Management Plan for Hearing Conservation
New Prague Area Schools

Management Plan for Hearing Conservation

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A – Noise Exposure Measurements
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D – Hearing Protection Summary
E – Audiogram Testing Results
**Program reviews and follow-up of program-related issues are documented below.**

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1.0 Purpose
New Prague Area Schools is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all employees. The purpose of this hearing conservation program is to reduce the potential for occupational hearing loss and to comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29 CFR 1910.95 *Occupational Noise Exposure*. OSHA established a permissible exposure limit (PEL) for occupational noise exposure. The action level for noise exposure is a “dose” of 50%, which is equivalent to an eight-hour time weighted average of 85 decibels (dBA). When information indicates that an employee’s noise exposure may equal or exceed this action level, noise monitoring is conducted to determine the actual employee noise exposures. When noise exposures exceed the action level, the affected employees are included in a hearing conservation program, including audiometric testing, hearing protection, and training.

2.0 Responsibilities
Administration of this hearing conservation program is the responsibility of the Program Administrator or a designated alternative. The Hearing Conservation Program Administrator for New Prague Area Schools is:

Craig Most
Director of Operations
952-758-1480

Administrative responsibilities include:
- Coordinate and supervise noise exposure monitoring
- Identify employees to be placed in the hearing conservation program
- Coordinate and supervise the audiometric testing program
- Assist with hearing protector selection
- Coordinate and supervise required effectiveness of this recordkeeping
- Periodically evaluate the overall program
- Coordinate required changes or improvements to the program

3.0 Noise Monitoring
Noise exposure monitoring is conducted to accurately identify employees for inclusion in the Hearing Conservation Program and to enable the proper selection of hearing protectors. The exposure measurement includes continuous, intermittent, and impulsive noise within the regulated 80 dBA to 130 dBA range. For each situation requiring testing, there is an assessment of the best test method suited to that particular situation. Noise dosimeters and sound level meters that comply with the provisions of OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95 are used when employee exposures are evaluated. Dosimeters and sound level meters used to monitor employee noise exposure are calibrated in accordance with the prescribed manufacturer’s procedures in order to enable accurate measurements.

Results of noise exposure measurements are maintained in the appendices of this program. Employees who are exposed to noise levels at or above the action level of 85 decibels (dBA) on the “A” weighted scale, averaged over an eight-hour working day, are placed in the Hearing Conservation Program. Notification is given to each employee exposed at or above the action level. A list of these employees as well as their status in regard to the various components of the Hearing Conservation Program can be found in the appendices.

Noise monitoring is repeated when a change occurs in the workplace that increases noise levels or when the attenuation provided by hearing protection being used may be inadequate.

4.0 Audiometric Testing
Audiometric testing monitors the sharpness and acuity of an employee’s hearing over time and provides the opportunity to educate employees about their hearing and the need to protect it. Baseline and annual audiograms are performed on employees whose exposures equal or exceed an eight-hour time-weighted average (TWA) of 85 dBA (see appendices).
Audiograms meet the following criteria:
- Audiometric testing is provided to employees covered in this program at no cost.
- Audiograms are conducted in accordance with OSHA 1910.95(g) by licensed or certified professionals.
- Baseline audiograms are conducted within six months of an employee’s first exposure at or above the action level in order to establish a valid baseline audiogram against which subsequent audiograms can be compared. However, if a mobile test van is used, the baseline audiogram is conducted within one year of the employee’s first exposure at or above the action level. Hearing protection is worn for any period exceeding six months after the first exposure until the baseline audiogram is obtained.
- Audiometric testing is preceded by at least 14 hours without exposure to workplace noise. Hearing protectors may be used as a substitute.
- The Human Resources department maintains records of all employee audiometric testing results. These records include:
  - Name and job classification
  - Date of audiogram
  - Examiner’s name
  - Date of the last acoustic or exhaustive calibration of the audiometer
  - Employee’s most recent noise exposure assessment

### 5.0 Audiometric Evaluation

Each employee’s annual audiogram is compared to his or her baseline audiogram by a qualified evaluator to determine if a Standard Threshold Shift (STS) has occurred. An STS is a hearing loss of 10 dB or more at 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hz in either ear. In determining if an STS exists, the following occurs:
- An allowance is made for the contribution of aging (presbycusis). The age correction values used are found in OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95 Appendix F.
- If the annual audiogram indicates that an employee has incurred an STS, the employee will be scheduled for a re-test within thirty days to determine if the STS is persistent.

If it is determined that a persistent STS has occurred, the Program Administrator informs the employee in writing within 21 days of the determination. A copy is also sent to the employee’s supervisor or union representative. A sample letter, which can be used for employee notification, is located in the appendices of this management plan. In addition:
- Employees experiencing an STS are trained, fitted, and required to use hearing protectors. If employees already use hearing protectors, the hearing protectors are evaluated and may be replaced with those offering greater attenuation if necessary.
- The most recent audiogram may be used as the new baseline audiogram to which all future annual audiograms will be compared. Revision of the baseline must be the decision of the audiologist, otolaryngologist, or evaluating physician.

### 6.0 Hearing Protectors

Hearing protection is made available at no cost to employees who are exposed to 85 dBA or greater over an eight-hour workday. Hearing protection is required to be worn by employees who experience any of the following:
- Exposure to noise levels exceeding those listed in OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95 Table G-16.
- Not yet had a baseline audiogram per the requirements in Section 4.0.
- A permanent STS.

All affected employees are given the opportunity to select their hearing protection from a variety of suitable hearing protectors. Suitable hearing protection attenuates exposures to at least an eight-hour TWA of 90 dB. For employees who have experienced an STS, hearing protection attenuates their exposure to an eight-hour TWA of at least 85 dB. A list of available equipment is located in the appendices of this management plan.
Training and instruction on the proper use and care of this equipment is the responsibility of the Program Administrator. After training has occurred, employees are held accountable for properly using and maintaining the equipment furnished.

### 7.0 Training

Annual training is conducted for those employees included in the hearing conservation program. Training includes:
- Effects of noise on hearing
- Purpose and advantages of hearing protectors
- Selection, fitting, use, and care of hearing protectors
- Purpose of audiometric testing

### 8.0 Recordkeeping

Noise exposure measurement records are retained for at least two years. Audiometric test records are retained by District Office for the duration of the affected employee’s employment.

Records are provided upon request to employees or former employees. A copy of OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95 is available to affected employees or their representatives from the Program Administrator.

### 9.0 Program Evaluation

At least annually, the Program Administrator or designated alternative evaluates this Hearing Conservation Program for deficiencies or necessary updates. Employees are immediately notified of significant changes.
Appendix A

Noise Exposure Measurements
Appendix B

Employee Tracking Form
Appendix C

Standard Threshold Shift Letter
Example Standard Threshold Shift Letter

Date

Dear ____________

Your most recent audiometric exam was compared to your original baseline audiogram. This comparison indicates that your hearing has deteriorated to the point where your hearing impairment constitutes a “Standard Threshold Shift.” This is defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) as a relative hearing loss of an average of 10 decibels (dB) in either ear at the frequencies of 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hz.

Audiogram results cannot define why you have a hearing loss, but there are many possible reasons such as infection, wax buildup in your ear, and noise exposure. By taking action now, we can reduce the potential for additional hearing loss. Hearing protectors are necessary to decrease exposure to noise while you are working. Please call ____________ to arrange a time to select hearing protectors suitable for your specific work environment.

Whenever you are in a work environment that results in noise exposure equal to or exceeding an 8-hour Time Weighted Average (TWA) of 85 decibels, hearing protection is required. Loss of hearing will affect your life. It is important to take action now.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Craig Most
Buildings and Grounds Director
Appendix D

Hearing Protection Summary
New Prague Area Schools
Hearing Protection Summary

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