



HEARING CONSERVATION GUIDELINE

PURPOSE

These guidelines support the *Health and Safety Policy* and *Health and Safety Management Standards* at the University.

This guideline outlines the process for monitoring and minimising the occurrence of hearing loss in workers as a result of occupational exposures at the workplace.

DEFINITIONS

Audiometric Testing	The measurement of the hearing threshold levels of a person by means of monaural pure tone air conduction threshold tests.
Exposure	Occurrence of an employee being in contact with a hazard.
Exposure Standard (ES)	Represents the concentration of a particular hazard that must not be exceeded. The exposure standard can be of three forms: 8-hour time weight average; a peak limitation or a short-term exposure limit.
Health Surveillance	System of periodical health checks as a result of occupational exposure.
Hearing Loss	Reduced ability in a person to detect sound.
Noise	All sound in the workplace whether wanted or unwanted.
Ototoxic Substance	A substance that can produce adverse effects on hearing or balance functions of the ear. Refer to Appendix One.
Risk	The likelihood and consequence of injury or harm occurring.
Risk Assessment	The overall process of risk identification, analysis and evaluation.

1. HEARING CONSERVATION

Curtin University (Curtin) is committed to protecting the hearing of all workers. There are many causes of hearing loss in the occupational environment, which include exposure to excessive noise and certain chemicals.



1.1. HEARING LOSS

Curtin will, as far as reasonably practicable, manage the risks associated with hearing loss through the implementation of the [Health and Hygiene Management Plan](#) which will assist in the identification, assessment and control of health risks.

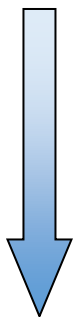
The two main occupational exposures that have the potential to affect hearing loss are noise and ototoxic substances

2. EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT

Health and Hygiene Exposure Assessments will be undertaken in line with the [Health and Hygiene Management Plan](#). The implementation of this Hearing Conservation Guideline will be based on both qualitative and quantitative assessment, with a specific focus on occupational noise and ototoxic substances.

3. EXPOSURE CONTROL

The risk of harm to hearing from occupational exposures shall be reduced to as low as reasonably practicable, through implementation of control measures. Controls shall be prioritised according to the Hierarchy of risk control as per the [Health and Safety Risk Assessment Guideline](#).



1. Elimination (most effective) - removing the hazard
2. Substitution, - substitute as substance, method or material
3. Engineering controls, - separate the hazard from the workplace or people, modify existing machinery or plant or purchase different plant or equipment
4. Administrative controls – develop a safe operating procedure, rotate the workers through the job, worker training; and
5. Personal protective equipment (the lowest level of protection) – ear plugs, ear muffs, etc.

Consultation with workers is required in the selection and implementation of control measures in the workplace.

Further to this, specific controls in regards to noise and ototoxic substances shall be managed and implemented in line with the [SafeWork Australia Model Code of Practice - Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work](#). In addition, prior to purchasing any new chemicals, please ensure you have completed the [chemical pre-purchase risk assessment](#).

4. HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

Health surveillance shall be managed through the specific work area based on the [Health Surveillance Guideline](#).

4.1. NOISE

The hearing of workers exposed to noise shall be monitored through regular audiometric testing. An audiometric testing program shall be made available to any employee regularly exposed to excessive



noise even if adequate controls are in place. Any changes in hearing levels over time shall be investigated as to their cause and the need for any corrective actions to be implemented.

4.2. OTOTOXIC SUBSTANCES

Health surveillance for Ototoxic substances shall be in line with the requirements outlined in the Work Health and Safety Regulations (General) 2022.

5. EVALUATION

Evaluation of occupational exposures and health surveillance programs will be in line with the [Health and Hygiene Management Plan](#).

6. EXEMPTIONS

The scope of the Hearing Conservation Guideline does not cover the hazards associated with environmental or nuisance noise.

For all questions relating to environmental or nuisance noise please refer to the Service Coordination Centre on 08 9266 2020 in the first instance.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty Business/Functional Area Managers or Equivalent

Faculty Business/Functional Area Managers or Equivalent are responsible for:

- a) Assisting in the implementation of the Hearing Conservation Guideline.
- b) Reviewing and actioning requirements for Health Surveillance.

Workers

Workers are responsible for:

- a) Utilising and implementing available exposure controls.
- b) Participating in area exposure assessment surveys.
- c) Participating in the Audiometric Testing Program as stated in this document.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Team are responsible for:

- a) Ensuring Workplace Noise Assessments are conducted at five yearly intervals.
- b) Ensuring findings and corrective actions are communicated across the University.
- c) Providing advice on the implementation of additional controls.
- d) Recording and maintaining relevant information as per the Health and Hygiene Management Plan
- e) Developing and delivering hearing conservation training programs / awareness sessions to relevant employees.



RELEVANT DOCUMENTS/LINKS

- [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Health and Safety Management Standards](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2020](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulations \(General\) 2022](#)
- [Health and Hygiene Management Plan](#)
- Health and Hygiene Risk Register
- [Health Surveillance Guideline](#)
- [Chemical Management Plan](#)
- [Model Code of Practice – Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work \(2018\)](#)
- [Code of Practice – Managing Noise at Workplaces 2002](#)
- AS/NZS 1269.1.2005 Occupational noise management – Measurement and assessment of noise emission and exposure
- AS/NZS 1269.3.2005 Occupational noise management – Hearing protection program
- AS/NZS 1269.4.2005 Occupational noise management – Auditory assessment
- AS/NZS 1270.2002 Acoustics – Hearing protectors
- AS/NZS 1319.1994 Safety signs for the occupational environment

CONTACT DETAILS	
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APPENDIX ONE – POSSIBLE WORKPLACE OTOTOXIC SUBSTANCES

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|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Butanol | Styrene | Mercury |
| Carbon Disulphide | Toluene | Organic Tin |
| Ethanol | Trichloroethylene | Acrylonitrile |
| N-Heptane | Xylenes | Carbon Monoxide |
| N-Hexane | Arsenic | Hydrogen Cyanide |
| Perchloroethylene | Lead | Organophosphates |
| Solvent Mixtures and Fuels | Manganese | Paraquat |