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## Part 16 Noise Exposure

### Duty to reduce

**216** An employer must ensure that all reasonably practicable measures are used to reduce the noise to which workers are exposed in areas of the work site where workers may be present.

### Noise control design

**217(1)** An employer must ensure that the following are designed and constructed in such a way that the continuous noise levels generated are not more than 85 dBA or are as low as reasonably practicable:

- (a) a new work site;
- (b) significant physical alterations, renovations or repairs to an existing work site or work area;
- (c) a work process introduced to the work site or work area;
- (d) significant equipment introduced to the work site or work area.

**217(2)** Subsection (1) does not apply to alterations, renovations or repairs begun or work processes or equipment introduced before April 30, 2004.

### Worker exposure to noise

**218** An employer must ensure that a worker's exposure to noise does not exceed

- (a) the noise exposure limits in Schedule 3, Table 1, and
- (b) 85 dBA  $L_{ex}$ .

### Noise exposure assessment

**219(1)** If workers are, or may be, exposed to noise at a work site in excess of 85 dBA  $L_{ex}$  and the noise exposure limits in Schedule 3, Table 1, an employer must do a noise exposure assessment under section 7.

**219(2)** A person who assesses noise exposure at a work site must measure the noise in accordance with CSA Standard Z107.56-06, *Procedures for the Measurement of Occupational Noise Exposure*.

- 219(3)** A person who measures noise exposure at a work site must use
- (a) a sound level meter meeting the requirements for a Type 2 instrument as specified by ANSI Standard S1.4-1983 (R2006), *Specification for Sound Level Meters*,
  - (b) a noise dosimeter meeting the requirements for a Type 2 instrument as specified by ANSI Standard S1.25-1991 (R1997), *Specification for Personal Noise Dosimeters*, and set at
    - (i) a criterion level of 85 dBA with a 3 dB exchange rate,
    - (ii) a threshold level at or below 80 dBA or “off”, and
    - (iii) slow response,
  - (c) an integrating sound level meter meeting the requirements as specified by ANSI Standard S1.43-1997, *Specifications for Integrating-Averaging Sound Level Meters*, or IEC Standard 61672-1 (2002), *Electroacoustics – Sound Level Meters – Part 1: Specifications* and IEC Standard 61672-2 (2003), *Electroacoustics – Sound Level Meters – Part 2: Pattern evaluation tests*, or
  - (d) equipment approved by a Director of Occupational Hygiene.
- 219(4)** An employer must ensure that a noise exposure assessment is
- (a) conducted and interpreted by a competent person, and
  - (b) updated if a change in equipment or process affects the noise level or the length of time a worker is exposed to noise.

### Results recorded

- 220(1)** An employer must ensure that results of noise exposure measurements are recorded and include
- (a) the dates of measurements,
  - (b) the workers or occupations evaluated,
  - (c) the type of measuring equipment used,
  - (d) the sound level readings measured, and
  - (e) the work location evaluated.
- 220(2)** An employer must ensure that
- (a) a copy of the results of the noise exposure assessment is available on request to an affected worker or an officer, and
  - (b) the record of the noise exposure assessment is retained for as long as the employer operates in Alberta.

## Noise management program

**221(1)** If a noise exposure assessment confirms that workers are exposed to excess noise at a work site, the employer must develop and implement a noise management program that includes policies and procedures.

**221(2)** The employer must ensure that the noise management program includes the following:

- (a) a plan to educate workers in the hazards of exposure to excess noise and to train workers in the correct use of control measures and hearing protection;
- (b) the methods and procedures to be used when measuring or monitoring worker exposure to noise;
- (c) the posting of suitable warning signs in any work area where the noise level exceeds 85 dBA;
- (d) the methods of noise control to be used;
- (e) the selection, use and maintenance of hearing protection devices to be worn by workers;
- (f) the requirements for audiometric testing and the maintenance of test records;
- (g) an annual review of the policies and procedures to address
  - (i) the effectiveness of the education and training plan,
  - (ii) the need for further noise measurement, and
  - (iii) the adequacy of noise control measures.

**221(3)** A worker who is subject to noise management must cooperate with the employer in implementing the policies and procedures.

## Hearing protection

**222(1)** An employer must ensure that hearing protection equipment provided to workers exposed to excess noise

- (a) meets the requirements of CSA Standard Z94.2-02, *Hearing Protection Devices – Performance, Selection, Care, and Use*, and
- (b) is of the appropriate class and grade as described in Schedule 3, Table 2.

**222(2)** An employer must

- (a) provide workers with training in the selection, use and maintenance of hearing protection equipment required to be used at a work site in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications, and
- (b) ensure that affected workers wear the required hearing protection equipment.

**222(3)** Workers who are provided with hearing protection equipment must wear and use the equipment in accordance with the training provided by the employer.

### Audiometric testing

**223(1)** An employer must provide, at the employer's expense, the following audiometric tests for a worker exposed to excess noise:

- (a) an initial baseline test as soon as is practicable, but not later than six months after the worker is employed or within six months after a worker is exposed to excess noise because of a change in the worker's duties or process conditions,
- (b) not more than 12 months after the initial baseline test, and
- (c) at least every second year after the test under clause (b).

**223(2)** An employer must ensure that audiometric tests are administered by an audiometric technician who must

- (a) work in consultation with a physician, audiologist or occupational health nurse designated by the employer,
- (b) maintain a log book for each audiometer being used that
  - (i) contains the audiometer's written calibration records, and
  - (ii) remains with the audiometer throughout its useful lifetime,
- (c) conduct the tests in a location where background noise levels do not exceed those specified in Schedule 3, Table 3,
- (d) record the results of the audiometric tests,
- (e) provide a copy of the test results to the worker,
- (f) retain the records of the audiometric tests for a period of not less than 10 years, and
- (g) ensure that the medical history information is under the sole control of the person designated under subsection (2)(a).

**223(3)** If the results of an audiometric test indicate an abnormal audiogram or show an abnormal shift, the audiometric technician must

- (a) advise the worker of the test results,
- (b) request the worker to provide, and the worker must provide, relevant medical history, and
- (c) forward the results that indicate an abnormal audiogram or an abnormal shift, the medical history and the baseline audiogram to a physician or audiologist designated by the employer to receive this information.

**223(4)** If the physician or audiologist designated by the employer confirms the audiogram as abnormal or the occurrence of the abnormal shift, the physician or audiologist must

- (a) advise the worker to that effect within 30 days,
- (b) with the written consent of the worker, provide results of the audiometric tests to the worker's physician,
- (c) advise the employer as to the effectiveness of the noise management program in place at the work site, and
- (d) retain the records of the audiometric test for a period of not less than 10 years.

**223(5)** A person must not release records of audiometric tests conducted on a worker or medical history received from a worker as required by this section to any person without the worker's written permission except in accordance with this section.

#### Credit of time

**224** If it is not reasonably practicable for a worker to undergo audiometric testing during the worker's normal working hours, the employer must

- (a) credit the time the worker spends to get the test done as time at work, and
- (b) ensure that the worker does not lose any pay or other benefits because the worker was tested.