THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

Hearing Conservation Program
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>The Program Administrator</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Noise Controls</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Audiometric Testing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>Hearing Protection</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>Record Keeping</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POLICY:

HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Statement of Purpose:

To provide protection against the effects of noise exposure when employees are exposed to noise levels at, or above, 85 decibels (dBA) based on an eight hour time weighted average (TWA) measurement. This measurement is taken using either a noise dosimeter or a sound level meter set on "A" scale.

Each campus unit contemplating the purchase of new or reconditioned equipment and machines shall research the equipment’s established noise output before the purchasing process begins.

Where hearing protectors are required, employees are to wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) or face disciplinary action.

1.0 Scope

1. To provide continual, on-going measurement for all USM campus locations (monitoring program).
2. To provide on-going employee education on an annual basis.
3. To provide personal hearing protection as designated.
4. To provide audiometric testing as designated.

2.0 The Program Administrator

The Program Administrator for the University of Southern Maine will be the University Environmental Health and Safety Office. Administrative responsibilities of UEH&S include:

1. Coordination and supervision of noise exposure monitoring.
2. Identification of employees to be included in the Hearing Conservation Program (HCP).
3. Coordination and supervision of the audiometric testing program.
5. Development of policies relating to the use of hearing protectors.
6. Supervision of employee training.
7. Coordination and supervision of record keeping.
8. Evaluation of overall program.
3.0 Monitoring

Beginning in September 1992, noise monitoring began to establish noise levels on machines/equipment in excess of 85 dBA. Noise exposure levels must be measured wherever they may reasonably be expected to be above an eight hour time weighted average of 85 dBA.

Monitoring will be conducted by the University Environmental Health and Safety Office. Where possible, check with the UEH&S to determine if historic date (previous similar monitoring) was conducted on equipment, and can be used for particular operations.

The following procedures are followed by UEH&S to minimize noise exposure for employees:

1. Machine/Equipment Testing: 33 machines / equipment were originally tested. Each time a new machine is purchased or leased, a noise analysis will be conducted. This information is available upon request from the UEH&S Office.

2. UEH&S annually identifies USM employees for inclusion into the Hearing Conservation Program. Employee audiograms, as well as equipment noise surveys, are available upon request from the UEH&S Office.

3. As a precautionary measure, noise level measurements will be conducted whenever there is a change in process, equipment, or controls which may affect employee exposure.

4. Every two years, re-measurement will be done as a precautionary measure to ensure the credibility of the Hearing Conservation Program.

5. Engineering Revisions: In addition, UEH&S findings will be given to FM engineering for study into the feasibility of engineering redesign and additional control.

6. Posting Procedures: (Noise measurements) revised sound level findings will be distributed to all departments involved, and posted for the benefit of all employees. When future noise measurement is conducted, postings will be done in the same manner.

7. The OSHA Standard: Copies of the standard, 1910.95 will be discussed in annual training sessions and available from the UEH&S Office for employees.

4.0 Noise Controls

Noise controls must be evaluated and implemented wherever employee exposures are at or above an eight hour time weighted average of 90 dBA.
As a result of noise level findings, selection of hearing protectors will be made for all job tasks exceeding 85 dBA. Hearing protectors will be selected on the attenuation (noise reduction rating) they provide. This is a way to lower the affected employee exposure to less than 85 dBA. Note: Protectors will be mandatory as indicated by the test findings. The following procedures and compliance requirements shall be followed:

1. 85 dBA: Noise monitoring results, Hearing Conservation Program, annual training and audiogram, and hearing protection offered.

2. 90 dBA: Noise monitoring results, Hearing Conservation Program, annual training and audiogram, and hearing protection required.

3. 115 dBA: If this level of noise is produced at any time during an employee’s work shift, monitoring results are required, and hearing protection must be worn for the period of time when the 115 dBA sound level is produced.

4. Protocol: If the noise level is between 85-90 dBA, one type of hearing protection is required (muffs or plugs). If the noise level is above 96 dBA, two types of hearing protection are required (muffs and plugs).

5. Protector Selection: Will be determined by the UEH&S Office or employer. Purchasing arrangements will be made by the appropriate department or unit involved.

6. Inspection and Maintenance: Each department/unit having employees wearing protectors is responsible for periodic inspection and maintenance of permanent protective devices. Appropriate documentation/recordkeeping is to be kept verifying on-going protector inspection and maintenance in each department/unit.

7. Enforcement: Supervisors within each USM department/unit are responsible for making sure the employees wear the prescribed protectors when performing those tasks that require protection.

The University Environmental Health & Safety Office will annually check to be sure enforcement is being conducted within each department/unit.

5.0 Audiometric Testing

All employees with an eight hour time weighted exposure of 85 dBA or above, must be included in an audiometric testing program. A baseline audiogram must be established within the first six months of exposure, and annual testing and evaluation must be done. Testing will be conducted per ANSI S3.6-1969 and in accordance with OSHA CFR29 1910.95. Testing will be conducted by a qualified (certified) hearing test consultant.
The UEH&S Office will ensure that all affected employees participate in the USM Audiogram Program, which includes baseline testing as soon after hire as possible but within 6 months of first exposure. Annual audiograms will be taken to compare to the baseline and assess whether employee(s) have experienced measureable hearing loss. Exposure to noise will be minimized for 14 hours prior to obtaining this baseline exam and subsequent annual tests.

If a standard threshold shift (an average shift in either ear of 10 dBA or more at 2000, 3000, or 4000 Hz) is identified, then:

1. The employee will be notified of the threshold shift within 21 days of the determination.
2. The employee will be informed of the need for further evaluation if a medical problem is suspected.
3. The use of hearing protection will continue to be enforced.
4. The employee will be refitted and retrained in the use of hearing protection.

6.0 Hearing Protection

The employer must provide hearing protection for all employees that have an eight hour time weighted exposure of 85 dBA or above, who have any continuous exposure at or above 115 dBA, or who have an exposure to any impulse noise levels above 140 dBA.

The following types of hearing protection will be provided to employees. If hearing protection has been identified to be worn, employees are required to wear that hearing protection during operations where noise levels are in excess:

1. Ear Plugs
2. Ear Muffs

If you have a question about whether or not a piece of machinery/equipment requires the use of hearing protection, contact the University Environmental Health & Safety Office at 780-5406.

7.0 Training

The University Environmental Health & Safety Office must provide training to all employees exposed to noise at or above an eight hour time weighted average of 85 dBA. Training must include the following topics:

1. The effects of noise on hearing.
2. Information on hearing protectors and their use.
3. Information on audiometric testing and its purpose.
4. The employees right to access records.

The UEH&S Office will maintain a written description of the training program. Training must be completed annually for affected employees.
8.0 Record Keeping

Audiometric tests need to contain the following information:

1. The name and job classification of the employee being tested.
2. The date of the audiogram.
3. The examiner’s name.
4. The date of the last calibration of the audiometer.
5. The employee’s most recent noise exposure assessment.

UEH&S shall maintain accurate records of the measurements of the background sound pressure levels in the audiometric test rooms.

Audiometric records will be retained for the duration of the affected workers employment. Noise exposure monitoring records are required to be kept for two years. All records will be provided to employees upon request.