

Hearing for  
**Life**  
l'ouïe pour  
**la vie**

# Audit Tool

## Noise Control and Hearing Conservation (NCHC)

**WSIB**  
ONTARIO  
**CSPAAT**

Workplace Safety &  
Insurance Board  
Commission de la sécurité  
professionnelle et de l'assurance  
contre les accidents du travail

# Noise Control & Hearing Conservation Program Audit Tool

This audit tool will help you to determine if your Noise Control & Hearing Conservation (NCHC) program is really working or, if problems exist, which elements or departments need improvement.

Completion of this audit may involve participation of differing functions and positions in the organization. Where available, the person(s) responsible for this audit should bring in the appropriate resources, such as: management and supervisors; company nurse; JHSC/employee representative; NCHC program leader; purchasing; audiometric technician; and others familiar with company standards and procedures.

It will help you to:

- Assess the completeness and quality of the program's components; and
- Evaluate noise exposure and the audiometric data for both individuals and groups of employees exposed to hearing hazards.

Use this audit, along with the Guide, to

maintain and update your records. The information you provide is confidential and intended to assist in the successful implementation of the company program.

Please check off those components of the program that are in place. Where they are not, or only partially implemented and successful, record your recommended action plan, who will implement the corrections, and a target date for completion.

Resources to assist your action plan are located in the Guide to Noise Control & Hearing Conservation. Electronic copies of this audit may be obtained at [www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca).

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# Leadership

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## Company Standards

Standards and expectations have been defined for:

No.	Result	Description	Action Planned	Who	Start	Finish
1.1	<p><b>yes</b> <b>no</b> <b>partial</b></p>	Noise exposure standard/ guideline for noise levels and exposures				
1.2		Supervisor roles and accountabilities				
1.3		NCHC program administrator or alternate				
1.4		JHSC/H&S representative role				
1.5		Purchasing policies				
1.6		Employee roles and expectations				
1.7		Team member				
1.8		Training content and reinforcement				
1.9		Assessment mechanisms and record keeping				
1.10		Reviews include work scheduling, assignments, and approval for high-risk work				

# Management Standards

No.	Result	Description	Action Planned	Who	Start	Finish
2.1	<p><b>yes</b> <b>no</b> <b>partial</b></p>	Dedicated resources are available for hearing loss prevention program evaluation (i.e., trained individuals and computer facilities).				
2.2		Program implementers provide trend and aggregate information, are knowledgeable in database analysis, and are committed to seeking out elusive information with all members of the hearing conservation team.				
2.3		Management shows a willingness to acknowledge and solve problems that arise.				
2.4		Employees provide feedback on the program's merits or shortcomings to management and participate in the achievement of the improvements.				
2.5		Supervisors have the required knowledge to supervise the use and care of hearing protection by employees.				
2.6		Supervisors serve as role models by wearing hearing protectors in appropriate areas.				
2.7		Supervisors counsel employees who resist wearing hearing protectors or fail to show up for hearing tests (audiograms) on the reasons for hearing protection and tests.				

2.8	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Human resources policies and education are enforced when employees repeatedly refuse to wear hearing protectors.
2.9	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisors ensure that noise warning signs are posted and visible in noisy work areas as required in regulations.

### Administrative Standards


No.	Result	Description	Action Planned	Who	Start	Finish
3.1	<b>yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>no</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>partial</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	Have there been any changes in legal regulations or noise exposure/standard guidelines? If so, have the hearing conservation program's policies been modified to reflect these changes?				
3.2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are there copies of company policies and guidelines regarding the hearing conservation program available to those who implement the program elements?				
3.3	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are the necessary materials and supplies being ordered with a minimum of delay?				
3.4	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Is the performance of key NCHC program staff evaluated periodically? If such performance is found to be less than acceptable, are steps taken to correct the situation?				
3.5	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Has the failure to hear warning shouts or alarms been tied to any accidents or injuries? If so, have remedial steps been taken?				

# Recognizing Noise

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## Measurements

No.	Result	Description	Action Planned	Who	Start	Finish
4.1	<p><b>yes</b> <b>no</b> <b>partial</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are noise measurements assessed against company standards, which are established in advance?				
4.2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are Type 2 (or better) sound level meters and dosimeters used when completing a workplace noise assessment?				
4.3	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Was the purpose of each noise study clearly stated?				
4.4	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are the results of the noise survey communicated to supervisors?				
4.5	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are results communicated to the appropriate personnel, especially when follow-up actions are required?				
4.6	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Were essential/critical noise studies performed in the workplace to identify potential high noise areas?				
4.7	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Have noise-exposed employees been notified of their exposures and apprised of auditory risks?				
4.8	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are the results of an individual's audiogram kept confidential?				

4.9		<p>Are results entered into health/medical records of noise-exposed employees and available only to personnel covered by the Health Disciplines Act (e.g., Medical Doctor, Occupational Health Nurse, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist)?</p>
4.10		<p>If noise maps exist, does the appropriate staff use them?</p>
4.11		<p>Have there been changes in areas, equipment, or processes that have altered noise exposure? Have follow-up noise measurements been conducted?</p>
4.12		<p>Are noise measurement results considered when contemplating the purchase of new equipment? Modification of the facility? Relocation of employees?</p>
4.13		<p>Are appropriate steps taken to include (or exclude) employees in the hearing conservation programs whose exposures have changed significantly?</p>
4.14		<p>Are high-risk jobs identified (e.g., jobs with combined noise and exposure to solvents, heat, vibration, or gaseous metals)?</p>

# Training and Content

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No.	Result	Description	Action Planned	Who	Start	Finish
5.1	<p><b>yes</b> <b>no</b> <b>partial</b></p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Has training on company standards and regulations (e.g., personal protective equipment, reporting, control measures) been conducted at least once a year?				
5.2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Were the learning objectives for the training met?				
5.3	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Is the content revised periodically?				
5.4	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Was the success of each training program evaluated?				
5.5	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are managers, supervisors, and occupational health department employees (if applicable) directly involved?				
5.6	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are regulations, handouts, and employee newsletters used as supplements?				
5.7	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are personal counseling sessions conducted for employees having problems with hearing protection devices or showing hearing threshold shifts?				

5.8



Follow-up protocol after audiogram: If there is a change in your hearing, you need to know why it occurred:

- medical problems such as ear wax, infection, or disease
- inadequate hearing protection
- off-the-job noise exposures

5.9



Is each hearing protector user required to demonstrate that he or she understands how to use and care for the protector?

Were the results documented?

# Assessing Noise

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reference  
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## Monitoring Audiometry and Record Keeping

No.	Result	Description	Action Planned	Who	Start	Finish
6.1	<p><b>yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>no</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>partial</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Has the audiometric technician (internal or contracted) been adequately trained, certified, and re-certified as necessary?				
6.2	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Have the internal/contracted technicians performed an audiometric test, instructed and consulted the employee, and kept appropriate records?				
6.3	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Are the records clear, concise, complete, and dated?				
6.4	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Have follow-up actions been documented?				
6.5	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	When tested, are employee hearing threshold levels reasonably consistent from test to test? If not, are the reasons for inconsistencies investigated promptly?				
6.6	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Does the technicians' documentation show that the background sound levels in the audiometer room were low enough to permit valid testing? (ANSI S3.6-1969 recommends measurements to a minimum of 10 dB for industrial screening purposes.)				

6.7



Does your Hearing Conservation documentation include the following PERMANENT records?

- Audiograms with history
- Audiometer calibration records/SLM and audiometric calibration records
- Audiometric technician certification
- Booth validation records
- Sound surveys/maps and dosimeter readings
- Noise controls conducted
- New equipment noise specifications
- Types of hearing protection used with Noise Reduction Rating listed
- Educational seminars with content and date conducted

6.8



Are the annual test results of employees compared to baseline to identify the presence of a standard threshold shift?

6.9



Are employees who incur a standard threshold shift (STS) notified in writing within 21 days?

6.10



Is the annual incidence of standard threshold shift greater than 5% percent? If so, are problem areas pinpointed and remedial steps taken?

6.11



Are the results of aggregate audiometric tests communicated to supervisors and managers as well as employees?

6.12



Are audiometric trends (deteriorations) being identified, both in individuals and in groups of employees? OSHA identifies a standard threshold shift as a 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. For groups of employees, NIOSH recommends no more than 5% of employees show a 15 dB significant threshold shift, same ear, and same frequency.

6.13



Are any inconsistencies in group audiogram results investigated promptly?

6.14



Do records show that audiometer calibration results meet the standards (e.g., biological, daily, and/or annual results)?

6.15



Has corrective action been taken if the rate of no-shows for audiometric test appointments is more than 5%?

# Controlling Noise

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## Engineering and Administrative Controls

No.	Result	Description	Action Planned	Who	Start	Finish
7.1	<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <b>yes</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <b>no</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <b>partial</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>	Have noise control needs been prioritized?				
7.2	<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div>	Has the cost-effectiveness of various options been addressed?				
7.3	<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div>	Are the records clear, concise, complete, and dated?				
7.4	<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div>	Have employees and supervisors been counseled on the operation and maintenance of noise control devices?				
7.5	<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div>	Are employees and supervisors consulted on various approaches?				
7.6	<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div>	Do employees have sound-treated lunch or break areas?				
7.7	<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div>	Has the full potential for administrative controls been evaluated?				
7.8	<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div>	Are noise control projects monitored to ensure timely completion?				
7.9	<div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div>	Are noisy processes conducted during shifts with fewer employees?				

7.10	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Have in-house resources or outside consultants been identified to perform the work?
7.11	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are noise criteria included in all equipment purchase orders?
7.12	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Is noise exposure considered in job task analysis, change management studies, or hazard assessments?

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## Hearing Protection

No.	Result	Description	Action Planned	Who	Start	Finish
8.1	<b>yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>no</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>partial</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	Have hearing protectors been made available to all employees whose daily average noise exposures are above company, industry, or other recommended standards?				
8.2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are employees given the opportunity to select from a variety of appropriate hearing protectors?				
8.3	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Are employees fitted carefully with special attention to comfort?				
8.4	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	How frequently is employee retraining conducted after completion of initial instruction?				
8.5	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Is personal protective equipment checked regularly for wear or defects, and replaced immediately if necessary?				

8.6



If employees use disposable hearing protectors, are replacements readily available?

8.7



Does employee training include hygiene and maintenance of hearing protectors?

8.8



Have employees developed ear infections or irritations associated with the use of hearing protectors?

8.9



Are there any employees who are unable to wear these devices because of medical conditions? If yes, have these conditions been addressed promptly and successfully?

8.10



Do employees who incur a hearing loss receive intensive counseling? Have alternative types of hearing protectors been considered when problems with current devices are experienced?

8.11



Are new types of, or potentially more effective, hearing protectors considered as they become available?

8.12



Do employees complain that hearing protectors interfere with their ability to do their jobs?

8.13



Do employees interfere with spoken instructions or warning signals?

8.14



Are these complaints followed promptly with counseling, noise control, or other measures?

8.15



Are those who fit the wearing of hearing protectors competent to deal with the many problems that can occur (e.g., poor fit, lack of comfort, inappropriate protector)?

8.16



Are those who supervise the wearing of hearing protectors competent to deal with the many problems that can occur?

8.17



Are employees encouraged to take their hearing protectors home if they engage in noisy non-occupational activities?

8.18



Is the effectiveness of the hearing protector program evaluated regularly?