

# CARE FOR YOUR HEARING!

## DUKE'S HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

---

*A guide for employees*

### DUKE POLICY ON HEARING CONSERVATION

The Duke Occupational and Environmental Safety Office (OESO) administers a hearing conservation program to protect employees against recognized noise hazards. The policy is in compliance with the OSHA 1910.95 Noise Standard.

**The policy requires:**

1. Anyone using equipment that is louder than 85 dBA must wear hearing protection while operating the equipment.
2. Anyone exposed above 85 dBA averaged over an 8-hour shift must wear hearing protection AND participate in the Hearing Conservation Program.

|  |
|--|
| <b>EMPLOYEES ON THE HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM</b> |
|--|

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <b>MUST wear hearing protection <i>properly</i> AND when required.</b></li><li>■ <b>Must be trained annually.</b></li><li>■ <b>Must have annual hearing tests (audiometric exams) given by Employee Health.</b></li><li>■ <b>May be monitored by the Occupational and Environmental Safety Office (OESO).</b></li></ul> |
|---|

### NOISE IS EVERYWHERE!!

**At Duke:** Steam Plant, HVAC, Carpentry Shops, FMD Machine Shops, Kennels, Life Flight, Grounds Crew, Electrical (generators), Instrument Shops, Recycling, etc.

**At Play:** Concerts, Radios, Nightclubs, Recreational Sports (jet skis, hunting, car racing, etc.), traffic noise, and household chores (lawn mowing, weed eating, etc.).

## SO, WHY PROTECT YOUR HEARING??

- ◆ Once your ears are damaged, NO medicine, NO surgery, OR even a hearing aid can correct this.
- ◆ Loud noise can cause anxiety, irritability, stress, headaches, and increase your pulse rate and blood pressure.
- ◆ Protecting your hearing will help preserve your ability to interact normally with co-workers and loved ones, and will help to minimize the severity of normal, age-related hearing loss.

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO NOISE...

**1<sup>st</sup>: Engineering Controls** like sound proofing barriers and mufflers.

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Administrative Controls** like with job rotation, and modifying the time spent on noisy tasks.

**3<sup>rd</sup>: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** like earplugs or earmuffs. Hearing protectors are an effective method of protection against noise hazards when properly selected and worn!

### ***WHEN*** Do You Wear Hearing Protection?

Hearing protection should be worn in ANY noisy environment, **especially when noise levels exceed 85 dBA.**

Here are some rules of thumb:

- If you have to yell to speak to someone only 3 feet away.
- If the noise makes your ears hurt, makes your ears ring, or if you are slightly deaf several hours after exposure.

***It is important to wear the appropriate type of hearing protection.***

**Selection depends on several factors:**

**Comfort** - Some people cannot wear earplugs because they have small ear canals. Also, people who wear glasses have difficulty wearing earmuffs.

**Interference with other types of PPE** - It is difficult to wear earmuffs, a hard hat, a respirator, and other types of PPE at the same time. In this type of situation, earplugs would be more appropriate.

**Amount of protection you need** - It is important to realize that NOT ALL types of hearing protectors provide the same type of protection. Our office can work with you and your supervisor to provide the kind of protection YOU need. Call 684-5996 for help.

*Noise can be dangerous...**PROTECT YOURSELF** to reduce your risk of noise induced hearing loss!*



**Occupational Hygiene Program**  
**Occupational and Environmental Safety Office**

2210 Elba Street  
Box 3914 DUMC  
Durham, NC 27710  
Phone (919) 684-5996  
Fax (919) 681-5916