



LAKE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
County Procedure

Title: HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Number: ES-5.01.10

Approved: October 12, 2012

Cancels: Hearing Conservation
Program ES-5.01.10
dated April 5, 2012

Originator: Human Resources

Review: October 12, 2017

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to provide a written description of Lake County's Hearing Conservation Program.

II. REFERENCES

Employment Policies Manual, 10/1/11, 5.1 Safety Policy

III. APPLICABILITY

This procedure applies to Lake County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) employees who may be exposed to sound levels averaging greater than 85 dBA for 8 hours per day, 40 hours per week.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Responsibilities

1. Individual County departments are responsible for the expense, determination of type and identification of the positions that require hearing protection.
2. Supervisors are responsible to provide adequate hearing protection for employees, post signs and warnings for all high noise areas, have exposure assessments performed when applicable or when new equipment is added, conduct hearing conservation training for employees that are exposed, and

schedule employee baseline audiometric testing (audiogram) with Lake County's authorized Healthcare Provider.

3. Employees are responsible to use hearing protection in designated high noise areas, request new hearing protection when needed and exercise proper care of issued hearing protection.

B. Noise Level Monitoring

1. Departments will coordinate monitoring of noise exposure levels, conducted by an approved and qualified vendor, to accurately identify employees who are exposed to noise levels at or above 85 dBA, averaged over eight (8) working hours; this is called an 8-hour Time-Weighted Average (TWA). The exposure measurement will be taken during a typical work situation.

Note: Where high worker mobility or significant variations in sound level make area monitoring generally inappropriate, representative personal sampling will be conducted.

2. Monitoring will be repeated whenever a change in the process, equipment, or controls is suspected of increasing noise exposures to the extent that additional employees may be exposed to noise levels at or above 85 dBA as an 8-hour TWA, or when the attenuation provided by the selected hearing protective devices is rendered inadequate.
3. Employees may observe the monitoring process and assessments.

C. Evaluation of Noise Exposure

Departments will coordinate exposure assessments, performed by an approved and qualified vendor, when there is an indication that an employee's exposure to noise may equal or exceed an 8-hr TWA of 85 dBA. Monitoring will be repeated whenever there is a change in the process, equipment or engineering controls.

D. Engineering/Administrative Controls

1. After it is determined by an approved and qualified vendor that noise exposures above 85 dBA are present, engineering controls should be evaluated and implemented to reduce the noise exposure before administrative controls are initiated. Examples of engineering controls include but are not limited to noise-reducing baffles, compartmentalization, installing noise reducing gears, and installing rubber pads under machinery.

2. After engineering controls are evaluated for effectiveness or feasibility, administrative controls should be considered to reduce noise exposure. Examples of administrative controls include but are not limited to restricting exposure time or using personal protective equipment.

E. Hearing Protection

1. Hearing protection devices are the first line of defense against noise in environments where engineering controls have not reduced employee exposure to safe levels. Hearing protective devices (e.g., earplugs, earmuffs, etc.) can prevent significant hearing loss, but only if used properly.
2. Employees are responsible for using hearing protection in designated high noise areas, requesting new hearing protection when needed, and exercising proper care of issued hearing protection.
3. Earplugs and earmuffs should be washed periodically and stored in a clean area. It is important to wash hands before handling earplugs to prevent contaminants that may increase the employee's risk of developing infections.

F. Training

Supervisors or their designee are responsible to train employees on specific department procedures, which may include:

1. Hearing conservation procedures;
2. Locations where and situations when hearing protection is required;
3. How to use and care for hearing protection;
4. How noise affects hearing and hearing loss; and
5. The purpose of audiometric testing (audiogram).

G. Record Keeping

Hearing Conservation Program records will be maintained in departmental files.

V. RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY

The authority to issue or revise this Procedure is reserved to the County Manager. The County Manager may authorize exceptions to this procedure when deemed appropriate.



David C. Heath
County Manager
Lake County