

HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM



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<u>Page</u>	<u>INDEX</u>
3	Purpose and Scope
3	Definitions
4	Hearing Conservation
4	Noise Monitoring
4	Noise Exposure Determination
5	Audiometric Testing
5	Follow-up Procedures
6	Hearing Protectors
6	Employee Training
6	Access to Information
7	Record keeping

PURPOSE and SCOPE

Employers shall administer a continuing, effective, hearing conservation program. When employee noise exposure equals or exceeds the OSHA Action Level, which is 85 dB.

In the event R.W. LaPine, Inc. has employees at long term jobsite location that require hearing protection due to the noise level above 85 dB, the following program has been established to meet Federal and State requirements for Occupational Noise Exposure, 1910.95

DEFINITIONS

ACTION LEVEL

Means an 8-hour, time-weighted average noise exposure of 85 decibels measured on the scale, slow response, or equivalently, a dose of 50%.

AUDIOGRAM

Means an audiometric test showing an individual's hearing threshold levels.

TIME WEIGHTED AVERAGE

Means that sound level which, if consistent over an 8-hour exposure, would result in the same noise dose as is measured.

STANDARD THRESHOLD SHIFT

Means a change in the hearing threshold relative to the baseline audiogram, of an average 10 dB or more at 2,000, 3,000, and 4,000 Hz in either ear.

HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The rule requires that employers administer a continuing effective hearing conservation program. When employee noise exposures equal or exceed the action level.

R.W. LaPine, Inc. at times due to equipment being used, i.e. torches, grinding, and cutting, etc. causes the noise level to be greater than action level.

R.W. LaPine, Inc. employees may be exposed to noise levels above the action level due to operations around them at job sites.

NOISE MONITORING

When information indicates that any employee's exposure may equal or exceed the action level, a noise-monitoring program shall be implemented.

The noise monitoring shall be designed to identify employee's who may be exposed to noise at or above the action level, and enable the proper selection of hearing protection, if required.

Noise monitoring shall be repeated when a change in production, process, equipment, or controls increase noise exposure to the extent that additional employees may be exposed at or above the action level.

NOISE EXPOSURE DETERMINATION

The job site supervisor on any job site will determine the need for the use of hearing protection any time the noise level exceeds the action level.

Based on the noise level the proper attenuation for hearing protection shall be made by the Safety Manager for R.W. LaPine, Inc..

AUDIOMETRIC TESTING

R.W. LaPine, Inc. will provide audiometric testing to all employees whose exposure equals or exceeds the action level.

The audiometric testing is providing to employees at no cost.

- Baseline audiograms are provided within 6 months of an employee's first exposure at or above the action level. This will establish a valid baseline audiogram were subsequent audiograms can be compared.
- Testing to establish a baseline audiogram shall be preceded by at least 14 hours without exposure to workplace noise. Hearing protectors may be used as a substitute for the requirement.
- Annual audiograms are obtained for each employee at or above the action level, after obtaining the baseline audiogram.
- Each employee's annual audiogram shall be compared to that employee's baseline audiogram to determine if the audiogram is valid and if a standard threshold shift has occurred.

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

If the audiogram shows that an employee has suffered a standard threshold shift, R.W. LaPine, Inc. may obtain a retest within 30 days and consider the results of the retest as the annual audiogram.

If a comparison of the annual audiogram to the baseline audiogram indicates a standard threshold shift has occurred, the employee shall be informed of this fact, in writing, within 21 days of the determination.

If a physician determines that the standard threshold shift is aggravated by occupational noise exposure, R.W. LaPine, Inc. will take the following steps.

- (a) Employees not using hearing protectors shall be fitted with hearing protectors.
- (b) Employee's already wearing hearing protectors shall be refitted and retrained in the use of hearing protectors and provided with hearing protectors offering greater attenuation if necessary.

If subsequent audiometric testing of an employee whose noise exposure is less than the permissible 8-hour TWA of 90dB indicates that a standard threshold shift is not persistent. The employee shall be informed of the new audiometric interpretations and may discontinue the required use of hearing protectors.

HEARING PROTECTORS

R.W. LaPine, Inc. will provide hearing protectors, at no cost to the employee's who are exposed to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 dB, or greater. Hearing protectors shall be replaced as necessary.

Supervisors shall ensure that hearing protectors are worn by the following persons:

- (a) Employee's who are exposed to noise at or above the 85-dB action level.
- (b) Employee's who are exposed above the action level 85 dB, which have not yet had a baseline audiogram.

For employee's who have experienced a standard threshold shift, hearing protection must attenuate employee exposure to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 dB or below.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

R.W. LaPine, Inc. will institute a training program for all employees' that are exposed to noise at or above the action level. This training shall be provided annually and updated to be consistent with changes in the PPE and work processes.

Employees shall receive the following information:

- The effects of noise in hearing.
- The purpose of hearing protectors.
- The advantage, disadvantages, and attenuation of various types of hearing protectors.
- Instructions on the selection, fitting, use, and care of hearing protectors.
- The purpose of audiometric testing, and an explanation of the test procedures.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

R.W. LaPine, Inc. will make available to affected employees this written program.

RECORD KEEPING

R.W. LaPine, Inc. shall maintain records of all employee exposure measurements.

R.W. LaPine, Inc. shall retain all employee audiograms and these records should include the following information.

- Name and job classification of the employee
- Date of the audiogram
- Examiner's name
- Date of last acoustic or exhaustive calibration of the audiometer
- Employee's most recent noise exposure assessment.
- Noise exposure measurement records shall be retained for 2 years.

Audiometric test records shall be retained for the duration of the affected employee's employment.