



Policy Title:	Hearing Conservation
Policy Number:	UNIV-419
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Policies Superseded:	FINA-704; HREO-1863
Policy Management Area(s):	Environmental Health and Safety

**SUMMARY:**

It has been shown that an eight-hour time weighted average exposure to eighty-five (85) decibels or greater can have unfavorable effects to hearing. The Hearing Conservation Program has been developed to reduce hearing loss at Coastal Carolina University.

**POLICY:**

**I. HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

It has been shown that an eight-hour time weighted average exposure to eighty-five (85) decibels or greater can have unfavorable effects to hearing. The Hearing Conservation Program has been designed to reduce hearing loss at Coastal Carolina University. This program consists of:

- Hearing protection
- Employee training and education
- Annual audiogram noise monitoring record keeping

**A. Definitions**

1. Audiogram - An audiometric test showing an individual’s hearing ability at different frequencies. This test shows if the individual has lost some hearing due to the work environment over a given period of time. An industrial hygienist will evaluate the results and make appropriate recommendations.
2. Audiologist - A professional, specializing in the study and rehabilitation of hearing, which is certified and licensed by a state board of examiners.
3. Decibel (dB) - Unit of measurement of sound volume.
4. Program Participants - Employees who experience noise levels equal to or exceeding an eight hour averaged exposure to 85 dB, and employees who perform tasks similar to those of the mentioned employees. When employees’

noise exposure levels equal an eight hour averaged exposure to 80 dB, they should receive annual audiometric examinations, personal protective equipment, and periodic training.

5. Personal Protective Equipment - Ear muffs and ear plugs approved by ANSI, and the Department of Environmental Health and Safety.

#### B. Supervisors Responsibility

Personal hearing protectors (approved ear muffs and ear plugs) will be provided at no cost to the employee. Managers and supervisors must give their employees a choice of at least two different protectors. The supervisor must also provide proper fitting instructions; supervise the correct use and care of all hearing protectors. Supervisors and managers can call the Department of Environmental Health and Safety for assistance in choosing proper hearing protection and in fit testing employees. The work areas will be posted with signs to use hearing protection in specific areas.

#### C. Employee Training and Education

Workers who are informed about hearing and its loss are likely to use hearing protection. Prior to working in a noisy area, employees should be trained in the basics of this Hearing Conservation Program. Requests for initial and annual training should be made to HREO. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety will arrange to teach employees the effects of noise, the advantages and disadvantages of hearing protectors, and the purpose and process of audiometric testing.

#### D. Annual Audiogram

An audiologist will perform the audiometric test, and this is at no cost to the participating employees. The employee's department is responsible for scheduling the initial exam (before the employee's job assignment) and the annual exam. Questions regarding audiometric testing should be directed to HREO or the Department of Environmental Health and Safety. Notification must be given to exposed employees that they must avoid loud noise for 14 hours prior to testing. This means they must not mow their lawns, discharge firearms, or perform other noisy activities during the period, unless they wear ear plugs or muffs.

#### E. Noise Monitoring

Monitoring will be performed by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety, who will determine the amount of noise to which an employee is exposed. Management is required to notify employees exposed to an eight-hour average of 85 dB. Monitoring will be repeated whenever a change in protection, process, equipment, or controls increases noise exposures. However, the department must notify the Department of Public Safety whenever that change occurs. An evaluation of the strategies for reducing employee exposure and the effectiveness of this program will be completed on an annual basis.

## F. Record keeping

As required by law, supervisors and the Department of Environmental Health and Safety will maintain an accurate record of all employees' noise level testing results for two years and audiometric results until workers leave the University's employment.

The audiometric test record must include:

- Name and job classification of the employee
- Date of the audiogram
- Examiner's name
- Date of the last calibration of the audiometer
- Employee's most recent noise monitoring test

Additional questions and comments should be directed to the Department of Environmental Health and Safety.