Hearing Conservation Program

For

<Insert Organization Name>

Adopted
<Insert date policy is adopted>
I. Introduction
As part of Organization’s overall safety and health program, a Hearing Conservation Program has been established. The program is designed to comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Occupational Noise Exposure standard (1910.95).

II. Objective
The objective of the program is to prevent work related hearing loss, through compliance with 1910.95

III. Scope
This program applies to all employees who are exposed to occupational noise at or above 85 decibels (dBA) as measured on the A-weighted scale, slow response.

IV. Responsibilities
A. <Insert name/title of program coordinator> is the designated Hearing Conservation Program Coordinator, and is responsible for the following:
   1. Develop and administer the written Hearing Conservation Program.
   2. Conduct, or contract a professional group to perform, a sound level survey of the facility to determine what areas (departments), and which employees may be exposed to noise at or above 85 dBA.
   3. Post warning signs that state hearing protection is required in areas that have documented noise levels at or above 85 dBA.
   4. Perform, or contract a professional group to perform, annual audiometric testing for all employees exposed to noise levels at or above 85 dBA. Ensure that employees take the necessary precautions to meet the 14-hour minimum requirement without exposure to excessive non-occupational and occupational noise before their audiometric testing. (Hearing protection may be used to satisfy this requirement.)
   5. Annually train, or contract a professional group to train, all employees who are required to work in areas where noise levels equal or exceed 85 dBA. Ensure that all area supervisors and employees have been trained in the selection, fit, use, and care of hearing protection, as well as the effects of noise on hearing.
   6. Enforce the use of hearing protection in required areas.
   7. Investigate feasible engineering and administrative controls when employee exposure to noise equals or exceeds 85 dBA.
   8. Post a copy of the OSHA 1910.95 - Occupational Noise Exposure Standard in a prominent location for all employees to view.

B. Supervisors are responsible for the following:
   1. Ensure that employees take the necessary precautions to meet the 14-hour minimum requirement without exposure to excessive non-occupational and occupational noise before their audiometric testing. (Hearing protection may be used to satisfy this requirement.)
   2. Ensure that all employees under their supervision, that are covered by the Hearing Conservation Program, have been trained on the selection, fit, use, and care of hearing protection, as well as the effects of noise on hearing.
   3. Enforce the use of hearing protection in required areas.
   4. Wear hearing protection at all times in areas designated as hearing protection required.

C. All Employees are responsible for the following:
   1. Participate in annual hearing conservation training sessions as required.
2. Wear hearing protection at all times in areas designated as hearing protection required.
3. Participate in annual audiometric testing if required.
4. Comply with the 14-hour minimum requirement without exposure to excessive non-occupational and occupational noise before their audiometric testing. (Hearing protection may be used to satisfy this requirement.)
5. Immediately notify your supervisor and/or the Hearing Conservation Program Coordinator of any problems encountered with hearing protection or their hearing.

V. Sound Level Survey
A. The Hearing Conservation Program Coordinator will ensure that a sound level survey will be performed at least every <insert number of years> years, or when there is a change in operations or upon receiving an employee complaint regarding the possibility of excessive noise. Sound level monitoring will determine what areas and which employees may be exposed to noise at or above 85 dBA.

B. Employees will be notified in writing of the sound level survey results.

C. Sound level survey procedure:
   1. A Type II sound level meter set on the A-weighted scale, slow response will be used to determine noise levels. All sound level measuring equipment will be calibrated in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions before and after each use. The equipment will be factory calibrated as per the manufacturer’s recommendation.
   2. A facility layout map may be used to document the noise level readings. All machines, air handlers, fans, and other equipment that are in operation and are contributing to the noise level in the area should be noted on the map.
   3. All continuous, intermittent and impulse noises from 80 to 130 dBA will be integrated into the noise level measurement.
   4. Variations of noise at intervals of one second or less are considered continuous.
   5. Exposure to impulse or impact noise will not exceed 140 dBA.
   6. Using a noise dosimeter, individual or job position exposure monitoring will be performed, where necessary, on all employees whose noise exposure equals 85 dBA or more. This monitoring will establish an eight-hour time-weighted average (TWA) exposure to noise. Employees who are exposed at or above an eight-hour TWA of 85 dBA will be notified of the noise level monitoring results in writing. Where circumstances such as high worker mobility, significant variations in noise level, or a significant component of impulse noise make area sampling inappropriate, representative (personal) sampling will be used to determine noise levels.

VI. Audiometric Testing
A. Annual audiometric testing will be provided for all employees whose exposure to occupational noise equals or exceeds an eight-hour TWA of 85 dBA. Audiometric tests will be provided to employees at no cost.

B. Audiometric tests will be performed by technicians who are certified by the Council of Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation. These tests will be pure tone, air conduction, and hearing threshold examinations with test frequencies including as a minimum 500, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, and 6,000 Hertz. Tests at each frequency will be taken separately for each ear.
C. A baseline audiogram will be established for all employees within 6 MONTHS of any exposure to noise at or above 85 dBA. The test will be preceded by at least 14 hours without exposure to excessive non-occupational and occupational noise. Hearing protection may be used to satisfy this requirement.

D. Evaluation of audiogram:
   1. Each current audiogram will be compared to their baseline audiogram to determine if a Standard Threshold Shift (STS) has occurred. An STS is a change in the current audiogram compared to the baseline of an average of 10 dB or more (and at least 25 dB above audiometric zero) at the 2,000, 3,000, and 4,000-Hertz levels in either ear.
   2. If the annual audiogram shows that the employee has suffered an STS, or significant improvement over their baseline audiogram, the employee will be re-tested within 30 days. The re-test will be substituted for the annual audiogram, if it confirms a persistent STS or indicates significant improvement over the baseline audiogram.

E. Audiogram follow-up:
   1. After the comparison of the current audiogram to the baseline is complete, the employee will be informed of the audiometric test results in writing within 21 days of the determination. The program coordinator will present the results to the employee in a face-to-face meeting. The information will include their current hearing status, a comparison of the current audiometric test to the previous test and baseline, and notification of an STS if one has occurred.
   2. If the follow up audiologist determines that an STS is work-related or aggravated by occupational noise, the following steps will be taken:
      a. Employees not using hearing protection will be fitted with hearing protection, trained in its use and care, and required to use it.
      b. Employees already using hearing protection will be refitted and retrained in its use, and provided with hearing protection that offers greater protection if necessary.
      c. Employees may need to be referred for a clinical audiological evaluation or an ontological examination if additional testing is necessary, to determine if there is a medical pathology of the ear that is caused or aggravated by wearing the hearing protection. Additional tests will be provided at no cost to the employee.

F. If an employee is diagnosed as having an STS of 10 dB or more in either ear, this will be recorded on the facility's OSHA 300 Log of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses. Occupational hearing loss is recorded on the illness side of the Log in column M5 – Hearing Loss.

VII. Hearing Protection
   A. A variety of suitable hearing protection will be made available to all employees who:
      1. Are exposed to an eight-hour TWA of 85 dBA or greater;
      2. Have not yet established a baseline audiogram;
      3. Have experienced an STS; or
      4. Want to wear hearing protection to protect their hearing.

   B. Hearing protection will be provided to employees at no cost and replaced as necessary.
C. Hearing protection will be evaluated for the specific noise environments in which it will be used, and will reduce noise exposure to less than 85 dBA. To evaluate the effectiveness of hearing protection for a given job, subtract seven from the Noise Reduction Rating (NRR), listed by the manufacturer on the hearing protection package. Then subtract the remainder from the TWA determined during the sound level survey. The final value will be less than 85 in order to assure employee exposure to noise is less than 85 dBA. If the result is more than 85, hearing protection with a higher NRR rating will be required for the job.

D. All managers and area supervisors will ensure that employees working in areas where noise levels are 85 dBA or more, employees who have not yet established a baseline audiogram, or employees who have experienced an STS, wear hearing protection.

VIII. Employee Training
A. All employees who are exposed to noise at or above an eight-hour TWA of 85 dBA will participate in annual hearing conservation training.

B. The Hearing Conservation Program Coordinator will ensure the training includes the following:
   1. The harmful effects of noise on hearing.
   2. The results of the bi-annual workplace sound level survey.
   3. The purpose of hearing protection, advantages, noise reduction ratings of various types, instruction on the selection, fit, use, and care of hearing protection.
   4. The purpose, procedure and explanation of the baseline audiogram and annual audiometric testing.

C. Copies of the facility’s written Hearing Conservation Program and any other related materials will be made available to all affected employees.

D. All training sessions will be documented on a training log. The documentation will include the employee’s name, signature, department, name of the instructor, date of the training, and an outline of what was presented by the instructor.

IX. Recordkeeping
A. The Hearing Conservation Program Coordinator will retain all sound level survey information including dosimetry results indefinitely. The records will include the following:
   1. Location, date, time of measurement, person performing the noise level measurements and results of the noise level readings.
   2. Name of the employee and job title or classification (if dosimetry was performed).
   3. Type, model, serial number and date of calibration of noise level measuring equipment.

B. Audiometric testing records will be maintained for each employee indefinitely. A record will be established for each employee and contain the following information:
   1. The employee’s name, job classification or title, noise exposure level, baseline audiogram, and most recent audiometric information.
   2. Location, date and name of the person administering the audiometric test.
   3. The hearing acuity levels obtained at each frequency.
   4. A systematic analysis, preferably using computerized techniques, comparing results of the current audiogram to the previous audiogram, including the baseline.
5. Percent of hearing loss (STS) for each ear.
6. The model, make and serial number of the audiometer, the standard to which it was calibrated, and date of last calibration.
7. Personal and work histories indicating significant noise exposure(s) prior to employment with the Organization and record of non-occupational noise exposure.
8. An interpretive summary of the physician's findings and recommendations, whenever follow-up medical evaluations are recommended.

C. The audiogram will become part of the employee’s permanent or medical record. Noise abatement records documenting the effectiveness and cost of engineering controls designed to reduce workplace noise, and documenting process/equipment changes that made an impact on noise exposure levels will be maintained even if controls were never installed, or if noise reduction was not the primary reason for the project. These records will include:
   1. Workplace noise levels before and after abatement.
   2. Cost of design, purchase, installation, operation, and maintenance of the engineering controls implemented and process/equipment changes made.
# Employee Sound Level Survey Results

Employee Name: ____________________________

Job Title: ____________________________ Shift: ___________

Sound Level: ____________ Date of Monitoring: ____________

Pursuant to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Standard, 29 CFR 1910.95, a sound level survey was performed in your work area. The results of the sound level survey indicate that the noise level you are exposed to is at or above 85 dBA. This notice is to inform you that you will participate in the Hearing Conservation Program. This program includes, but is not limited to, annual audiograms and training on the use of hearing protection.

I acknowledge that I have received the sound level survey results for my work area.

Employee’s Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________

Surveyor’s Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________

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Our safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are made solely to assist your organization in reducing hazards and the potential of hazards and accidents. These recommendations were developed from conditions observed and information provided at the time of our visit. They do not attempt to identify every possible loss potential, hazard or risk, nor do they guarantee that workplace accidents will be prevented. These safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are not a substitute for ongoing, well-researched internal safety and risk management programs. This report does not warrant that the property inspected and its operations are compliant with any law, rule or regulation.

United Heartland is the marketing name for United Wisconsin Insurance Company, a member of AF Group. All policies are underwritten by a licensed insurer subsidiary of AF Group.
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Employee Sound Level Survey Results

Employee Name: ____________________________________________

Job Title: _____________________________________________ Shift: __________

Sound Level: ____________________________ Date of Monitoring: __________

Pursuant to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Standard, 29 CFR 1910.95, a sound level survey was conducted in your work area. The results of the sound level survey indicate that the noise level you are exposed to is **below 85 dBA**. At this time, no further action is necessary. If the noise in your work area increases, please contact the safety coordinator so arrangements for another sound level survey can be performed.

I acknowledge that I have received the sound level survey results for my work area.

Employee’s Signature: _______________________________ Date: __________

Surveyor’s Signature: _______________________________ Date: __________
Audiometric Testing Results

I have been shown the results of my recent audiometric test along with any information regarding any threshold shift. I understand the information and have no further questions on this matter.

Signed: _______________________________  Dated: ____________________

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Hearing Conservation Training Log

Instructor: ____________________________  Date: ____________________________

I have trained the employees listed below on the **Occupational Noise Exposure Standard, 29 CFR 1910.95**. A copy of the training outline is attached.

Instructor’s Signature: ____________________________

I have received training in this topic, understand the information and have no further questions regarding this information.

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