Part 16 Noise Exposure

Duty to reduce

216 An employer must ensure that all reasonably practicable measures are used to reduce the noise to which workers are exposed in areas of the work site where workers may be present.

Noise control design

217(1) An employer must ensure that the following are designed and constructed in such a way that the continuous noise levels generated are not more than 85 dBA or are as low as reasonably practicable:
   (a) a new work site;
   (b) significant physical alterations, renovations or repairs to an existing work site or work area;
   (c) a work process introduced to the work site or work area;
   (d) significant equipment introduced to the work site or work area.

217(2) Subsection (1) does not apply to alterations, renovations or repairs begun or work processes or equipment introduced before April 30, 2004.

Worker exposure to noise

218 An employer must ensure that a worker’s exposure to noise does not exceed
   (a) the noise exposure limits in Schedule 3, Table 1, and
   (b) 85 dBA $L_{ex}$.

Noise exposure assessment

219(1) If workers are, or may be, exposed to noise at a work site in excess of 85 dBA $L_{ex}$ and the noise exposure limits in Schedule 3, Table 1, an employer must do a noise exposure assessment under section 7.

219(2) A person who assesses noise exposure at a work site must measure the noise in accordance with CSA Standard Z107.56-06, Procedures for the Measurement of Occupational Noise Exposure.
219(3) A person who measures noise exposure at a work site must use
(a) a sound level meter meeting the requirements for a Type 2 instrument
   as specified by ANSI Standard S1.4-1983 (R2006), *Specification for Sound Level Meters*,
(b) a noise dosimeter meeting the requirements for a Type 2 instrument
   (i) a criterion level of 85 dBA with a 3 dB exchange rate,
   (ii) a threshold level at or below 80 dBA or “off”, and
   (iii) slow response,
(d) equipment approved by a Director of Occupational Hygiene.

219(4) An employer must ensure that a noise exposure assessment is
(a) conducted and interpreted by a competent person, and
(b) updated if a change in equipment or process affects the noise level or the length of time a worker is exposed to noise.

Results recorded

220(1) An employer must ensure that results of noise exposure measurements are recorded and include
(a) the dates of measurements,
(b) the workers or occupations evaluated,
(c) the type of measuring equipment used,
(d) the sound level readings measured, and
(e) the work location evaluated.

220(2) An employer must ensure that
(a) a copy of the results of the noise exposure assessment is available on request to an affected worker or an officer, and
(b) the record of the noise exposure assessment is retained for as long as the employer operates in Alberta.
Noise management program

221(1) If a noise exposure assessment confirms that workers are exposed to excess noise at a work site, the employer must develop and implement a noise management program that includes policies and procedures.

221(2) The employer must ensure that the noise management program includes the following:

(a) a plan to educate workers in the hazards of exposure to excess noise and to train workers in the correct use of control measures and hearing protection;
(b) the methods and procedures to be used when measuring or monitoring worker exposure to noise;
(c) the posting of suitable warning signs in any work area where the noise level exceeds 85 dBA;
(d) the methods of noise control to be used;
(e) the selection, use and maintenance of hearing protection devices to be worn by workers;
(f) the requirements for audiometric testing and the maintenance of test records;
(g) an annual review of the policies and procedures to address
   (i) the effectiveness of the education and training plan,
   (ii) the need for further noise measurement, and
   (iii) the adequacy of noise control measures.

221(3) A worker who is subject to noise management must cooperate with the employer in implementing the policies and procedures.

Hearing protection

222(1) An employer must ensure that hearing protection equipment provided to workers exposed to excess noise meets the requirements of CSA Standard Z94.2-02, Hearing Protection Devices — Performance, Selection, Care, and Use, and is of the appropriate class and grade as described in Schedule 3, Table 2.

222(2) An employer must provide workers with training in the selection, use and maintenance of hearing protection equipment required to be used at a work site in accordance with the manufacturer’s specifications, and ensure that affected workers wear the required hearing protection equipment.
222(3) Workers who are provided with hearing protection equipment must wear and use the equipment in accordance with the training provided by the employer.

Audiometric testing

223(1) An employer must provide, at the employer’s expense, the following audiometric tests for a worker exposed to excess noise:
(a) an initial baseline test as soon as is practicable, but not later than six months after the worker is employed or within six months after a worker is exposed to excess noise because of a change in the worker’s duties or process conditions,
(b) not more than 12 months after the initial baseline test, and
(c) at least every second year after the test under clause (b).

223(2) An employer must ensure that audiometric tests are administered by an audiometric technician who must
(a) work in consultation with a physician, audiologist or occupational health nurse designated by the employer,
(b) maintain a log book for each audiometer being used that
   (i) contains the audiometer’s written calibration records, and
   (ii) remains with the audiometer throughout its useful lifetime,
(c) conduct the tests in a location where background noise levels do not exceed those specified in Schedule 3, Table 3,
(d) record the results of the audiometric tests,
(e) provide a copy of the test results to the worker,
(f) retain the records of the audiometric tests for a period of not less than 10 years, and
(g) ensure that the medical history information is under the sole control of the person designated under subsection (2)(a).

223(3) If the results of an audiometric test indicate an abnormal audiogram or show an abnormal shift, the audiometric technician must
(a) advise the worker of the test results,
(b) request the worker to provide, and the worker must provide, relevant medical history, and
(c) forward the results that indicate an abnormal audiogram or an abnormal shift, the medical history and the baseline audiogram to a physician or audiologist designated by the employer to receive this information.
223(4) If the physician or audiologist designated by the employer confirms the audiogram as abnormal or the occurrence of the abnormal shift, the physician or audiologist must
(a) advise the worker to that effect within 30 days,
(b) with the written consent of the worker, provide results of the audiometric tests to the worker’s physician,
(c) advise the employer as to the effectiveness of the noise management program in place at the work site, and
(d) retain the records of the audiometric test for a period of not less than 10 years.

223(5) A person must not release records of audiometric tests conducted on a worker or medical history received from a worker as required by this section to any person without the worker’s written permission except in accordance with this section.

Credit of time

224 If it is not reasonably practicable for a worker to undergo audiometric testing during the worker’s normal working hours, the employer must
(a) credit the time the worker spends to get the test done as time at work, and
(b) ensure that the worker does not lose any pay or other benefits because the worker was tested.