

OSHA Hearing Conservation Thresholds

Every action level, exposure limit, and program requirement for occupational noise — per OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95.



85 dB TWA · Action Level

Once an employee's 8-hour time-weighted average reaches 85 dB(A), the employer must launch a Hearing Conservation Program: noise monitoring, audiometric testing, hearing protectors at no cost, annual training, and recordkeeping.

§1910.95(c)(1)



90 dB TWA · Permissible Exposure Limit

When exposures exceed the 90 dB(A) 8-hour TWA, feasible engineering and administrative controls must be implemented. If controls cannot bring exposure below the PEL, hearing protectors must be used to attain compliance.

§1910.95(b)(1) · Table G-16



Audiometric Testing

Provide a baseline audiogram within 6 months of first exposure at or above the action level, then annually. Compare each annual test to the baseline; a Standard Threshold Shift (STS) of ≥ 10 dB averaged at 2, 3, and 4 kHz triggers follow-up action.

§1910.95(g)(1)–(10)



Hearing Protectors (HPDs)

Make HPDs available at no cost to every employee exposed at or above 85 dB TWA. HPD use is mandatory for employees exposed at or above 90 dB TWA, for those who have not yet had a baseline audiogram, and for any employee who has experienced an STS.

§1910.95(i)(1)–(2)



Annual Training

Train every employee exposed at or above 85 dB TWA at least once a year. Cover the effects of noise on hearing; the purpose, advantages, and limitations of HPDs; HPD selection, fitting, use, and care; and the purpose of audiometric testing.

§1910.95(k)(1)–(3)



Records Retention

Keep noise exposure measurement records for at least 2 years. Keep audiometric test records for the duration of the affected employee's employment. Records must be made available to employees, former employees, and their representatives on request.

§1910.95(m)(1)–(4)

Need a turnkey hearing conservation program with audiometric testing?

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