

Hearing Conservation Program

Policy · US · Updated 2026-07-13 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A hearing conservation program is the written program OSHA requires when workers are exposed to significant occupational noise: monitoring to find out who is exposed, audiometric testing to catch hearing loss while it is still small, hearing protection to stop it, and training so people understand why the earplugs matter. It is the difference between managing noise and merely working in it.

Noise-induced hearing loss is permanent, painless while it happens, and entirely preventable. Nobody notices losing the high frequencies until conversations blur — years after the exposure that caused it. That is why the program is built on measurement rather than perception: the shop that "isn't that loud" is often exactly loud enough, and the annual audiogram is the early-warning system that catches a shift in hearing before the worker ever would.

This template gives you the full program: exposure monitoring, audiometric testing and what happens when a test shows a change, hearing protector selection and use, the training program, and the recordkeeping that holds it together.

Purpose and scope

This program sets out how [Your company] protects workers from occupational noise at [site]. It applies to every employee whose noise exposure equals or exceeds 85 dBA as an 8-hour time-weighted average, per OSHA 1910.95 — and to the monitoring that determines who that is.

[Name/role] is the program administrator: they own the monitoring plan, the audiometric testing contract with [provider], the hearing protection stock, the training calendar, and this document. The roster of employees in the program is maintained at [location/system] and updated whenever monitoring results change it.

Noise monitoring

You cannot run this program on guesswork — monitoring establishes who is in it. [Your company] monitors noise exposure using [sound level meter surveys / personal dosimetry] conducted by [provider/qualified person]:

- Initial monitoring covers every area and job where exposures may reach the action level of 85 dBA as an 8-hour TWA, per OSHA 1910.95 — including the jobs everyone assumes are fine.
- Monitoring is repeated whenever production, equipment, or controls change in a way that could increase exposures or make hearing protectors inadequate — a new machine, a wall removed, a line sped up.
- Affected employees are notified of their monitoring results and may observe the monitoring, per the standard.

- Results are recorded at [location/system], mapped to jobs and areas, and drive three lists: who is in the program, where protection is required, and where engineering controls are the required answer rather than earplugs.
- High-noise areas are posted with signage at [locations], and the area map is part of new-hire orientation for affected roles.

Audiometric testing

Every employee in the program receives audiometric testing at no cost, through [provider], per OSHA 1910.95: a baseline audiogram within the timeframe the standard sets after first exposure at or above the action level, and an annual audiogram after that, each compared against the baseline.

The comparison is the point. When an annual audiogram shows a standard threshold shift — a change in hearing relative to baseline as defined by the standard — [Your company] follows the standard's required steps: the employee is notified in writing within the required time, hearing protector use and fitting are reviewed and upgraded, the employee is refitted and retrained, and referral for audiological or medical evaluation happens where the standard requires it. [Name/role] tracks every shift case to closure.

A threshold shift is treated as a program failure to investigate, not just a medical event to file: what was the exposure, was protection worn and fitted, and what changes — controls, protectors, or supervision.

Hearing protection

- Hearing protectors are provided at no cost, in a genuine choice of suitable types ([earplugs, banded plugs, earmuffs]) — comfort drives real-world wear time, and an unworn protector has an attenuation of zero.
- Protector use is required where OSHA 1910.95 requires it — including for exposures at or above the action level for employees awaiting a baseline audiogram or who have had a standard threshold shift — and wherever [Your company] posts mandatory-protection signage: [areas/tasks].
- Protectors are selected so their attenuation reduces the wearer's exposure adequately for the noise in their area, per the standard's attenuation requirements — [name/role] keeps the selection calculation on file.
- Supervisors enforce protector use like any other PPE rule, and fit is checked at issue and at training — a poorly inserted earplug performs nothing like its rating.
- Disposable protectors are stocked at [locations]; reusable protectors are issued personally, cleaned per the manufacturer's instructions, and replaced when worn or damaged.

Engineering and administrative controls

Hearing protection is the last layer, not the plan. Where exposures require it under the standard, [Your company] uses feasible engineering and administrative controls to reduce the noise itself, and considers them for every high-noise area regardless:

- Engineering: quieter equipment on the purchase specification, enclosures and barriers, vibration damping and isolation mounts, maintenance that quiets machines (worn bearings are loud bearings), silencers on air exhausts.
- Administrative: rotating workers to limit time in high-noise areas, scheduling noisy operations when fewer people are present, and increasing distance between people and sources.
- Every noise control evaluated — adopted or rejected — is recorded with reasons at [location], because "not feasible" is a claim an inspector may ask you to support.

Training

Every employee in the program receives training annually, per OSHA 1910.95, repeated so it stays current with changes in protectors and processes. The program covers:

- The effects of noise on hearing — permanent, painless, and cumulative.
- The purpose of hearing protectors; the advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation of the types offered; and instruction on selection, fitting, use, and care — with an actual fit practice, not just a demonstration.
- The purpose of audiometric testing and an explanation of the test procedures.
- Attendance is recorded with a sign-off per session at [system/location].

Records and review

Exposure monitoring results and audiometric test records are retained per the standard's retention requirements at [system/location], along with training sign-offs, protector selection calculations, and threshold shift case files. Records follow the standard's access rules — employees may see their own.

This program is reviewed [frequency, e.g. annually], after any standard threshold shift, and whenever monitoring, equipment, or production changes move the noise map. Owner: [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Start with monitoring — book the noise survey before editing anything else, because every list in this program flows from the exposure results.
2. Contract the audiometric testing provider and put baseline audiograms for affected employees on the calendar with the standard's timeframe in view.
3. Stock a real choice of protectors and run fit practice at issue — the gap between rated and real attenuation is fit and wear time.
4. Walk the noisiest areas asking the engineering question first: what would make this quieter, and what would it cost against years of protector purchases and claims?
5. Diary the annual cycle now — audiograms, training, and program review — and re-monitor whenever equipment or production changes.
6. If you also do construction work, apply OSHA's construction noise requirements to that work separately — the standards differ.

Official guidance

- › [OSHA — Occupational noise exposure](#)
- › [OSHA — 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational noise exposure](#)
- › [CDC NIOSH — Workplace safety and health](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/hearing-conservation-program-template> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.