

T K GROUP, INC.
NEWSLETTER
2ND QUARTER-2008

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 2

The "Re-Check/Re-Fit" Procedure

Without doubt, 29 CFR 1910.95 (The Hearing Conservation Amendment) requires numerous and necessary follow-up actions in response to certain "actionable" events and it is strongly advised that all follow-up actions be documented.

Perhaps the number one most commonly overlooked follow-up mandate is the hearing protector "re-check/re-fit" procedure following a 10 dB STS, whether shown to be persistent by retest or when no retest is attempted.

The OSHA noise standard states:

1910.95(g)(8)(ii)(A)

Employees not using hearing protectors shall be fitted with hearing protectors, trained in their use and care, and required to use them.

1910.95(g)(8)(ii)(B)

Employees already using hearing protectors shall be refitted and retrained in the use of hearing protectors and provided with hearing protectors offering greater attenuation if necessary.

Employees indicating a 10 dB STS on-board T K Group mobile test units receive "re-check/re-fit" service and associated documentation when on-board Employee Notification Letters are requested. It is very

important to address this issue for those opting not to receive this service on-board the mobile van and for those who maintain in-house Hearing Loss Prevention Programs.

When doing a "re-check/re-fit" procedure, first check the condition of the hearing protector; this is paramount if the employee uses "reusable" protectors such as muffs or custom devices since product deterioration may result from prolonged use. Secondly, verify that the protector provides adequate attenuation for the employee's noise exposure; changes in noise exposure (higher or lower) are not
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The Dust Has Settled...

T K Group recently completed a move to our new headquarters located in Cherry Valley, IL. We are firmly and happily established in our new surroundings.

Please be advised that while some processing delays

were incurred when data was submitted to our old address during the transition phase, we worked diligently to process the data as quickly as possible and we have returned to normal operations.

T K Group looks forward

to supporting your current and future Hearing Loss Prevention Program requirements.



The “Re-Check/Re-Fit” Procedure (continued)

uncommon due to job changes. Thirdly, ask the employee to demonstrate proper insertion of the protector (if the protector is the plug or canal cap variety). Lastly, review any site specific protector regulations and reiterate the importance of protecting hearing during off the job activities as well.

Document all training and retain documentation for prompt retrieval if needed.

Pre-Employment Hearing Tests

Many corporations conduct “Pre-Employment” Hearing tests as part of their customary “in-take” process. T K Group is often asked “May the Pre-Employment” test serve as an employee’s official baseline test?”

Answer: Yes, as long as the test is valid and reliable.

In an interpretation dated March 7, 2007, Richard Fairfax, Directorate of Enforcement Programs-OSHA, states: “The baseline audiogram may be given either before or after an employee's first exposure to noise but must be given no later than six months after an employee's exposure to noise above the action level”. As a point of clarification, this statement omits the “mobile test van exception”, which allows those relying on mobile testing services to obtain a baseline up to and including 12 months post hire as long as hearing protection is in use.

March 7, 2007

Mr. George A. Glassanos
Deputy Counsel
Department of Correctional Services
1220 Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12226-2050

Dear Mr. Glassanos:

Thank you for your January 2, 2007 letter regarding audiograms and the requirements of the Occupational Noise Exposure standard, 29 CFR 1910.95. This letter constitutes OSHA's interpretation only of the requirements discussed and may not be applicable to any question not delineated within your original correspondence.

In your letter you stated that all candidates being evaluated for employment are given baseline audiograms upon intake, and those hired will usually have their first exposure to noise within a few weeks of commencement of employment. Your question is whether the baseline audiogram may be administered either before or after their first exposure.

The baseline audiogram may be given either before or after an employee's first

exposure to noise but must be given no later than six months after an employee's exposure to noise above the action level.

The baseline audiogram is the reference against which future audiograms are compared in order to determine the extent to which an employee's hearing is deteriorating. If it is not conducted properly, it will not reflect the employee's true threshold, and any changes between baseline and future tests may be masked. Pre-employment audiograms are usually given for reasons other than complying with OSHA regulations. These records may serve as a baseline and be used for future compliance with the noise standard, only if they were conducted in a manner that complies with all the requirements for baseline audiograms specified in the noise standard. If these audiograms do not meet the requirements of the noise standard, then another audiogram must be given to serve as the baseline audiogram, and it must be given no later than six months from the employee's first exposure above the action level.



T K Group conducts periodic CAOHC Certification and Recertification courses. Our next course is tentatively scheduled for early January, 2009. If you wish to participate, please contact Beth Minnick at (815) 332-3460



Pre-Employment Hearing Tests (continued)

Thank you for your interest in occupational safety and health. We hope you find this information helpful. OSHA requirements are set by statute, standards, and regulations. Our interpretation letters explain these requirements and how they apply to particular circumstances, but they cannot create additional employer obligations. This letter constitutes OSHA's interpretation of the requirements discussed. Also, from time to time we update our guidance in response to new information. To keep apprised of such developments, you can consult OSHA's website at <http://www.osha.gov>. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the Office of Health Enforcement at (202) 693-2190.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Fairfax, Director
Directorate of Enforcement Programs

Just so you know...

New Contact Information

Mailing Address:

T K Group, Inc.

1781 S. Bell School Rd.

Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Main Telephone Number:

815.332.3460

Main Fax Number:

815.332.5204

Scheduling and Accounting Fax Number:

815.332.5082

Data Processing Fax Number:

(Please use this number to fax data and Extended Questionnaires)

815.332.5175

ATTENTION!

In an effort that we provide this newsletter electronically as well as to inform you of immediate professional announcements, please email us your email address to: robertwilliams@tkontheweb.com

T K Group News is written by Dr. Robert Williams, Audiologist Director Audiology

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Robert Williams at <mailto:robertwilliams@tkontheweb.com>

The NIOSH Hearing Test Fact Sheet

Earlier this year, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) published a nicely done and informative document entitled *Inquiring Ears Want To Know; A Fact Sheet About Your Hearing Test*.

The document is posted at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/pubs/pubreference/outputid2573.htm>

Special thanks to Glenn Spatola



This sheet explains your audiogram (hearing test) and gives some basic information about protecting your hearing. Keep it so you can refer to it later.

What is an audiogram?

- An audiogram is often called a "hearing test," but there's no pass or fail
- It is a written record of your hearing levels
- A series of audiograms can track changes in hearing over time
- Your hearing threshold levels (the quietest sounds you can hear) are measured in decibels (dB) at different frequencies from low (500 Hz) to high (8000 Hz)

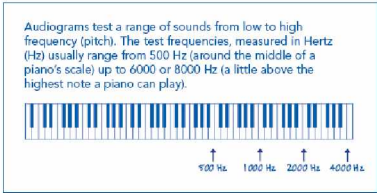
Why should I get audiograms?

- To measure your hearing ability
- To identify hearing problems
- To monitor success at maintaining your hearing
- To see if noise exposure is affecting your hearing

Do I have normal hearing?

Compare your hearing threshold levels to this scale:

- 10 – 25 dB Normal hearing
- 26 – 40 dB Mild loss
- 41 – 55 dB Moderate loss
- 56 – 70 dB Moderate/severe loss
- 71 – 90 dB Severe loss
- 91 – 100 dB Profound loss



What can cause my hearing to get worse?

Noise is the greatest hearing hazard for most workers, but any of these factors can cause or contribute to hearing loss:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Hazardous noise | Earwax blockage | Medical diseases |
| Head trauma | Heredity | Frequent ear infections |
| Aging | Medications | Chemical exposures |

See an audiologist or physician for more information about these causes.

Noise is everywhere! How do I protect myself?

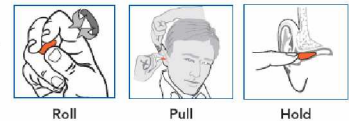
- If you must shout to be heard over the noise, it's probably too loud!
- Noise doesn't only happen at work. Noisy home and recreational activities can be hazardous.
- Have hearing protectors on hand. Use them on and off the job.

How do I select and use hearing protectors?

- Comfort — so you'll wear them
- Consistency — use them every time, all the time, in hazardous noise
- Cleanliness — keep plugs and hands as clean as possible

How do I insert a foam earplug to help protect my hearing?

1. Roll the earplug
2. Pull to open the ear. This step is especially important. You should pull up and away on the top of your ear with the opposite hand so the earplug can slide in easily.
3. Hold the earplug after inserting it.



Your test results are valuable — don't lose them!

- Keep a copy of your audiogram in a safe place.
- Give a copy to your primary care doctor.
- Give a copy to the administrator of your hearing conservation program.

Sample audiogram results

Frequency of test tone in Hz	Left Ear Thresholds						Right Ear Thresholds							
	500	1000	2000	3000	4000	6000	8000	500	1000	2000	3000	4000	6000	8000
	0	5	0	10	5	0	5	5	0	10	15	30	40	35

Normal hearing threshold levels (25 dB or less, negative numbers are especially good)

Worse than normal levels (more than 25 dB)

To receive NIOSH documents or for more information about occupational safety and health topics, contact: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) • 1-888-232-6348 (TTY) e-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov or visit the NIOSH Web site at www.cdc.gov/niosh

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



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