Hearing Conservation Program
Updated January 2018
Baylor University
Hearing Conservation Program

OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95

INTRODUCTION
Hearing conservation is an important aspect of the overall safety and health program. Workplace noise, classroom noise, lab noise, shop noise, practice room noise and any other types of surroundings on campus that have noise exposure can cause hearing loss, create physical and psychological stress and contribute to accidents by making it difficult to communicate.

Fortunately, noise exposure can be controlled. Foremost, every effort will be made to use engineering controls to minimize noise exposures in all concerned venues. When feasible engineering controls do not reduce the noise level below the OSHA permissible exposure limit, administrative controls and/or the use of proper hearing protectors will be mandated to minimize employees and students noise exposure.

SCOPE AND ELEMENTS TO A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

The upmost priority at Baylor University is to ensure that employees are not exposed to unacceptable noise levels per OSHA Standard guidelines. It is also critical that students who may be exposed to conditions such as those described within this section are knowledgeable about the dangers of noise exposure and provided with effective mitigation strategies and personal protective equipment.

There are many reasons for providing an effective hearing conservation program, including:

- Protecting the university’s most important resources – employees and students;
- Providing a safe and healthful workplace and learning environment; and
- Complying with governmental regulations.

Management, supervisory, employee and student commitment to hearing conservation and a positive attitude are important aspects of the overall success of the program. The key elements of the university’s hearing conservation program are:

- Noise exposure measurements;
- Engineering and administrative noise exposure controls;
- Personal hearing protection;
- Audiometric testing and follow-up; and
- Training and education.

NOISE EXPOSURE MEASUREMENT

The success of the university’s hearing conservation program depends on an accurate knowledge of the existing noise environment. Accurate surveys define areas within acceptable guidelines for noise exposure and those areas where potentially harmful noise exposure exists. Effective noise exposure measurement identifies possible loss of hearing by detecting work, classroom, study and practice areas where employees must wear hearing protectors and participate in the Hearing Conservation program. Students will be provided training and hearing test are available at no charge. Therefore, the university conducts noise surveys using sound level meters that meet the appropriate ANSI standard and are calibrated acoustically before and after each survey. Measurements are made at employees and students normal work, study and practice locations. This procedure allows an
estimation of the daily exposure except in instances where it is required for those affected to move from one location to another in his/her daily routine. In these cases, noise dosimetry is performed. Follow-up measurements are made whenever changes in work practices or methods may change workplace noise exposures. The results of all measurements are recorded, and affected employees and students will be notified of their exposure level. Noise exposure measurements will be available for review at the EHS department.

**EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT EDUCATION**

Baylor University provides all enrolled students free hearing test through the Communication Sciences and Disorders department. Interested students are invited to contact that department for more information.

The university recognizes the need for a strong educational program pertaining to hearing conservation. Therefore, proper education for employees and students affected by the parameters set forth in this program takes place per standard requirements and university policy. At least annually hearing conservation training and evaluation is conducted. The educational program consists of an initial presentation by designated university staff; during this training session an explanation of university policy relative to the requirements of wearing hearing protective devices is given. All employees are encouraged to ask questions concerning the program. Topics covered include the effects of noise on hearing, the purpose of hearing protectors, their advantages and disadvantages and instructions on the selection, fitting, use, and care of protectors. The purpose and procedures of audiometric testing are also discussed. Students exposed to areas identified with noise levels exceeding accepted guidelines are informed, trained and types of appropriate personal protective equipment are explained. Some types of personal protective equipment will be made available by the university; more sophisticated PPE can be advised upon and purchased through the Communication Sciences and Disorders department.

It is necessary to provide continuing education in the implementation of any safety program and, therefore, employees and students will be regularly reminded of the necessity for preserving their hearing. This is achieved by posting educational materials at appropriate locations, EHS and Communication Sciences and Disorders departmental web site information and making information available by request through either department mentioned above.

Employees and students not exposed to noise levels exceeding the accepted guidelines are encouraged to participate whenever possible in the educational programs provided.

It is recognized that a loss of one’s ability to hear can occur from many causes and that for this reason all employees and affected students benefit from the educational programs described above. Since the hearing conservation program described in this plan protects employees and students hearing from potentially-harmful environments and could possibly alert them to effects, the program is considered an additional benefit program for employees and students alike.

The Educational Phase begins when employees are hired and continues annually thereafter. A copy of the OSHA Hearing Conservation Standard will be available at the EHS department and all other
affected departments throughout campus. The student training will be conducted through an ongoing predetermined evaluation process by those involved with the program.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Until engineering and/or administrative controls reduce levels of noise exposure within or below the allowed limits. It is recognized that the use of PPE is considered a temporary solution to the problem of overexposure until feasible controls are possible. Within the university environment it can be difficult to control the noise in these types of diverse surroundings. Therefore, administrative controls and/or hearing protection will be used to protect employees and students. Failure of an employee or student to properly wear the PPE provided/recommended could result in action being taken by the university.

The individual responsible for issuing and fitting hearing protection will be a competent technician working in conjunction with the EHS department.

Instruction, fitting and issuing of hearing protective devices will be accomplished before employees and students are exposed to harmful noise levels.

AUDIOMETRIC TESTING PROGRAM

The objective of the hearing conservation program is the preservation of the hearing of its employees and students. To achieve this goal, an effective audiometric testing program has been implemented. This program includes a baseline audiogram for all identified affected employees before they are exposed to harmful noise levels. Students will not participate in audiometric testing conducted by the university but will be trained and involved with all aspects of the program with major emphasis on the protection of their hearing in designated locations.

The success of the hearing conservation program regarding each individual employee is evaluated by comparing annual audiograms to the baseline audiogram. Audiogram review is performed by a competent technician working in conjunction with the EHS department. Any problem audiograms or audiograms indicating a standard threshold shift of 10dB in either ear will be referred to an audiologist or physician for follow-up, and recommendations. This procedure, among others, helps to determine the effectiveness of the program, and, as a result, monitors with a goal of the protection of employees’ hearing.

ENGINEERING AND ADMINISTRATIVE NOISE CONTROLS

Baylor University recognized the desirability of controlling the existing noise levels by engineering and/or administrative controls. Therefore, the feasibility of such controls is carefully considered. Due to the complexity of some challenging issues in the university environment, noise levels may have to be controlled by administrative controls.

Within the limitation of schedules, skills and training background, administrative controls will be implemented with the advice of the EHS department and supervisors of the affected venue. When it
is feasible over-exposed employees and students are moved to other areas having noise levels below program requirements. In addition, operational procedures are modified as necessary so that during any one twenty-four-hour period the allowed exposure times will not be exceeded. Engineering and administrative controls are being considered and implemented where feasible on a continuing basis.

RECORDKEEPING

All information related to affected employees in the hearing conservation program will be documented and kept by the EHS department as required by 29 CFR 1910.95(l) Access to information and training materials.

UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT

As indicated by the hearing conservation program described above, it is the full intent of the university to take measures to conserve the hearing of its employees and students. The EHS department will review the program annually for effectiveness and compliance as developed and outlined in this program and make all attempts within the university’s financial and technical capability to improve the program when feasible.

When the work area noise levels are reduced below the accepted guidelines, the university reserves the right to terminate any or all the phases of the program described herein.

The safety and health of the dedicated employees and students of this university is priority number one.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Environmental Health and Safety department;
- The Communication and Science & Disorder department; and
- Information pertaining to the OSHA Hearing Conservation standard is available at www.osha.gov under the 29 CFR 1910.95 standard.

PROGRAM RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING CORRESPONDENCE

After reviewing this document and getting any questions clarified all employees responsible for carrying out these requirements will e-mail the EHS department notifying them of completion of the program review. Please e-mail Brent_A_Jones@baylor.edu with your confirmation. If you have any question, contact EHS at 710-2492.