

HEARING CONSERVATION

INTRODUCTION

The Turtle Mountain School Division (The Division) is committed to provide a safe and healthy environment for all employees, patients, clients, and visitors. The Hearing and Noise Policy is designed to prevent noise-induced hearing loss through the use of engineering controls, administrative controls, hearing protective devices, Audiometric Testing, and employee training. Employees exposed to workplace noise at or above 80 dBa Lex must be included in the Hearing and Noise Conservation Program.

PROGRAM

1. The Workplace Safety and Health Committees shall be informed and involved in the Hearing Conservation and Noise Conservation Program within their worksite. The Committees will be provided with a copy of the exposure assessment and hearing education program for their respective worksite/program where required.
2. Sound Level Surveys will be conducted where committees know or have reason to believe that sound levels exceed 80 dBa Lex.
3. Where sound levels exceed acceptable limits, engineering control measures will be investigated and used wherever practicable to reduce identified noise levels.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Division Management responsibilities, in accordance with the Workplace Safety and Health Act, are to ensure that:

1. Manitoba Regulation 217/2006 requirements are complied with;
2. A noise exposure assessment is conducted and posted in a conspicuous place in the workplace if:
 - a. An employee is or is likely to be exposed to noise at a workplace in excess of 80 dBa Lex.
 - b. There is an alteration, renovation or repair of the workplace, or installation of new equipment that is noise generating,
 - c. A modification to a work process that may result in a significant change in the employee's exposure to noise.
 - d. If an employee provides management with evidence of an occupationally induced hearing loss.
3. Warning signs indicating that a work area is above 85 dBA Lex shall be posted at the entrance of that work area;
4. Audiometric tests are conducted once per year on all employees assigned to work in designated areas over 85 dBa Lex;
5. Audiometric hearing tests are to be performed within 70 days of employment on employees who work in designated areas over 85 dBa Lex;
6. All levels of management and employees are aware of the control measures to reduce exposure to noise;
7. All employees are encouraged to cooperate in using agreed safe work practices;
8. Information on noise, the risks of exposure to noise, and the appropriate control measures are disseminated in a manner appropriate to the workplace;

Cross Reference: Policy A-11

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9. A comprehensive personal hearing protection program, including the selection of personal hearing protectors, and instruction of employees in their correct use and maintenance, is implemented; and
10. Employees receive appropriate training and education when it is required.

DIVISION EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Divisions employees' responsibilities, in accordance with the Workplace Safety and Health Act, are to comply with all regulation requirements, as far as is practicable, and established workplace safe work procedures in all areas where sound surveys are above 80 dBa Lex.

PROVISION OF PROTECTIVE HEARING EQUIPMENT:

If an employee is or is likely to be exposed to noise in a workplace that exceeds 80dBa Lex but does not exceed 85 dBa Lex, The Division shall inform the employee about the hazards of the level of noise and on the request of the employee, provide the employee with a hearing protector

Where noise levels exceed the limits of 85 dBa Lex and it is not possible to reduce those noise levels, appropriate protective hearing equipment will be provided by The Division.

AUDIOMETRIC HEARING TESTING:

1. Audiometric testing of staff who work in areas where noise levels approach 85 dBa Lex will be carried out in accordance with Manitoba Regulation 217/2006.
2. Audiometric tests will be done on all employees assigned to work in the designated areas, once per year. The testing will be conducted by a qualified audiologist, and will be engaged by and paid for by The Division.
3. All new employees assigned to work in a designated area will be tested within seventy (70) days of employment to establish a base line audiogram, and annually thereafter.
4. Any employee transferred or moved from a non-designated area to a designated area will be tested within seventy (70) days of the transfer or move, and annually thereafter.
5. Employees who work in several areas, and where only some areas are designated, will be part of the hearing conservation program and tested annually
6. An audiometric test will be conducted at the time of departure on all exiting employees who worked in a designated area and who leave the employment of The Division.
7. All medical records (individual worker results) must remain with the audiologist. However, a record will be kept indicating all of those employees who participate in the hearing conservation program, and a notation will be made in their individual training file.