



## Hearing Conservation Plan

Environmental Health and Safety

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## REVISION HISTORY

Revision Number	Revision Date	Revised By	Description of Change
00	11/8/2019	J. Jones	Initial creation and implementation
01	2/8/2021	S. McLean	Document review; review of federal register for updates. Weblinks added.
02	12/29/2023	S. McLean	Document review; link updates

## **Introduction**

Under 29CFR1910.95 (Occupational Noise Exposure):

The hearing conservation plan requires the monitoring of areas/equipment that may pose hearing damage to employees. This exposure to noise levels becomes hazardous at or above 85 decibels (dB) averaged over 8 working hours, or 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA). Florida Institute of Technology (Florida Tech) will monitor all employees whose noise exposure is equivalent to or greater than a noise exposure received in 8 hours where the noise level is constantly 85 dB.

The exposure measurement will include all continuous, intermittent, and impulsive noise within an 80 dB to 130 dB range and will be taken during a typical work situation. This requirement is performance-oriented because it allows Florida Tech to choose the monitoring method that best suits each individual situation.

Florida Tech Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) Department will repeat monitoring whenever changes in production, process, or controls increase noise exposure. These changes may mean that more employees need to be included in the plan or that their hearing protectors may no longer provide adequate protection.

Employees are entitled to observe monitoring procedures and will receive notification of the results of exposure monitoring.

## **Noise Monitoring**

Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) will conduct monitoring for noise exposure levels. Departments are responsible for notifying EH&S when there is a possible need for monitoring. Monitoring will be performed with the use of sound level meters and personal noise dosimeters at the discretion of EH&S. Noise monitoring devices will be calibrated per 29CFR1910.95.

Monitoring will also be conducted whenever EH&S is notified that there is a change in equipment, process, or controls that affects the noise levels. This includes the addition or removal of machinery, alteration in building structure, or installation of new equipment.

## **Hearing Protection**

Hearing protection will be provided, and replaced as necessary, at no cost to employees who perform tasks designated as having a high noise exposure. It is the responsibility of the department to require employees to wear hearing protection when noise levels reach or exceed 85 dB. Those employees will have the opportunity to choose from various types of hearing protection. Personal stereo headsets (e.g. iPods) are not approved for hearing protection. Available hearing types include ear plugs and hearing protection ear muffs. Signage is required in hearing protection areas. The following areas are designated hearing protection required areas. When working in these areas, hearing protection must always be worn.

1. Olin Life Science Mechanical Room
2. Olin Life Science Chiller Room
3. Link Boiler Room
4. Link Chiller Room

Personnel noise exposure monitoring was performed in September 2019 to determine which personnel need to be in the Hearing Conservation Program. It was determined that the Grounds Maintenance Department is exposed to noise above the OSHA 85 dB PEL. Therefore, all personnel in the Grounds Maintenance Department must receive annual audiograms and Hearing Conservation Training as detailed below, and hearing protection must be worn while performing work activities.

## **Hearing Conservation Training**

Employees included in the hearing conservation program will be required to receive training concerning the proper usage and wearing of hearing protection. The training will be provided by EH&S or a designated representative, within a month of hire and annually thereafter. Training will include information on the effects of noise on hearing, the purpose of hearing protection, an explanation of audiometric testing, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) noise standard. Environmental Health and Safety will maintain training records.

## **Annual Audiograms/Hearing Test**

Employees included in the hearing conservation program who have time-weighted average (TWA) noise exposures of 85 dBA or greater for an eight (8) hour work shift will be required to have both a baseline and annual audiogram. The audiogram will be provided by Florida Tech at no cost to the employee.

The baseline audiogram will be given to an employee within one (1) month of employment with Florida Tech and before any exposure to high noise levels. Annual audiograms will be performed

within one year from the date of the previous audiogram. It is the responsibility of the individual and their supervisor/Department Head to contact EH&S to schedule the annual audiogram.

If an annual audiogram shows that an employee has suffered a standard threshold shift the employee will be retested within thirty (30) days of the original audiogram. If the retest confirms the occurrence of a standard threshold shift, the employee will be notified in writing within twenty-one (21) days of the confirmation. Employees who do experience a standard threshold shift will also be refitted with hearing protection and provided more training on the effects of noise.

## **Recordkeeping**

All records of employee exposure measurements including the results of all surveys, audiometric tests and training will be retained for the following periods:

- Noise exposure measurement records will be retained for at least two years at EH&S.
- Audiometric test records will be retained in the affected employee's medical file for the duration of their employment.

Records will contain employee's name and job classification, date, examiner's name, date of the last acoustic or exhaustive calibration, measurements of the background sound pressure levels in audiometric test rooms, and the employee's most recent noise exposure measurement.

All records will be provided upon request to employees, former employees, designated representatives, and to any authorized OSHA or State of Florida representative.