



# *Hearing Conservation Guidelines*

14945 La Palma Drive Chino, CA 91710  
Office (909) 393-5419 Fax (909) 606-0163  
<http://secc-corp.com>

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## **Procedures**

Hearing protection is provided for all employees. A hearing protection device is anything that can be worn to reduce the level of sound entering the ear. You need to protect your ears when:

- Signs indicating hearing protection are required.
- The sound in your work area is irritating.
- You need to raise your voice to be heard by someone closer than two feet from you.
- There are short bursts of sound that can cause hearing damage.

Our normal work environments indicate that employees are not exposed to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels or higher. However, there are some work environments that may expose employees to limited periods of 85dBA or higher and the work area will be monitored by Tony Nichols or designee for exposure limits. Therefore we will make available to each employee ear plugs which will adequately protect an employee from such exposure or even protect them from an 8-hour exposure.

It is our responsibility to tell employees when ear protection is mandatory; it is up to each individual employee to determine when they need limited protection. If there is a standard threshold shift this program will be re-evaluated.

## **Selecting Hearing Protection Devices**

- Earplugs - Earplugs offer the most protection and if the fit snugly they are most effective. Roll the plug into a small diameter and place it well into the ear canal. After you have inserted it, hold the plug in your ear for a few seconds to ensure a good fit.
- Earmuffs - They have cushioned ear cups that form a seal around the outer ear. The cups of the earmuffs should be made of sponge to give a good seal. The seal they form around the ear limits their effectiveness.
- Headband plugs - Most of these plugs fit into the ear canal as well, but the headband ensures an even pressure on the ear tips. Some headbands have caps that fit over the ear canal instead of plugs. Although they have a headband, these can still be worn with eyeglasses and hard hats.

You the worker should select which hearing protection device is most effective for you based on the following:

- Your hearing ability
- Your exposure to noise
- Proper fit
- Communication needs
- Any other constraints specific to your job's tasks

## **When Hearing Protection is Mandatory**

In our effort to maintain an effective hearing protection for workers that are affected, we are establishing this program. This program includes the following special consideration for those employees exposed to greater than an averaged 85 dBA over an 8 hour workday (Time Weighted Average-TWA):

- Proper training concerning the fit, care and maintenance of hearing protection.
- Proper attenuation provided to the affected employees or representatives for the work area.
- Notification to all employees that hearing protection is mandatory for exposed workers.
- Hearing tests as required by the regulations.

When working in noise hazard areas, workers will be required to wear hearing protection devices (disposable insert plugs, muffs) so the attenuated noise level is less than 85dBA. The NNR (Noise Reduction Rating) level on the hearing protection shall be at least 30/35.

The primary objective of this hearing conservation program is to alleviate employee hearing loss as a result of job related noise exposure. If required we will have an outside vendor monitor for exposure and establish a baseline audiogram for exposed employees within 6 months of exposure or at time of hiring. Also a baseline audiogram will be conducted; at least 14 hours prior without exposure to workplace noise; an annual audiogram and if the standard threshold shift has occurred, we will notify employee within 21 days of determination in writing. All records will be maintained by Tony Nichols or designee.

## **Training**

### ***Reasons for Wearing a Hearing Protection Device***

- Compliance with Cal OSHA.
- Compliance with our company guidelines and/or our clients site requirements.
- Noise levels in the work area may damage hearing over a given time.
- To have a safe workplace.

### ***Ensure Earplugs and or Muffs fit properly***

- Different sizes and types are available.
- Comfort and effectiveness are important.
- Your voice will sound muffled or hollow when talking.
- Proper insertion technique - allow time for foam plugs to expand after insertion, muff cushion should fit comfortably and be flexible without losing the good seal around the ear.

### ***Proper cleaning and care of the Hearing Protection Device***

- Expandable foam ear plugs - Dispose of when dirty (could be several times a day).
- Preformed - Wash with warm water and mild soap.
- Muffs - Clean cushions with alcohol solution.
- Do not alter the hearing protection in any way, this will destroy their effectiveness.

### ***Contact for Replacement of Hearing Protection Device or Problems***

- Ask your supervisor for replacement hearing protection.
- Contact your supervisor if you have any questions, problems or concerns.

### ***Failure to Wear Hearing Protection Device as Required***

- Hearing protection is required on all workers using the sprayer and working around the mixer. Failure to wear hearing protection may lead to termination.

The training will be recorded as required by the regulations and repeated annually for each employee included in the hearing conservation program. This training will be documented and any and all testing documented and retained per the regulations. Information provided in the training program shall be updated to be consistent with changes in protective equipment, work processes and company policies/procedures.