Occupational Health Hearing Evaluation (Audiogram) Procedures

The steps below explain the process to schedule audiometric testing for UW employees identified as having occupational noise exposures exceeding the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) noise exposure action level of 85 dBA as an 8-hour time-weighted average.

Individuals with potentially hazardous noise exposure will be monitored by the Environmental and Occupational Health Unit, Occupational Medicine, and the UW School of Communicative Sciences and Disorders. Employees in the positions identified as exceeding the action level will participate in the audiometric testing program.

The testing program consists of a baseline evaluation within 6 months of hire, and annual evaluations thereafter. The program is designed to provide early detection of occupational noise-induced hearing loss so proper intervention can be taken.

1. The employee or employee’s supervisor will call (608) 262-3951 to schedule an “Occupational Health Hearing Evaluation”. Identifying that this is an Occupational Health appointment is necessary for appropriate billing.

2. The testing will be conducted at the UW Speech and Hearing Clinic located in Goodnight Hall, 1975 Willow Drive. Each test takes approximately 30 minutes.

3. It is preferred that the audiograms are scheduled after a period of at least 14 hours without exposure to loud noise. Hearing protectors may be used as a substitute for the requirement that audiograms be preceded by 14 hours without exposure to workplace noise. Non-occupational noise should also be avoided during the 14-hour period immediately preceding the audiogram.

4. The test results will be compiled by the UW Speech and Hearing Clinic and a copy sent to the employee, and University Health Services to be filed in the employee medical record.

5. If a shift in hearing ability is detected, an Audiologist will contact the patient to schedule a confirmatory test within 30 days. If a shift in hearing ability is confirmed with the second test, a notification letter will be sent to the employee and the supervisor. The Environmental and Occupational Health Unit and the supervisor will follow-up with the employee to determine protective measures to preserve the employee’s hearing.

6. In instances requiring medical follow-up, based on test results, the employee could be referred to the UHS Occupational Medicine Physician, to an otolaryngologist, or their own physician.

Contacts:
Environmental & Occupational Health: 890-3992 or 890-1992
University Health Services, Occupational Medicine Nurse: 262-0955 or 265-5610
UW Speech and Hearing Clinic: Front desk: 262-3951