



Occupational Exposure to Noise Fact Sheet

Noise is one of the most pervasive problems in today's occupational environment, causing gradual hearing loss in workers in a wide variety of occupations. Because of this hazard, OSHA has developed standards designed to protect workers who are occupationally exposed to excessive noise. The OSHA noise standards (29 CFR 1910.95 and 29 CFR 1926.52) are enforced at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) by the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL).

Workers who are exposed to a time-weighted average of 85 decibels (A-scale) or more for an eight-hour exposure are considered to have occupational noise exposure. In compliance with the IDOL-adopted OSHA standards, UIUC has developed a Hearing Conservation Program that provides policies and guidance to protect workers from occupational noise. All employees shall adhere to the Hearing Conservation Program as applicable. For more information, contact the Division of Safety and Compliance (265-9828 or safetyandcompliance@illinois.edu).

Each campus unit with occupationally-exposed employees is responsible for maintaining a written standard operating procedure (SOP) that gives specific information regarding unit procedures for implementing the Hearing Conservation Program. A sample SOP is found in the Appendices of the Hearing Conservation Program. Upon request, a safety and health professional from the Department of Occupational Safety and Health will provide assistance in the development of unit-specific SOPs.

Per the OSHA Noise Standards, all employees who are occupationally exposed to noise as defined in the Hearing Conservation Program must be provided initial and annual training. In addition, hearing protection must be worn and audiometric testing must be conducted annually. These requirements and others are detailed in the Hearing Conservation Program.

Questions concerning occupational exposure to noise should be directed to the Division of Safety and Compliance, (217) 265-9828 or safetyandcompliance@illinois.edu.