

Hearing Conservation Testing

How to Prepare Your District

Puget Sound Workers' Compensation Trust (PSWCT) is committed to the safety and well-being of our members and encourages a culture of safety within each district. Hearing conservation, an important best practice, is designed to prevent the occurrence or reduce the progression of noise-induced hearing loss. PSWCT has developed a Hearing Conservation Program for specific employee work groups that may experience risk due to prolonged noise exposure. PSWCT has partnered with *Listen Audiology Services* to bring on-site audiogram services to our Trust members. This is a benefit of membership and there is no charge for the screening tests.

Why Audiometric Testing?

Audiometric testing monitors an employee's hearing over time. It also provides an opportunity for employers to educate employees about their hearing and the need to protect it. OSHA mandates that all employers establish and maintain an audiometric testing program, and annual audiograms are required for compliance of all employees considered to have a high risk of noise exposure. PSWCT's Hearing Conservation Program will keep your district compliant with L&I/OSHA regulations.

Program Details

Important elements of the Hearing Conservation Program include baseline and annual audiograms, training, and follow-up procedures. The establishment of baseline results for comparative analysis is key. After testing employees are made aware of any hearing changes. This allows for the investigation of noise exposures and equipment use.

It's possible the testing might reveal normal hearing changes because of age, prescription drug use, or activities outside of work (music concerts or recreation activities.) Making staff aware is critical so lifestyle changes can be made to protect hearing beyond the scope of their job.

Who Does the Testing?

Listen Audiology Services is the contracted provider for PSWCT member districts. To date, they have successfully completed over 500 audiograms for 28 school districts. *Listen Audiology Services* provides on-site audiometric testing services.

- Using a mobile audiometric test unit, which meets all state and federal standards for test environments, equipment and procedures.
- Administered by certified staff with the results personally explained to the employee at the end of testing. A Doctor of Audiology then reviews test results.
- Providing a comprehensive computer report including a summary report, individual data sheets, standard threshold list, medical referral list, employee letters with audiometric results and OSHA 300 Log employees (if applicable).

Who Do We Test?

PSWCT has identified several work groups that may experience risk due to prolonged noise exposure – exposed to a time weighted average (TWA) greater than 85 decibels in an 8-hour work day:

- [Maintenance & Operations](#) – Grounds, Facilities, and “All Trades”
- [Transportation Maintenance](#) – Bus Mechanics
- [Music Instructors](#) - Music, Band, and Choir
- [Vocational Education Instructors](#) – Wood Shop, Metal Shop, and Automotive Technology

Testing Details

Additional information about testing:

- Testing takes 15-20 minutes.
- Results will be provided within a few weeks of testing completion.
- Allow at least a 2-hour testing window per on-site appointment to test up to 19 employees. Large school districts may need to schedule more than one testing appointment.

Preparing for On-Site Testing

District claims contacts call *Listen Audiology Services* directly to schedule testing appointments.

Consider the following when planning a test:

- Identify staff to be tested using the list of required work groups.
- Be prepared to provide *Listen Audiology Services* with a written list of names and job title.
- Contact *Listen Audiology Services* at least 4 weeks in advance of desired testing date.
- Notify *Listen Audiology Services* of any potential language barriers.
- Notify *Listen Audiology Services* of any ADA or other accommodations needed by staff.
- Provide connections for electrical power at test locations.
- Share “What Employees Need to Know about Audiometric Testing” document.

Next Steps

After completing testing, districts should re-issue non-invasive hearing protection to employees. Remember, hearing protection should be provided at the time of hire. PSWCT recommends staff complete a hearing conservation module through *SafeSchools* as a part of the District’s annual training. Once your baseline testing is complete, *Listen Audiology Services* will contact you near your testing anniversary date to schedule an appointment.

Questions

Contact [Steve Lyons](#) or [Matt Tardif](#) with any questions about PSWCT’s Hearing Conservation Program.

To schedule a testing appointment:

Listen Audiology Services, Inc.

listenaudiology@comcast.net

Scheduling Line: 360-303-0390