

Hearing Conservation

For staff exposed to noise above 85 decibels (action level) over an 8-hour workday you need to:

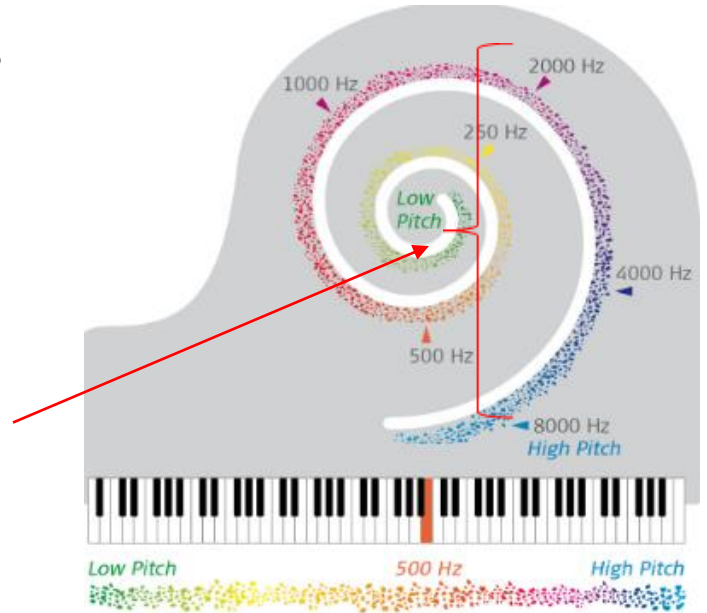
- Work with EH&S and Supervisor to reduce noise exposure
- Participate in annual hearing conservation training
- Participate in initial and annual hearing tests by an audiologist
- Be provided with adequate hearing protection

Requirements outlined in Cal-OSHA Hearing Conservation Standard (Title 8, Section 5079)

Loud noise can damage cells and membranes in the cochlea (inner ear)

Listening to loud noise for a long time can overwork hair cells in the ear, which can cause these cells to die. The hearing loss progresses as long as the exposure continues. Harmful effects might continue even after noise exposure has stopped.

Hearing loss tends to happen for high frequencies first, between 2,000 to 8,000 Hertz. High frequency verbal sounds like 's', 'h', 'f' become difficult to hear.



Audiometric Testing

- Mobile test van/truck is used to provide hearing tests to FS employees exposed over the 85-decibel action level
- Employees tested within 1 year of first potential exposure over action level (baseline exam) and every year thereafter
- All hearing test results reviewed by Audiologist
- Yearly tests are compared to baseline exam to note any hearing loss and take appropriate action



How to Wear Soft Foam Earplugs

1. Roll



Roll the earplug up into a small, thin "snake" with your fingers. You can use one or both hands.

2. Pull



Pull the top of your ear up and back with your opposite hand to straighten out your ear canal. The rolled-up earplug should slide right in.

3. Hold



Hold the earplug in with your finger until it expands to fill the ear canal. Your voice will sound muffled when the plug has made a good seal.

Source: CDC/NIOSH - <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/content/earplug.html>

Sound Level Measurement

How many Decibels is a...

- Normal Conversation
- Loud(ish) music
- Home Vacuum
- Leaf Blower
- Electric Drill
- Electric Tire Pump

