

(12-6-05 Administratively changed to reflect current organization name)

Kennedy NASA Procedural Requirements

Effective Date: October 4, 2004

Expiration Date: October 4, 2009

Responsible Office: Center Operations

KSC HEARING LOSS PREVENTION PROGRAM

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

John F. Kennedy Space Center

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PREFACE

P.1 PURPOSE

This KNPR contains the requirements for the development, management, and implementation of the KSC Hearing Loss Prevention Program. The primary objective of the Program is to implement Center policy and provide the requirements for the evaluation and control of workplace noise hazards and prevention of employee hearing loss.

It is KSC policy to provide employees with an environment in which occupational health hazards are identified, evaluated, eliminated or controlled in such a manner that personnel do not suffer adverse health effects as a result of their employment. Activities shall be conducted in a manner that conforms to all applicable federal, state and local regulatory requirements. Personnel exposures to chemical and/or physical agents shall at all times be restricted to levels as low as reasonably achievable.

The requirements presented in this KNPR implement Federal OSHA regulations and NASA management policy for industrial hygiene programs. Environmental Health and other operations organizations will supplement the provisions of this Directive by implementation of internal policies and instructions, as needed.

Additional requirements for the KSC Industrial Hygiene Program are contained within KNPD 1800.2, "KSC Hazard Communication Program"; KNPR 1820.4, "KSC Respiratory Protection Program," and KNPR 1840.19, "KSC Industrial Hygiene Programs."

P.2 APPLICABILITY

This KNPR applies to all NASA organizational elements located at Kennedy Space Center (KSC), the United States Air Force (USAF) 45th Space Wing, and NASA/KSC facilities and operations at other locations; including associated contractors, to the extent specified in their respective contracts; carrier and payload organizations; and other Government agencies, their contractors, and tenants.

P.3 AUTHORITY

- a. Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1960.
- b. Executive Order 12196, "Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees."
- c. NPD 1820.1 (as revised), "Environmental Health Program
- d. NPR 8715.1 (as revised), "Safety and Health Handbook - Occupational Safety and Health Programs"

P.4 REFERENCES

- a. OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure
- b. OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1926.52, Occupational Noise Exposure
- c. 29 CFR 1904, Recording and Reporting Occupational Injuries and Illnesses

- d. American National Standards Institute, "Specification for Sound-level Meters," ANSI SI.4-1994
- e. American National Standards Institute, "Specification for Personal Noise Dosimeters," ANSI SI.25-1991
- f. American National Standards Institute, "Maximum Permissible Ambient Noise Levels for Audiometric Test Rooms", ANSI S3.1-1999
- g. American National Standards Institute, "Specifications For Audiometers", ANSI S3.6-1996
- h. American National Standards Institute, "Measurement of Sound Pressure Levels in Air," ANSI S1.13-1995
- i. American National Standards Institute, " Measurement of Occupational Noise Exposure", ANSI S12.19 – 1996.
- j. Privacy Act of 1974 as amended (5 USC Sec.552a Records Maintained on Individuals)
- k. American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists, "Threshold Limit Values for Chemical Substances and Physical Agents and Biological Exposure Indices".
- l. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Occupational Noise Exposure – Revised Criteria 1998.
- m. Air Force Occupational Safety and Health (AFOSH) Standard 48-19 Hazardous Noise Program.

P.5 CANCELLATION/SUPERSESION

This document cancels and supersedes KHB 1820.3, KSC Hearing Conservation Program.

P.6 DEFINITIONS

- a. Action level: Continuous noise greater than or equal to a noise dose in excess of 50 percent of the noise exposure limits listed in Appendix A, Table 1, measured with a dosimeter or sound-level meter on the A-weighted scale, slow response. The action level is criterion for workplace monitoring. When average exposures exceed this and yet none exceed the exposure limit, this is a criterion for participation in the Hearing Conservation Program.
- b. Administrative controls: Any procedure limiting daily exposure to noise by control of the work schedule or operation.
- c. Annual Audiogram: Annual audiometric test, obtained subsequent to the baseline audiogram, which is used to detect shifts in the individual's threshold of hearing.

- d. Audiogram: Chart, graph, or table resulting from an audiometric test. An audiogram shows an individual's hearing threshold levels as a function of frequency.
- e. Audiologist: Professional specializing in the study and rehabilitation of hearing, which is certified by the American, Speech, Hearing, and Language Association, or licensed by a state board of examiners.
- f. Audiometer: Electronic instrument used for measuring hearing threshold levels that conforms to requirements and specifications of ANSI S3.6-1996.
- g. Baseline Audiogram: Audiogram against which future audiograms are compared.
- h. decibel (dB): A unit of measurement of sound pressure level.
- i. dba (decibels A-weighted): Unit of measurement of sound level corrected to the A-weighted scale (reference ANSI SI.4-1994), as measured by a sound level meter.
- j. Deafness: The otological condition in which the hearing threshold level for speech, or the average hearing threshold level for pure tones at 500, 1000, 2000, and 3000 Hz is at least 93 dB (reference ANSI S3.6-1996). This is generally accepted as representing a hearing loss disability for normal speech.
- k. Diplacusis: Condition in which one sound is heard differently by the two ears, resulting in the perception of two sounds instead of one.
- l. Engineering control: Any mechanical device or physical barrier that reduces the sound level at the source of noise or along the path of propagation of the noise to the individual, not including personal protective equipment such as ear muffs or plugs.
- m. Exchange rate: The increase in sound level allowed for a corresponding halving of exposure time. (Also called doubling rate and trading ratio.)
- n. Hertz (Hz): A unit of measurement of frequency, numerically equal to cycles per second.
- o. Impulsive or Impact noise: Variations of noise level involving peaks of intensity occurring at intervals of more than one second. If the noise peaks occur at intervals of less than one second, the noise is considered continuous.
- p. Medical pathology: Disorder or disease. For the purposes of this Standard, a condition or disease affecting the ear, which a physician specialist should treat.
- q. Noise: Generally unwanted sound. May also include desired sound (PA systems, alarms, etc.).

- r. Noise Dose: A cumulative measure of noise exposure which takes into account both the intensity of sounds and the duration of exposure to noise during the work shift.
- s. Noise Dosimeter: An electronic instrument that integrates cumulative noise exposure over time and measures noise dose.
- t. Hazardous Noise: A noise hazard exists wherever any operation, process, or procedure generates noise of sufficient duration and intensity to be capable of producing a permanent loss of hearing to unprotected persons when exposed over a working lifetime.
- u. Hazardous Noise Area: Any work area where personnel could be exposed to noise levels equivalent to 85 dBA 8-hr TWA or greater; continuous or intermittent noise above 115 dB; or a peak sound pressure of 130 dB.
- v. Noise Control Area: An area in which noise is 85 dBA or greater. This designation is independent of duration.
- w. Octave Band Analysis: An analysis of the standard frequency ranges (31.5 Hz - 16k Hz) used to characterize noise. The frequency of each band is such that the upper band limit is twice the lower band limit. Octave band analysis is often used as a means to determine materials and methods used for controlling noise.
- x. Otitis media: Infection and inflammation of the middle ear space and ear drum.
- y. Otitis externa: Infection and inflammation of the external ear canal.
- z. Otolaryngologist: Physician specializing in diagnosis and treatment of disorder of the ear, nose, and throat.
- aa. Representative Exposure: Measurement of an employee's noise dose or 8-hour time weighted average (8-hr TWA) noise exposure that is representative of the exposure of other employees in that work area or job classification.
- bb. Standard Threshold Shift (STS): An average hearing threshold shift of 10 dB or more at 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hz; in either ear relative to the baseline audiogram or to the most recent audiogram which has established a standard threshold shift. A threshold shift can be either temporary or permanent. A temporary threshold shift is a change in hearing threshold, primarily due to exposure to high intensity noise that can usually recover in 14 to 72 hours away from noise exposure. Any loss remaining after an adequate recovery period is termed a permanent threshold shift.
- cc. Sound Level: Mathematically equivalent to ten times the common logarithm of the ratio or the square of the measured A-weighted sound pressure to the Standard reference pressure of 20 micropascals (measured in decibels).
- dd. Sound-level meter: Electronic instrument for the measurement of sound level.

- ee. Time-Weighted-Average (8-hr TWA): Sound level which, if constant over an 8-hour workday exposure, would result in the same noise dose as is measured.
- ff. Tinnitus: A noise in the ears, as ringing, buzzing, roaring, clicking, etc.

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SECTION 1: RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.1 The KSC Occupational Medicine Officer, or designated representative, is responsible for:
- a. Providing medical evaluations, obtaining occupational history of participants in the Hearing Conservation Program, and evaluating test results.
 - b. Maintaining a record of personnel receiving Hearing Conservation Program physical examinations and providing audiometric examinations for those persons.
 - c. Notifying employees in accordance with this KNPR of significant hearing loss or other medical pathology of the ear, and explaining the need and plans for further testing and/or referrals.
 - d. Notifying the employee and his/her employer within 21 days if further testing establishes a standard threshold shift or deafness has occurred and initiating an industrial hygiene follow-up investigation of the employee's workplace.
 - e. Recommending the reassignment of employees to work in low noise areas, when necessary to prevent further significant hearing loss or the aggravation of other medical conditions that could be worsened by work in a high noise area.
 - f. Referring employees to an audiologist or physician specialist, as appropriate.
 - g. Ensuring physicians who conduct or supervise the audiometric testing of employees have reviewed the requirements of this standard and 29 CFR 1910.95.
 - h. Ensuring audiometric tests are performed by a licensed certified audiologist, otolaryngologist, or other physician, or by a technician under the supervision of a physician or audiologist. Technicians who perform audiometric tests using microprocessor audiometers shall satisfactorily demonstrate competence in administering automatic audiometric examinations, obtaining valid audiograms, and properly using the audiometers. Technicians who perform manual audiograms shall be certified by the Council of Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation.
 - i. Ensuring audiometric test equipment is properly calibrated and ambient noise levels in the audiometric test rooms meet the requirements within this KNPR.
 - j. Maintaining audiometric test records and other records.

- k. Providing employee access to medical records in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 2.14.
 - l. Providing audiometric examinations and notifying employees of the need to avoid exposure to high noise levels preceding the audiometric test.
- 1.2 The Human Resources Office will coordinate reassignment of employees with the Occupational Medicine Officer as required by paragraph 1.1.e.
- 1.3 The J-BOSC Technical Training Office, or other contractor training organizations will, to the extent provided by contract, provide hearing conservation program training and maintain associated employee training and certification records in accordance with the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.95.
- 1.4 The KSC Industrial Hygiene Officer, or a designated representative, is responsible for
- a. Providing baseline surveys on notification of each new operation, job, or procedure having the potential of creating a noise hazard.
 - b. Providing monitoring of hazardous, or potentially hazardous, noise areas or operations, including personnel noise dosimetry.
 - c. Providing follow-up investigations of employee workplaces for employee's with an identified Standard Threshold Shift.
 - d. Providing the results of noise surveys and recommendations for control of noise hazards to supervisors, site managers, and responsible safety organizations in the affected work areas.
 - e. Notifying the employers of affected employees of the results of noise dosimetry monitoring.
 - f. Reviewing facility and operational plans to assess the adequacy of precautions taken to control noise exposures.
 - g. Recommending methods to control hazardous noise exposure.
 - h. Maintaining records of noise surveys and providing employee access to those records.
- 1.5 The KSC Hearing Conservation Program Officer, or designated representative, is responsible for:
- a. Implementing and administering the Hearing Conservation Program.
 - b. Designating hazardous noise areas and notifying the work area supervision, the Environmental Health Officer, and the safety office of such areas.
 - c. Maintaining an inventory of high noise areas including noise levels recorded in those areas.

- d. Notifying supervisors of the requirements for employees to participate in the Hearing Conservation Program when monitoring data shows the employee's noise exposure exceeds the criterion for enrollment.
 - e. Ensuring the implementation and adequacy of training provisions for NASA personnel.
 - f. Recommending and evaluating the selection of hearing protection devices to assure they provide adequate attenuation.
 - g. Coordinating with the Occupational Medicine Officer, or designated representative to determine workplace causes of standard threshold shifts.
 - h. Monitoring background noise levels in audiometric booths used at KSC.
- 1.6 Contractor Safety and Health program personnel are responsible for:
- a. Referring personnel who complain of hearing loss or other hearing or ear problems to the Occupational Health Facility.
 - b. Enforcing the wearing of hearing protection devices, the posting of warning signs and labels, and implementation of administrative controls.
 - c. Notifying the Hearing Conservation Program Officer, or his/her designated representatives, of any known changes in operations or procedures which increase/decrease personnel exposure to noise.
 - d. Reporting notifications of work-related hearing loss to the NASA mishap reporting system.
- 1.7 Heads of Primary organizations and Heads of Contractor Organizations are responsible for:
- a. Implementing engineering and work practice controls where required to reduce or eliminate noise hazards.
 - b. Ensuring employees are provided Hearing Conservation Program training in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.95 and this Directive.
- 1.8 Supervisors are responsible for:
- a. Reporting suspected noise hazards in all their areas of jurisdiction to the Hearing Conservation Program Officer, or to designated representative.
 - b. Providing the Occupational Health Facility with the names of personnel working in hazardous noise areas or noise exposed jobs when identified by the Hearing Conservation Officer.
 - c. Referring personnel who complain of hearing loss or other hearing or ear problems to the Occupational Health Facility.
 - d. Ensuring that employees keep their appointments at medical facilities for Hearing Conservation Program examination.

- e. Ensuring the provision of hearing protection devices, as identified by the KSC Industrial Hygiene Officer, enforcing the wearing of hearing protection devices, and implementing recommended administrative controls
 - f. Notifying the Hearing Conservation Officer, or his designated representatives, of any changes in operations or procedures which increase/decrease personnel exposure to noise.
 - g. Ensuring employees who are participants in the Hearing Conservation Program attend annual training.
 - h. Attending Hearing Conservation Program training.
 - i. Notifying his/her affected employees of the results of noise surveys.
 - j. Notifying each affected employee of the results of noise dosimetry monitoring
 - k. Ensuring warning signs are posted at locations specified by the Hearing Conservation Officer.
 - l. Scheduling an exit audiometric examination prior to the employee's termination, transfer to another position, or retirement when possible and if an audiogram has not been performed within six months of departure.
- 1.9 Individual Employees are responsible for:
- a. Following control procedures established for maintaining effective noise exposure control, including wearing and maintaining hearing protective devices furnished for their protection.
 - b. Cooperating with supervisors, medical, environmental, and safety personnel in actions to evaluate noise hazards and to prevent hearing loss caused by excessive exposure to workplace noise.
 - c. Notifying supervisors of areas, operations, or equipment that may be a noise hazard.
 - d. Attending training courses and keeping medical appointments as required by this Handbook.
- 1.10 Facility Managers are responsible for posting warning signs on facility equipment and entrances to high noise areas, in accordance with paragraph 2.5.
- 1.11 Heads of engineering organizations are responsible for:
- a. Assuring new facilities and equipment are designed, procured, operated, and maintained in such a manner, where feasible, as not to create a noise hazard.
 - b. Designing and implementing engineering methods to reduce noise from existing facilities or equipment that constitute a noise hazard.

- c. Coordinating the design and implementation of engineering noise control measures with the KSC Industrial Hygiene Officer.
- d. Notifying the KSC Hearing Conservation Officer, or designated representative, of any changes in operations or procedures which increase/decrease personnel exposure to noise.

SECTION 2: HEARING LOSS PREVENTION PROGRAM

2.1 General

The Hearing Loss Prevention Program includes elements toward a goal of preventing hearing loss and includes the observance of noise exposure limit, exposure assessments, engineering controls, administrative controls, hearing protection devices, medical surveillance, hazard communication, training and records management

2.2 Noise Exposure Limits

- a. The noise exposure limit for an employee is an eight hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels, A-weighted (85 dBA 8-hr TWA) or an equivalent dose based on Table 1 (Appendix A). Exposures at or above 100% of the noise dose are considered hazardous. Unprotected exposures above 115 dBA are not allowed for any duration.
- b. Exposure to impact or impulse noise shall not exceed the limits listed in Table 2. No exposures in excess of 130 dB peak sound pressure level are permitted regardless of hearing protection.
- c. An employer must enroll personnel in the Hearing Conservation Program if employee routine (30 days or more per year) noise exposure equals or exceeds the Action Level (80 dBA 8-hr TWA or equivalent dose).

2.3 Engineering Control of Noise

- a. Where feasible, facilities and equipment will be procured, designed, operated, and/or modified to prevent employee exposure to continuous noise levels at or above 85 dBA or impulsive noise above 130 dB. Any reduction in noise level even if it is not reduced below 85 dBA is essential.
- b. If controls fail to reduce sound levels within the limits of Tables 1 and 2, a warning sign must be posted and hearing protection devices and/or administrative methods of noise exposure protection must be used.

2.4 Administrative Control

Access of personnel to noise hazard shall be restricted to the minimum number and/or period of time required to perform a specific task or function. Where Hearing Protection Devices are not sufficient to attenuate noise to less than 85 dBA 8-hr TWA, the duration of time spent in the noise hazard area will be limited, not to equal or exceed the exposure limits in Table 1 and Table 2.

2.5 Warning Signs

- a. When noise levels routinely equal or exceed 85 dBA 8-hr TWA, warning signs which clearly indicate the hazard of high noise levels and state the requirement to wear hearing protection will be posted at the entrances to the area.
- b. Decals or placards warning of the potential noise hazard will be affixed to shop tools and machines that produce noise equal to or greater than 85 dBA at the operator's position.
- c. Warning signs and decals shall have wording in black letters on a yellow or orange background.

2.6 Hearing Protection Devices

- a. Earmuffs and/or plugs will be provided in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.95 and this Handbook. Such equipment shall be issued for the exclusive use of each employee and shall not be traded or shared.
- b. Personnel must wear hearing protection whenever engineering and administrative controls do not reduce employee noise exposure below the Action Level. Additionally, all persons working within a posted hazardous noise area without regard to their exposure duration must wear hearing protection when noise is present. The use of hearing protection is recommended for all employees operating equipment with sound levels exceeding 85dBA.
- c. Hearing protectors must attenuate the employee's noise exposure to a level below the noise exposure limit of 85 dBA 8-hr TWA. A combination of both earmuffs and plugs is required where noise levels equal or exceed 100 dBA 8-hr TWA, and any exposure equal to or greater than 110 dBA. For those with a Standard Threshold Shift (STS), protectors must attenuate exposure to an 8-hr TWA of 80 dBA. Estimation of the adequacy of hearing protector attenuation should be performed according to a method specified in 29 CFR 1910.95, Appendix B. A de-rating of the noise reduction rating (NRR) of 25% for muffs, and 50% for plugs should be used, or the direct application of the SF value from subject fit data based on ANSI S72-1998.
- d. The adequacy of hearing protector attenuation shall be reevaluated whenever the employee's noise exposure increase to a level where the hearing protector provided may no longer provide adequate attenuation. More effective hearing protectors shall be provided when necessary.
- e. Where reusable earplugs are used, they will be permanently issued to the employee, the employee must be instructed in the proper method of insertion and cleaning of the earplugs. Employees will inspect reusable earplugs for cleanliness and to ensure that they are not damaged prior to each use. Damaged earplugs will not be used.
- f. The user must inspect earmuffs on a regular basis. Earmuffs that have been damaged, altered, or modified in any way shall not be used in hazardous noise environments. Where replacement parts, such as ear cup seals are available, the earmuffs may be repaired and reused.

- g. Special hearing protection equipment, such as sound-suppression communications and active noise reduction headsets may be used in hazardous noise environments. These devices will be regularly inspected by the issuing agency. Headsets that have been damaged, altered, or modified shall not be used in hazardous noise environments. Where headsets cannot be permanently issued to individuals, the issuer must assure the headsets are cleaned and sanitized before re-issuance.

2.7 Exposure Monitoring

- a. An initial investigation of potentially hazardous sound levels will be conducted when any information, observation, or calculation shows an employee may be exposed to a noise level of 80 dBA 8-hr TWA or greater. This identification includes, but is not limited to, representative measurements of noise exposure, employee complaints of excessive noise, or any areas where it is difficult to understand a normal conversation when the speaker and listener face each other at a distance of 2 feet. Any new equipment, operation, job, or procedure with the potential for creating hazardous noise should be evaluated prior to start up.
- b. When any initial determination indicates any employee's noise exposure may equal or exceed 85 dBA 8-hr TWA, area noise monitoring will be conducted to establish the characteristics of the noise source, operations in the noisy area, the extent of the area which exceeds 85 dBA, the number of affected employees, and their exposure duration/frequency.
- c. When an initial determination shows any employee or group of employees may be exposed to noise at or above 85 dBA 8-hr TWA, noise dosimetry monitoring will be conducted to determine the noise dose of the exposed employee and the representative exposure of similarly exposed employees, and to determine appropriate noise abatement techniques. Where required, an octave band analysis will be conducted to determine the characteristics of the noise source and to enable the selection of engineering controls.
- d. Monitoring which is representative of the noise exposure of employees in the work area will be performed and repeated whenever any changes to facilities, equipment, work practices, procedures, or noise control measures could increase personal noise exposure.
- e. Employees and/or their representatives will be provided an opportunity to observe noise dosimetry and area monitoring activities.
- f. Affected employees will be notified in writing of the results of noise dosimetry monitoring within 30 days of receipt of monitoring results.
- g. As a minimum, sound-level meters will meet the Type II requirements of ANSI S1.4-1994 and shall be capable of measuring sound in the range of 80-130 dBA. Measurement will be in accordance with ANSI S1.13-1995.

- h. Noise dosimeters shall meet the Class 2A-90/80-5 requirements of ANSI S1.25-1991 and will be capable of integrating sound levels of 80 dB and above. Measurements will be made in accordance with ANSI S12.19-1996.
- i. Noise exposure monitoring may be conducted using either a noise dosimeter or a sound-level meter. Where a sound-level meter is used to estimate an employee's noise dose, the survey will include a time and motion study to document the variations in the employee's noise exposure during the working shift.

2.8 Hearing Conservation Program Enrollment

- a. Whenever an employee is occupationally exposed for 30 or more days per year to noise at or above 80 dBA 8-hr TWA (50% dose), or to impact or impulsive noise in excess of the limits listed in Table 2, the employee will be enrolled in a Hearing Conservation Program. For the purposes of Hearing Conservation Program enrollment, the employee's noise exposure shall be determined without regard to any sound attenuation provided by the use of hearing protectors.
- b. Prior to placement in a job requiring participation in the Hearing Conservation Program, each employee will undergo an examination by a qualified physician. The examination will include a baseline audiogram, a medical examination to determine any preexisting medical pathology of the ear, and a work history to document past noise exposure. If an employee is determined to be suffering from an acute disease of the ear, which may compromise the validity of the test, the baseline audiogram will be delayed until the condition has abated.
- c. When a physical examination cannot be obtained prior to placement in a job requiring participation in the Hearing Conservation Program, or when it is discovered those already assigned to noise-hazard areas have not had a physical exam, one shall be conducted within 30 days thereafter. The baseline audiogram must be preceded by a period of at least 14 hours, during which there is no known exposure to sound levels in excess of 80dBA. This time interval should be sufficient to allow recovery from noise-induced temporary threshold shift.
- d. Employees exhibiting a preexisting medical pathology will require a review prior to being assigned to work in conditions that may aggravate their medical condition. This includes persons who are considered legally deaf, hearing disabled, or who exhibit medical pathologies that prohibit the use of hearing protectors.
- e. All employees who are enrolled in the Hearing Conservation Program will receive an annual audiogram.

2.9 Audiometric Testing

- a. An audiologist, otolaryngologist or other qualified physician, occupational health nurse or technician may perform audiometric testing. Technicians and nurses who perform audiometric tests must be under the supervision of an audiologist, otolaryngologist, or other physician. If manual

audiometers are used, personnel must be certified by the Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation. Hearing threshold levels will be determined by audiometers calibrated to the zero reference levels of the ANSI S3.6-1996 standard for audiometers.

- b. Audiometric tests will consist of pure tone, air conduction, hearing threshold exams with test frequencies at 500, 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 6000, and 8000 Hz in each ear. Audiometric test equipment shall meet the specifications, maintenance and use requirements of ANSI S3.6-1996. Where a pulsed-tone, self-recording audiometer is used, it will also meet the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.95 Appendix C.
- c. The audiologist or audiometric technician will perform a listening check, daily, prior to use, to assure the device is free from distorted or unwanted sounds.
- d. A functional test shall be performed each day, either using an "acoustical ear" calibrator (dBA) SLM with 9A Type Earphone Coupler) or a "biological check," by testing an individual with a known and stable hearing baseline. A record will be kept of the daily tests. Deviations of 5 dB or more require an acoustical calibration test.
- e. An electroacoustic calibration test (using a SLM, octave band filter set and a National Bureau of Standards 9A Coupler) will be performed at least annually (semiannually for self-recording audiometers) or when a listening check indicates a deviation of 5 dB or more. The calibration test will conform to the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.95 Appendix E. Deviations of 10 dB or more will initiate an exhaustive calibration.
- f. A complete calibration will be performed at least every 2 years or whenever an acoustic calibration test indicates an error of 10 dB or more. The tests will meet the criteria of ANSI S3.6-1996. Following the calibration, the front panel of the audiometer will be labeled with a tag indicating calibration to ANSI S3.6-1996 and the date of the calibration.
- g. Rooms used for audiometric testing shall not have background sound pressure levels exceeding those in Table 3. Sound pressure levels in rooms used for audiometric testing should be tested at least annually.
- h. Annual audiograms must be preceded by at least 14 hours without exposure to workplace noise. Hearing protectors may be used to prevent noise exposure during this period. Employees will be notified, in writing, of the need to avoid high levels of occupational and non-occupational noise during the 14 hours preceding the audiometric test.
- i. In addition to audiometric test data, each audiogram will, as a minimum, identify, the audiometric reference level to which the audiometer was calibrated at the time of testing; the date of the audiogram; the examiners name; the date of the last calibration of the audiometer; and the name, employee number, and job classification of the individual tested.
- j. A qualified physician will compare the employee's baseline audiogram to the Annual audiogram to determine if the audiogram is valid and if a

standard threshold shift (STS) has occurred. When determining if a standard threshold shift has occurred, allowance may be used for the contribution of aging to the hearing threshold level by adjusting the audiogram. The procedure described in 29 CFR 1910.95 Appendix F will be used. The age correction Table F-1 and F-2 may be extrapolated for personnel older than 60 years.

- k. When the evaluation of an audiogram indicates a standard threshold shift has occurred, a retest shall be scheduled within 30 days to determine if the shift is permanent. A permanent STS has occurred when the retest confirms the original audiogram results.
- l. The annual audiogram may be substituted for the baseline audiogram when, in the opinion of the audiologist, otolaryngologist, or examining physician, the hearing threshold shown in the annual audiogram indicates a permanent threshold shift or significant improvement over the baseline audiogram. This audiogram will be used for comparisons with future annual audiograms.

When the professional evaluating the audiogram determines that a baseline revision is appropriate, whether due to a persistent STS or improved thresholds, the baseline must be revised for each ear separately. A baseline audiogram that shows a persistent shift for only one ear may be revised for only that ear. The baseline may not be revised for the other unaffected ear. This procedure is required because it provides a clear indication of how each ear is affected by noise.

- m. If a permanent STS is determined, the employee will be evaluated by a physician to determine if the hearing loss is most likely noise induced or whether other medical pathology is suspected. The Record of Injury Form (KSC Form 6-2) will be used to notify the employee's supervisor, safety office, Workers' Compensation office, KSC Hearing Conservation Officer and JBOSC Environmental Health of a permanent STS. A separate letter is provided to the employer for use to ensure compliance with OSHA requirements that employees be provided written notification of STS and audiogram results by the employer. If further evaluation by an audiologist or otolaryngologist is requested to provide further testing or to diagnose other pathology, the request for referral will be indicated on the KSC Form 6-2. If it can be determined that the STS is not work related or aggravated by occupational noise exposure, a KSC 6-2 will not be completed, although a new reference audiogram may need to be established.

2.10 Medical Referrals

- a. Criteria for referral to an audiologist
 - (1) Baseline Audiogram indicating:
 - Average loss greater than 25 dB for 500, 1000, 2000 and 3000 Hz in either ear.
 - Average difference between ears of:
 - greater than 15 dB for 500, 1000, and 2000 Hz, or
 - greater than 30 dB for 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz

- (2) Annual Audiogram indicating:
 - Change for the worse in average hearing level in either ear compared to the baseline audiogram:
 - greater than 15 dB for 500, 1000, and 2000 Hz, or
 - greater than 20 dB for 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz
 - (3) Variable or inconsistent responses or unusual hearing loss curves.
- b. Criteria for examination by a qualified physician
- (1) Presence and persistence of ear pain; drainage; dizziness; severe persistent tinnitus; sudden, fluctuating or rapidly progressive hearing loss, fullness or discomfort in one or both ears; or a history of these within the last 12 months.
 - (2) Where an employee has previously received an otologic evaluation on the basis of failing on the above criteria, a re-evaluation should be done if ear pain, drainage, dizziness, severe persistent tinnitus develops, or if a significant change in hearing levels is observed.
 - (3) Where an employee suspects a medical pathology of the ear is caused or aggravated by the use of hearing protectors.
 - (4) A person possesses good hearing in only one ear (severe unilateral loss),
 - (5) A person who has chronic otologic problems (such as chronic otitis media or chronic otitis externa, especially if the condition prevents use of personal hearing protection,
 - (6) A person with diplacusis, fullness, inconsistent audiometric findings or other puzzling ear symptoms, and
 - (7) Where the examining physician refers an employee to a physician specialist, communication of relevant medical data will be provided upon request.

2.11 Follow-up Review

When a work-related hearing loss is detected, a follow-up review will be conducted.

- a. The employee's work area will be investigated to determine if work practices or changes in equipment or procedures have increased the noise hazard.
- b. Work-related hearing loss will be reported to the KSC/NASA mishap reporting system. Hearing loss that meets the definition of deafness will be reported as a Class B mishap. Other less serious hearing loss as defined in 29 CFR 1904.10 will be reported as an incident.

- c. The employee will be retrained on the hazardous effects of noise and the need to use hearing protection.
- d. The employee will be refitted with hearing protectors offering greater sound attenuation, if needed.
- e. When hearing protectors have not been previously used, the employee will be fitted with hearing protectors and will be provided training in their use.
- f. The employee's supervision and responsible safety office will be notified of the occurrence of a Standard Threshold Shift or other work related hearing loss and any necessary abatement actions identified in the follow-up investigation of the employee's workplace.
- g. When an OSHA recordable standard threshold shift has occurred, employers will record the condition as a hearing loss on the OSHA 300 Log and maintain the record in accordance with 29 CFR 1904, *Recording and Reporting Occupational Injuries and Illnesses*.
- h. The employee will be reassigned to work in a low-noise area when recommended by a physician to prevent a compensable hearing loss. These employees will continue to participate in the Hearing Conservation Program.

2.12 Employee Training

- a. Each employee who participates in the Hearing Conservation Program will receive annual training. The training must include, as a minimum, an overview of the program, a review of the effects of noise on hearing; the purpose of hearing protectors; the advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation characteristics of various types of protectors; noise control principles; instruction on selection, fitting, use, and care of hearing protectors; and an explanation of the audiometric testing procedure and the purpose of audiometric testing.
- b. Personnel will be encouraged to use hearing protectors whenever they are exposed to noise during off-duty activities (e.g., from lawn mowers, firearms, etc.).
- c. Supervisors of personnel participating in the Hearing Conservation Program shall also receive hearing conservation training.

2.13 Employee Access

Copies of this handbook, 29 CFR 1910.95 (OSHA Occupational Noise Exposure), and any appropriate records regulated by this standard will be provided, upon request, to employees, former employees, representatives of employees, representatives of the U.S. Department of Labor, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and NASA Headquarters Staff. Privacy Act provisions will be adhered to as applicable. The current version of this handbook is available electronically on Business World.

2.14 Records

Audiograms, employee noise exposure measurements, measurements of the background sound pressure levels of audiometric test rooms, and employee training records shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.95.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1

Noise Exposure Limits ¹

DURATION		EXPOSURE LEVEL ² dBA
(hours)	(minutes)	
16	960	80
8	480	85
4	240	90
2	120	95
1	60	100
0.5	30	105
0.25	15	110
0.125 or less	7.5 or less	115

¹ Using:

exchange rate =, 5 dB

lower threshold = 80 dB,

$T=480/2^{(L-85)/3}$ where T=time in min. and L=exposure level

Meter set to slow response

² The exposure noted for each sound level for the duration noted is equivalent to 100% of the allowed noise dose. The Action Level is any exposure equivalent to 50% of the exposure duration in this Table.

TABLE 2

Noise Exposure Limits For Impact or Impulsive Noise

SOUND LEVEL (dB)*	PERMITTED NUMBER OF IMPULSES OR IMPACTS PER DAY (imp/day)
>130	none
130	100
120	1,000
110	10,000

**Decibels peak sound pressure level measured with a Type I/II sound level meter with peak hold feature using C-weighting or linear scale at fast response.*

TABLE 3

**Maximum Background Sound Pressure Levels
for Audiometric Test Rooms**

OCTAVE BAND CENTER FREQUENCY (Hertz)	SOUND PRESSURE LEVEL (dB)
500	27
1000	26
2000	34
4000	37
8000	37
1000 to 8000 Hz based on ANSI S3.1; exceeds 29 CFR 1910.95 & AFR 161-15; 500 Hz based on AFR 161-15 and exceeds 29 CFR 1910.95	