

Noise Exposure and Hearing Conservation Plan - Appendix A: Definitions

Action Level – An 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels measured on the A-scale, slow response, or equivalently, a dose of 50%.

Administrative Control – A secondary option for achieving a reduction in occupational noise prior to reliance on personal protective equipment (PPE), e.g., job rotation, work procedures, preventative maintenance, etc.

Attenuation – A term that refers to the reduction of noise intensity; the opposite of amplification.

Audiogram – A chart, graph or table resulting from an audiometric test showing an employee's hearing threshold levels as a function of frequency.

Baseline Audiogram – The audiogram against which future audiograms are compared.

dBA – An expression of the relative loudness of sounds in air as perceived by the human ear. The dBA scale reflects measurements that emphasize higher frequencies, closer to human hearing.

Decibel – A unit of measurement of sound level.

Engineering Control – The primary means to achieve a reduction in occupational noise prior to reliance on PPE; e.g., substitution, use of distance, enclosures, sound dampening devices, etc.

Hearing Protectors – Various forms of PPE; ear caps, ear plugs and ear muffs.

Hertz – A unit of measurement of frequency or pitch of a sound, numerically equal to cycles per second.

Noise Dosimeter – An instrument that integrates a function of sound pressure over a period of time in such a manner that it directly indicates a noise dose.

Noise Reduction Rating (NRR)– A unit to determine the effectiveness of hearing protectors to decrease sound exposures within a given work environment.

OR OSHA – The State of Oregon's Occupational Safety & Health Administration.

Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL)– An 8-hour time weighted average level of 90 decibels on the A-scale, or a dose of 100%.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Equipment worn on the body to protect various parts of the body; with respect to hearing, personal protective equipment includes all hearing protectors.

Representative Exposure – Measurements of an employee's noise dose or 8-hour time-weighted average sound level that the employers deem to be representative of the exposures of other employees in the workplace.

Sound Level Meter – An instrument for the measurement of sound.

Standard Threshold Shift – A change in an employee’s hearing as measured during an audiometric examination; an average hearing loss of 10 dB at 2000 Hz, 3000 Hz and 4000 Hz in either ear when compared to a baseline audiogram.

Time Weighted Average (TWA) Sound Level – That sound level, which if constant over an 8-hour exposure, would result in the same noise dose as is measured.