

# Chapter 1 - Hearing Conservation Program

It has been shown that an eight hour time-weighted average exposure to 85 decibels or greater can have unfavorable effects on hearing. The Hearing Conservation Program has been designed to reduce hearing loss at the College of Agricultural Sciences. This program consists of:

- Hearing Protection
- Employee Training and Education
- Annual Audiogram
- Noise Monitoring
- Record keeping

## Hearing Protection

Person Protectors (approved earmuffs and ear plugs) shall 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, and ensure that employees wear the hearing protectors. Supervisors and managers can call EH&S' industrial Hygienist, at (737-2274) for assistance in choosing proper hearing protection and in fit-testing employees.

## 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. Initial training and annual training reminders will be posted on EH&S' safety training record keeping documentation computer based server. Training programs should be repeated annually for each employee included in the hearing conservation program. EH&S and participating departments will arrange to teach employees about the effects of noise, the advantages and disadvantages of hearing protectors, and the purpose and process of audiometric testing.

## Annual Audiogram

An audiologist will perform the audiometric test at no cost to participating employees. The employee's department is responsible for scheduling the initial exam (before the employee's job assignment begins) and the annual audiometric exam. Questions regarding audiometric testing should be directed to EH&S.

## **Noise Monitoring**

Monitoring will be performed by an industrial hygienist or a trained person who will determine the amount of noise to which an employee is exposed. Management is required to notify employees exposed at or above an eight-hour average of 85 decibels of the results of monitoring. Monitoring shall be repeated whenever a change in production, process, equipment, or controls, increase noise exposures. However, the department must notify EH&S whenever that change occurs.

Noise monitoring shall also be conducted at least every three years in suspected areas. If employees or supervisors suspect that anyone may be exposed to high noise levels, they are obligated to contact EH&S and request noise monitoring.

## **Record keeping**

As required by law, supervisors and EH&S shall maintain an accurate record of all employee's noise level testing results for two years and audiometric test results until workers leave the University's employ. The audiometric test records 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 can be directed to EH&S (737-2273).