



City Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

## **THE CITY OF POMONA**

### **SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **HEARING CONSERVATION POLICY**

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#### **I. PURPOSE**

This Policy describes the general requirements of the City of Pomona's hearing conservation program, and provides information and guidance on the proper selection, instruction, and use of hearing protective devices.

#### **II. APPLICABILITY**

This Policy applies to all City employees.

#### **III. POLICY**

It is the policy of the City of Pomona that all aspects of Cal/OSHA's requirements for a Hearing Conservation Program, *California General Industry Safety Orders, Title 8, Subchapter 7, Group 15, Article 105, Sections 5095 – 5100*, shall be met or exceeded.

#### **IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

*"Action Level"* – an 8-hour time weighted average of 85 decibels or above measured as an 8-hour TWA (time weighted average).

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

*"Baseline Audiogram"* – an initial audiogram to which future audiograms are compared.

*"Decibel (dB)"* – unit of measurement of sound level.

*"dBA (Decibels A Weighted)"* – a unit of measurement of sound level corrected to the A-weighted scale, as defined by ANSI S1.4-1971.

*"Hertz (Hz)"* – unit of measurement of frequency, numerically equal to cycles per second.

*"Noise Dosimeter"* – an instrument that integrates a function of sound pressure at a chosen point in the environment or on a person, over a period of time in such a manner that it directly

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indicates a noise dose.

*“Noise Reduction Rating (NRR)”* – a measurement of the ability for a given protective device to attenuate noise as a function of frequency and intensity. The NRR must be shown on the hearing protector package.

*“Representative Exposure”* – measurements of an employee’s noise dose or 8-hour time-weighted average sound level that the employer deems to be representative of exposures of other employees in the workplace.

*“Standard Threshold Shift”* – the change in hearing threshold relative to the baseline audiogram of an average of 10 dB or more at 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hz in either ear.

**V. RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. Supervisors shall:

1. Ensure that hearing protection is available to, and worn by, employees in areas where exposure equals or exceeds the Action Level; and
2. Report to the Safety Officer any changes in working conditions that may result in a change in the noise exposure to employees.

B. Employees shall:

1. Follow the prescribed elements of the hearing conservation program;
2. Attend training on hearing conservation;
3. Complete an annual City paid audiogram.

C. Safety Officer shall:

1. Issue, revise, and maintain this Policy;
2. Complete noise exposure determinations and assist in selecting proper hearing protection; and
3. Provide training in hearing conservation to all affected employees.

**VI. PROCEDURES**

A. Workplace Monitoring

When information indicates that an employee’s exposure equals or exceeds the Action Level, a monitoring program will be implemented. The monitoring program is designed to determine those employees who are to be included in the hearing conservation program, and to enable proper selection of hearing protectors.

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The Safety Officer or a Certified Industrial Hygienist shall conduct the workplace monitoring. Either area monitoring or personal monitoring that is representative of the employee's exposure shall meet the monitoring requirement. Monitoring shall be repeated when there is a change in equipment, engineering controls, or if the adequacy of the hearing protection comes into question. The City shall provide affected employees or their representatives with an opportunity to observe any measurements of employee exposure which are conducted. The City shall notify each employee exposed at or above the Action Level of the results of the monitoring.

Instruments used to measure employee noise exposure shall be calibrated before and after each use to ensure that measurements are accurate. The City will use an A-weighted sound level meter or noise dosimeter to conduct the monitoring. Noise exposure measurements shall be retained for two (2) years.

B. Audiometric Testing

Baseline audiometric testing shall be carried out as part of this program. Annual retesting shall be given to those employees exposed to noise at levels that equal or exceed the Action Level as determined by the Safety Officer. The program shall be provided at no cost to employees.

The following job titles have been identified as having occupational exposure to noise in excess of the Action Level of 85 db(A). Each of these employees will receive a baseline and an annual audiogram.

- Park Maintenance Worker II (Tree Trimmer)
- Public Works Maintenance Crew Leader
- Public Works Maintenance Worker I
- Public Works Maintenance Worker II
- Senior Equipment Operator
- Water Worker I
- Water Worker II

Testing and retesting shall be preceded by a 14-hour "quiet period" without exposure to workplace noise prior to the test. This requirement may be met by wearing hearing protectors, which will reduce the employee's exposure to a sound level of 80 db(A) or below. Supervisors shall advise employees to avoid high levels of non-occupational noise for a similar time period prior to the test.

Employees will be given the results of the audiometric tests. The City shall maintain these records for a period of 30 years. Each employee's annual audiogram shall be compared to that employee's baseline audiogram to determine if the audiogram is valid and if a standard

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threshold shift has occurred.

C. Use of Hearing Protection

80 Hearing Protectors shall be made available to all employees exposed to an 8-hour time weighted average of 85 db(A) or more. The Safety Officer shall evaluate the attenuation afforded by the hearing protection for the specific environment where the protector is used. Hearing protections shall attenuate exposure to at least an 8-hour time weighted average of 85 db(A) or attenuate exposure at least to an 8-hour time weighted average of db(A) for employees who have experienced a standard threshold shift. Hearing protection is required for employees whose audiograms show a significant threshold shift, as recommended by the City's medical consultant. The adequacy of hearing protection will be re-evaluated whenever employee noise exposures increase to levels where the hearing protection may no longer be satisfactory.

D. Training

All employees who are designated to participate in the hearing conservation program shall participate in a training program that includes as a minimum:

1. Effects of noise on hearing;
2. Purpose of hearing protection; its advantages and disadvantages; attenuation provided by the various types; and instructions on selection, fitting, use and care;
3. Specific nature of operations/areas where excessive noise levels could occur; and
4. The purpose of audiometric testing, and an explanation of the test procedures.

In addition, supervisors shall remind employees, through the tailgate safety meetings, of the areas and equipment where hearing protection is required.

E. Record Retention

The City of Pomona shall retain all noise exposure measurement records for two (2) years. Audiometric test records shall be retained for the duration of the affected employee's employment.

All records required above shall be provided upon written request to employees, former employees, representatives designated by the employee, and any authorized representative of the Chief of Cal/OSHA.

**VII. ACTION**

This revised Policy is effective 2/2/07.