

HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Manitoba's Workplace Safety and Health Regulation came into force February 1, 2007. As there is a clear association between industrial noise and hearing loss, Part 12 of this Regulation requires that, wherever possible, steps be taken to reduce employee exposure to noise. Where exposure cannot be reduced to below 80 decibels by altering workplace conditions, employees and their supervisors must be provided with education as to the noise levels that they are exposed to and the hazards of exposure to excessive noise. Employees must also be provided hearing protection upon request.

Those who are exposed to harmful noise in excess of 85 decibels over a workday must be required to use hearing protection and educated as to the hazards of noise exposure and the means to protect against hearing loss. The success of these protective measures must be assessed by means of an annual hearing test or audiogram.

Purpose

To comply with Part 12 of the Workplace Safety and Health regulation, Seven Oaks School Division has developed this policy to protect employees and others from the harmful effect of exposure to noise.

Program Elements

- Regular and complete sound level surveys.
- Positive action on recommendations for noise control and exposure reduction.
- Worker education programs.
- A hearing surveillance program including:
 - Hearing health histories.
 - Otologic and otoscopic examinations.
 - Pre-employment audiometry.

Responsibilities

- **Seven Oaks School Division**
 - Provide resources to conduct sound level surveys.
 - Support hearing conservation in the workplace.
 - Ensure worker training takes place.
 - Supply hearing protection where required.
- **The Workplace Safety Coordinator**
 - Develop and administer the written conservation program.
 - Ensure sound level surveys are conducted on a regular basis (5 years or when required).
 - Supply warning signs to be posted in areas where noise has been documented to be over 85 dBA.

- Enforce the use of hearing protection where required.
- Supply occupational noise standards for Workplace Safety and Health Boards.
- **Supervisors**
 - Participate in annual hearing conservation training sessions.
 - Wear hearing protection where required.
 - Ensure employees under their supervision are covered by the program where required.
 - Ensure employees are trained on the selection, use and care of hearing protection.
 - Enforce the use of hearing protection where required.
- **Employees**
 - Participate in annual training sessions where required.
 - Wear hearing protection where required.
 - Participate in annual audiometric testing if required.
 - Notify your supervisor if work is causing hearing concerns.
 - Have an audiometric test done by our representatives within 70 days of employment if working in a high noise area.

Sound Level Surveys

To be conducted every five years, when new noisy equipment is added or when modifications to buildings or equipment create sound concerns.

Action on Recommendations

The Workplace Safety Co-ordinator will review and act on sound level survey reports recommendations.

The Workplace Safety Co-ordinator will report on recommendations and actions to the Workplace Safety and Health Steering Committee.

Worker Education

Conducted yearly, presented by video, web, presenter, etc., covering the Act (Part 12) - how to prevent noise-induced hearing loss; how to select, use and maintain appropriate hearing protection devices.