RANDOLPH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HEARING PROTECTION PLAN

Reviewed October 2019

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidelines for employees exposed to occupational noise and to comply with the OSHA Occupational Noise Exposure Standard 29 CFR 1910.95.

The objective of the procedure is to provide guidelines to protect the hearing of those employees exposed to noise levels in excess of 85 dBA, to provide a uniform method of dealing with noise and hearing protection for all departments.

2. SCOPE

Since, no employees are exposed to an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA) of 85 dBA or greater, a full Hearing Conservation Program will not be utilized. However, RCC recognizes the hazards of increased noise levels, even for a short amount of time, and hearing protection devices will be required when noise levels are higher than 85 dBA.

3. NOISE LEVEL MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Noise Level Monitoring

Monitoring of noise exposure levels shall be conducted to accurately identify employees who are exposed to noise levels at or above 85 dBA. The exposure measurement shall include all sound levels within an 80 dBA to 130 dBA range, and shall be taken during a typical work situation. Measurements shall be obtained on the A scale of a standard sound level meter at slow response.

Monitoring shall be repeated whenever a change in the process, equipment, or controls is suspected of increasing noise exposures to the extent that additional employees may be exposed to noise levels at or above 85 dBA.

Employees are entitled to observe the monitoring procedures.

Review of all employee complaints concerning noise shall be conducted within 60 days by:

a. In-house screening of noise levels with a sound level meter.
b. Conducting noise dosimetry on affected employees.

Noise Exposure Evaluation

Upon completion of a noise level monitoring of an area, noise dosimetry shall be conducted on those employees potentially exposed to levels of noise in excess of an action level of 85 dBA or greater. (Personnel noise dosimetry shall be conducted by job description.)

Noise dosimeters shall be capable of integrating all continuous, intermittent, and impulsive sound levels from 80 decibels to 130 decibels.

4. NOISE CONTROL

Noise control can be addressed by three main categories: engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal hearing protection. This section will address the first two controls.

The most desirable method of noise control is to apply engineering principles designed to reduce sound levels either at the source or within the hearing zone of the employee. This application can usually reduce noise to a desired level, however economic considerations and/or operational necessities can make these controls impractical. It is the college's policy to utilize engineering controls whenever feasible and practical to reduce employee noise exposures.

Whenever engineering controls are not feasible or practical, the use of administrative controls should be explored. (Note: Administrative controls may be used in conjunction with engineering controls.) Administrative controls include any administrative decision that results in lower noise exposures; including complying with purchase agreements that specify maximum noise levels for machinery.

It is the college's policy to use administrative controls whenever practical to reduce employee noise exposure. Administrative controls may include rotating jobs so that exposure times are reduced. This includes such measures as transferring employees from a location with high noise levels to one with a lower level in order to reduce the daily exposure below the "action level". When administrative controls are not feasible with regard to job rotation, other alternatives, including hearing protection (See Section 5.0) will be utilized to reduce the daily noise exposure.

5. HEARING PROTECTION

Hearing protective devices (HPD) shall be readily available at no cost to all affected employees. HPDs shall be evaluated to ensure that they attenuate noise level exposures to less than 90 dBA. Appendix A lists the locations and tasks at the college that require hearing protection.

HPDs must be worn by:

a. All employees exposed to 85 dBA or greater on a time weighted average.
b. Any employee entering an area or performing a task in which hearing protection is required, where noise levels are 85 dBA or greater.

The employees shall have an opportunity to select their HPDs from at least 2 different styles. Each department that shall supply the HPDs.

To prevent a hearing loss, hearing protectors must be worn and maintained correctly. Keep your ear plugs clean by washing them in warm soapy water and make sure they are completely dry before inserting them in your ears. Inspect your hearing protection regularly. If they become damaged, hard, worn out, then ask your supervisor for a new pair.

Due to the fact that everyone has different size ear canals, each person should evaluate the HPD to ensure they receive the right size. Each employee will be instructed on how to wear their personal hearing protectors. If there is a problem with the fit or comfort of your hearing protectors, see your supervisor and you will be given a different type of protection.

HOW LONG WILL MY HEARING PROTECTION GENERALLY LAST?

Sponge plugs: 1 or 2 days
Custom plugs: 18-24 months
Insert plugs: 4-6 months
Muffs: Replace when worn out

The life of the hearing protector is dependent upon the care it is given. A sponge type hearing protector is disposable. But, as long as it is clean, it may be used until it no longer expands. How long the hearing protection lasts is unique to each employee depending on the chemical make-up of their body.

PUTTING IN EARPLUGS ONLY INVOLVES TWO STEPS

FIRST
Put your left arm over your head and with your left hand pull up on your right ear.

SECOND
With your right hand insert the ear plug. Switch hands and insert the other plug in the same manner.

Remember, both plugs must be worn for complete protection

6. REVIEW OF THE HEARING PROTECTION PLAN

An annual review of the Hearing Protection Plan shall be conducted by the RCC Safety Committee.

APPENDIX A

AREAS REQUIRING HEARING PROTECTION

Noise areas requiring hearing protection shall have signs requiring the wearing of hearing protectors. HPD's shall be utilized at these locations to reduce noise levels as needed.

The following areas require hearing protection when noise levels are greater than 85 dBA:

Auto Body Repair

Grounds Keepers (Operating mowers, blowers, saws and string trimmers)

ESTC Firing Range

Welding Shop