

Title:	Hearing Conservation Program
Adopted on:	August 5, 2020
Adopted by:	City Manager
Jurisdiction of Procedure:	Safety Coordinator
Revision Date:	March 4, 2021

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Hearing Conservation Program is to take all reasonably practicable steps to reduce noise levels to an acceptable level in all areas where employees may be required or permitted to work, to prevent hearing loss due to excessive noise at City of Weyburn worksites by minimizing the employee’s occupational noise exposure, and to train employees in the hazards associated with noise exposure and the hearing protection available.

2. NOISE LEVEL MEASUREMENTS

In every area where workers are required or permitted to work and the noise level may frequently exceed 80dBA, the City of Weyburn will ensure that the noise level is measured in accordance with an approved method. The City of Weyburn will ensure that any area in which the measurements taken are in excess of 80dBA is clearly marked by a sign indicating the range of noise levels. A competent person must evaluate the sources of noise and recommend corrective actions. The measurements, evaluation and recommendations are to be documented.

3. PERMISSIBLE EXPOSURE LIMITS

3.1 Legislation

The *Occupational Health & Safety Regulations, 2020* Part 8, deals with noise control and hearing conservation and Part 7 Section 14 deals with exposure to noise. These regulations respecting noise and hearing conservation will be met as a minimum expectation.

3.2 City of Weyburn Permissible Exposure Limit

Research has shown that a significant percentage of the working population may suffer hearing loss above 85 dB. Therefore, City of Weyburn requires employees working on 8-hour shifts to wear hearing protection when the 8-hour time weighted average noise exposure level exceeds 85 dB. Employees working a 12-hour shift shall wear hearing protection when the 12-hour time weighted average noise exposure level exceeds 83 dB.

NOISE EXPOSURE TIMES	
Noise Level (dB)	Exposure Time (hearing protectors not used)
83 dB	12.5 hours
85 dB	8 hours
88 dB	4 hours
91 dB	2 hours
94 dB	1 hour
97 dB	30 minutes
100 dB	15 minutes

4. HEARING PROTECTION**4.1 Hearing Protection**

Where a worker's occupational noise exposure is or is believed to be between 80 – 85 dB, the City of Weyburn will provide approved hearing protection. Where practicable, the City of Weyburn will ensure that hearing protection provided reduces the noise level received into the worker's ears to not more than 85 dB. Where it is not practicable to comply, the City of Weyburn will ensure that hearing protection provided reduces the noise level received into the worker's ears to the lowest level that is practicable and document the steps taken. Both earplugs and muffs should be worn when a worker's daily time-weighted noise exposure exceeds 100dBA.

5. AUDIOMETRIC TESTING**5.1 New Employees**

All new employees who may be exposed to noise levels in excess of 85 dB for an 8-hour period or 83 dB for a 12-hour period will be provided with an opportunity to have an audiometric (hearing) test to determine the base line audiogram.

5.2 Routine Audiometric Testing

The City of Weyburn encourages employees exposed to noise in excess of 85 dB for an 8-hour period or 83 dB for a 12-hour period to undergo audiometric testing every 2 years. The City of Weyburn encourages employees exposed to noise levels in excess of 90 dB to undergo audiometric testing annually.

5.3 Medical Referral

The City of Weyburn encourages employees showing an audiogram with a permanent bilateral threshold shift of 5 dB or more to seek specialist medical services to determine if the cause of the hearing loss is noise related. If the hearing loss is found to be noise related, review the employee's training, use of hearing protection and occupational noise exposure level on an individual basis to ensure adequate protection is provided.

5.4 Audiometric Testing Records

The examining physician shall keep results of audiometric tests for the duration of the employee's employment plus 5 years.

6. TRAINING

All City of Weyburn employees exposed to noise levels in excess of 80 dB will receive training on the following subjects:

- Physics of noise
- Effect of noise on hearing
- Use & Maintenance of hearing protection
- Noise test methods
- Permissible noise levels
- Audiometric tests
- Noise hazards

7. NOISE CONTROLS

Part 8 section 2 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020* states:

“An employer, contractor or owner shall ensure that:

- (a) all new places of employment are designed and constructed so as to achieve the lowest reasonably practicable noise level;
- (b) any alteration, renovation or repair to an existing place of employment is made so as to achieve the lowest reasonably practicable noise level;
and
- (c) all new equipment to be used at a place of employment is designed and constructed so as to achieve the lowest reasonably practicable noise level.”

Consider the following approaches to reducing noise exposure based on practicality and effectiveness:

Elimination

Eliminate or remove excessive noise level sources from work areas wherever practical.

Substitution

Replace equipment producing excessive noise levels with less noisy equipment wherever practical.

Engineering

Use engineering controls such as insulation, baffles, enclosures, and mufflers to reduce noise to acceptable levels, where elimination or substitution of noisy equipment is not practical.

Administration

Consider administrative controls such as reduction of employee exposure time and scheduling work during non-operating times.

Personal Protective Equipment

Consider, only as a last resort when alternatives are impractical or ineffective, personal protective equipment such as earplugs and hearing protection muffs.

8. HEARING CONSERVATION PLAN

If noise level surveys are completed and occupational noise exposure levels are determined to exceed 85 dB L_{ex} for 10 or more workers, the City of Weyburn in consultation with the Occupational Health Committee (OHC) shall develop a Hearing Conservation Plan and appoint a supervisor to oversee the plan. This plan shall be reviewed and where necessary, revised every three years.

9. HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM & PLAN EVALUATION

In consultation with the OHC, the effectiveness of the Hearing Conservation Program shall be reviewed and where necessary revised every three years to ensure that the employees are being provided with adequate hearing protection. Periodically consult the employees wearing the hearing protection about discomfort, interference with communications, interference with job performance and their confidence in the hearing protection's effectiveness. The training program will be reviewed annually or as legislation changes or new information is made available.