OSHA Hearing Conservation Booklet



A 15 page overview of OSHAs requirements on occupational noise exposure monitoring audiometric testing and evaluations.

What is occupational noise exposure?

Noise, or unwanted sound, is one of the most pervasive occupational health problems. It is a by-product of many industrial processes. Sound consists of pressure changes in a medium (usually air), caused by vibration or turbulence. These pressure changes produce waves emanating away from the turbulent or vibrating source. Exposure to high levels of noise causes hearing loss and may cause other harmful health effects as well. The extent of damage depends primarily on the intensity of the noise and the duration of the exposure.

Noise-induced hearing loss can be temporary or permanent. Temporary hearing loss results from short-term exposures to noise, with normal hearing returning after period of rest. Generally, prolonged exposure to high noise levels over a period of time gradually causes permanent damage.

OSHA’s hearing conservation program is designed to…