	<b>HSE POLICY</b>	<b>HSE Policy No.:</b>	<b>HSE-P-021</b>
	<b>Hearing Conservation Program</b>	<b>Original Release:</b>	<b>April 2009</b>
		<b>Revision No.:</b>	<b>1</b>
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		<b>Approval:</b>	<b>Vice President, Human Resources</b>

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ensure all reasonable measures are taken to protect employees and contractors from exposure to hazardous noise levels that exceed the 8 hour time-weighted average exposure level of 85 dBA.
- 1.2 To ensure compliance with the occupational noise exposure limits outlined in Section 139 of Ontario Regulation 851 for Industrial Establishments made pursuant to the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.

## 2. SCOPE

This program applies to all Caesars Windsor employees/workers and contractors working in locations or performing job duties where hazardous noise levels are present as outlined in the Hearing Protection Guideline (HSE-G-010).

## 3. DEFINITIONS

**Abnormal Audiometric Test:** A change in hearing threshold relative to a baseline audiometric test that averages 10 dB or more in the 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hz frequencies in either ear combined with a hearing level of 25 dB or greater.

**Administrative Controls:** The use of work practices aimed at reducing noise exposure.

Examples of administrative controls include:


- preventative maintenance programs to prevent equipment from becoming significant sources of noise;
- limiting a worker's exposure time to hazardous noise levels through work-rest cycles and job rotation;
- training and awareness.

**Audiometric Testing:** Tests that are conducted to determine the hearing ability of a person. These tests are used to establish an employee's baseline hearing, to identify any subsequent hearing loss and to monitor the effectiveness of noise controls.

**Baseline Audiometric Test:** The initial audiometric test obtained upon hire or upon transferring into a noise exposed job classification. The baseline audiometric test will be used as a reference point against which future audiometric test results are compared.

**dBA:** The frequency-weighted value of the sound level determined with a sound level meter and relates the sensitivity of the human ear to each sound frequency.

**Decibel (dB):** A unit of measurement to express sound pressure levels.

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**Engineering Controls:** The preferred method of eliminating or reducing hazardous noise levels. Engineering control options may include:

- substitution of quieter machines tools or processes such as hydraulic rather than pneumatic power;
- installing absorbent panels on building surfaces near noisy equipment;
- using vibration isolators on vibrating equipment;
- applying mechanical damping treatment to metal panels in impact situations;
- installing mufflers on air exhausts;
- the use of enclosures, partial enclosures or barriers at the noise source;
- the use of enclosures, partial enclosures or barriers at the worker.

**Hazardous Noise:** Sound levels that exceed the 8 hour time-weighted average exposure limit of 85 dBA(L<sub>ex8</sub>). Exposure to hazardous noise may result in NIHL.

**Hearing Loss:** The impairment of auditory acuity. Hearing impairment is measured in decibels as a set of threshold levels at specified frequencies.

**Hearing Protection Devices (HPD):** Personal protective equipment that is designed to be worn in the ear canal or over the ear to reduce the sound level reaching the ear drum. Examples include ear plugs and ear muffs.

**L<sub>ex8</sub>:** The equivalent sound exposure level in 8 hours.

**Noise Exposed Job Classifications:** Job classifications that have the potential for exposure to hazardous noise levels.


**Noise Exposure Assessment:** The measurement of the sound intensity and the length of time the employee is exposed to noise energy levels. Noise dosimeters and integrated sound level meters are tools used to calculate the exposure values.

**Noise-induced Hearing Loss (NIHL):** Hearing loss that begins at the higher frequencies (3,000-6,000Hz). It begins as a temporary threshold shift in the pattern of hearing. The shift raises the level of loudness required to hear sounds and may include a ringing or buzzing in the ears (tinnitus) and mild hearing loss at the higher frequencies.

**Noise Reduction Rating (NRR):** A single number rating which is required by law to be shown on the label of hearing protection devices sold in the United States. The NRR is the measure, in decibels, of how well a hearing protection device reduces noise. The higher the NRR, the greater the potential noise reduction.

**Sound Pressure Levels:** The intensity of sound measured in decibels.

**Standard Threshold Shift:** A change in hearing threshold relative to the baseline audiogram of an average of 10 dB or more at 2000, 3000 and 4000 hertz (Hz). The standard threshold shift is calculated by adding the "shift in hearing" results for each ear and averaging the results. For example (10 dB +10 dB +5 dB)/3 = 25/3 = 8.2 dB.

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**Time-Weighted Average (TWA):** an exposure that is averaged over a specified time period.


#### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **4.1 President, Vice-Presidents and Directors shall,**

- a) ensure that the Hearing Conservation Program and all its components are implemented, administered and enforced;
- b) implement control measures (Engineering, Administrative, Personal Protective Equipment) necessary to prevent hearing loss;
- c) ensure the effects of hazardous noise are considered and minimized when purchasing new equipment and/or implementing new processes;
- d) ensure hearing protection signage is posted in areas identified in the Hearing Protection Guideline.

##### **4.2 Managers/Supervisors shall,**

- a) identify potential sources of hazardous noise and communicate the information to the Manager, Health, Safety and Environment;
- b) inform their employees of all sources of hazardous noise in their work areas;
- c) provide hearing protection to employees and strictly and consistently enforce its use as required by this program;
- d) provide instruction to employees in the proper use and care of the hearing protection devices provided;
- e) ensure all existing and new employees who may be exposed to hazardous noise levels undergo audiometric testing as required by this program;
- f) ensure all existing and new employees who may be exposed to hazardous noise levels undergo training as required by this program;
- g) as required, participate in the recognition, assessment and control of hazardous noise in the workplace;
- h) ensure hearing protection signage is posted in areas identified in the Hearing Protection Guideline.

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**4.3 Employees/Workers,**

- a) shall report potential sources of hazardous noise to their Supervisor or Manager;
- b) shall use and care for hearing protection devices as required by this program;
- c) shall participate in training as required by this program;
- d) may voluntarily participate in audiometric testing as recommended by this program.

**4.4 Contractors shall,**


- a) wear hearing protection devices as required by this program.

**4.5 Manager, Health, Safety and Environment shall,**

- a) administer and communicate all elements of the Hearing Conservation Program;
- b) coordinate or conduct all noise exposure assessments;
- c) identify areas or processes that require noise attenuation and/or signage posting;
- d) communicate the noise exposure monitoring results to all employees exposed to hazardous noise levels;
- e) communicate the noise exposure monitoring results to the Joint Health and Safety Committee;
- f) provide guidance to departments on the selection of appropriate noise control measures including hearing protection devices;
- g) maintain the Hearing Protection Guideline;
- h) review the Hearing Conservation Program annually to ensure legislative compliance;
- i) conduct periodic audits of the Hearing Conservation Program to ensure compliance.

**4.6 Health & Safety Department shall,**

- a) coordinate/conduct baseline and annual audiometric testing for all employees working in noise exposed job classifications identified in the Hearing Protection Guideline;

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- b) coordinate and conduct baseline audiometric testing for all new employees;
- c) ensure audiometric equipment is calibrated annually and maintained in good working order;
- d) maintain audiometric equipment calibration records and make available for inspection upon request;
- e) ensure staff are trained and competent to conduct audiometric testing and provide educational support to employees;
- f) communicate the audiometric testing results to each employee;
- g) with informed consent, provide abnormal audiometric test results to the employee's primary care practitioner;
- h) report abnormal audiometric test to the Manager, Health, Safety & Environment for further investigation;
- i) maintain all audiometric testing records in the employee's personal employee file.

**4.7 Medical Consultant shall,**

- a) review all audiometric test results and refer abnormal results to the Manager, Health, Safety & Environment for follow up.

**4.8 Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC) shall,**

- a) identify potential hazardous noise exposure areas or processes during monthly workplace inspections;
- b) conduct an annual review of the Hearing Conservation Program and provide written recommendations for improvement to the Manager, Health, Safety and Environment.

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## 5. PROGRAM ELEMENTS AND PROCEDURES

### 5.1 Identifying Hazardous Noise Levels

- 5.1.1 The following are indicators that hazardous noise levels may be present in the workplace:
- a) Employees must speak very loudly to communicate with another person at distances of 1 (one) metre or less;
  - b) Using equipment/tools that are known to produce sound levels above 80 dBA in published data;
  - c) Worker complaints regarding noise and symptoms;
  - d) Audiometric test results showing early signs of noise induced hearing loss.
- 5.1.2 Requests for noise exposure assessments must be submitted to the Manager, Health, Safety and Environment.

### 5.2 Noise Exposure Assessments

- 5.2.1 Noise exposure assessments shall be requested when one of the following criteria is met:
- a) Hazardous noise levels are suspected;
  - b) An alteration, renovation or repair of the workplace may change the noise levels;
  - c) New or modified equipment is introduced into the workplace that may change the noise levels;
  - d) Changes to a work process may change the noise levels.
- 5.2.2 The Manager, Health, Safety and Environment or his/her designate will conduct or coordinate all noise exposure assessments.
- 5.2.3 The Unifor Health and Safety Representative or his/her alternate must be present at the beginning of noise testing.
- 5.2.4 Noise exposure assessments shall be conducted in accordance with CSA Standard Z10.56-06, Procedures for the Measurement of Occupational Noise Exposure.
- 5.2.5 In the event the noise exposure assessment results equal or exceed 85 dBA,  $L_{ex8}$ , the Manager, Health, Safety and Environment shall:

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- a) communicate the results of the noise exposure assessment to the Director(s) of the employees/areas affected;
- b) arrange for audiometric testing of the affected employees;
- c) provide recommendations for immediate and short term control measures, including but not limited to recommendations for appropriate hearing protection devices and training;
- d) provide recommendations for warning signs, if required;
- e) update the Hearing Protection Guideline.

**5.2.6** Noise levels that equal or exceed 85 dBA,  $L_{ex8}$  will be further investigated for the use of engineering and/or administrative controls to reduce exposures to acceptable levels.

### **5.3 Audiometric Testing**

**5.3.1** Audiometric testing shall be coordinated through Caesars Windsor's Health & Safety Department at no cost to the employee.

**5.3.2** Baseline audiometric testing shall be conducted for:

- a) all existing employees in noise exposed job classifications identified in the Hearing Protection Guideline;
- b) all new employees working in a noise exposed job classification;
- c) all employees transferring into a noise exposed job classification within 30 days from the date of transfer.

**5.3.3** Employees working in noise exposed job classifications shall undergo annual audiometric testing.


**5.3.4** Audiometric testing shall be conducted by a Caesars Windsor Representative trained in audiometric testing procedures.

**5.3.5** Audiometric test results shall be:

- a) reviewed with the employee at the time of testing;
- b) reviewed by Caesars Medical Consultant and compared with previous results to assess for threshold shifts.

**5.3.6** Abnormal audiometric test results shall be repeated in 30 days and if validated shall be referred to the employee's primary treating practitioner, with informed consent.

**5.3.7** Validated abnormal audiometric test results demonstrating a noise induced pattern shall be:

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- a) referred to the Manager, Health, Safety & Environment to assess the need for improved control measures;
- b) considered as an occupational disease and reported to the WSIB.

**5.4 Control Measures**

5.4.1 Where it is determined that employees are exposed to a sound level greater than 85 dBA,  $L_{ex8}$ , control measures shall be put in place.

5.4.2 Control measures shall focus primarily on eliminating or reducing the sound pressure levels below 85 dBA wherever practical. Noise control measures shall be evaluated and implemented using the following hierarchy:

- a) Engineering Controls;
- b) Administrative Controls;
- c) Personal Protective Equipment.

**5.5 Personal Protective Equipment (Hearing Protection Devices)**


5.5.1 Hearing protection devices shall be considered mandatory personal protective equipment for all employees:

- a) working in areas where measurements indicate an exposure of 85 dBA,  $L_{ex8}$  or greater;
- b) operating equipment that produces a sound pressure level of 85 dBA or greater.

5.5.2 Hearing protection devices shall be selected and maintained in accordance with CSA Standard Z94.2-02 Hearing Protection Devices – Performance, Selection, Care and Use. The following Hearing Protection Selection criteria shall be followed:

Noise Exposure Time-Weighted Average (TWA)	Recommended Class of Hearing Protection
≤ 85 dBA	Hearing protection not required
≤ 90 dBA	Class C
≤ 95 dBA	Class B
≤ 105 dBA	Class A
≤ 110 dBA	Class A earplug + Class A or Class B earmuff
> 110 dBA	Class A earplug + Class A or Class B earmuff and limited exposure



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**5.5.3** Hearing protection devices shall be provided by the employee's department at no cost to the employee.

**5.5.4** The Department Manager/Supervisor shall instruct the employee in the proper use and care of the hearing protection device at the time of issue.

**5.5.5** The Department Manager/Supervisor shall strictly and consistently enforce the use of hearing protection devices as mandated by this program.

### **5.6 Signage**

**5.6.1** A clearly visible warning sign shall be posted at every approach to an area in the workplace where the sound level regularly exceeds 85 dBA.

**5.6.2** The warning sign shall include:

- a) a warning of hazardous noise levels;
- b) the requirement for mandatory hearing protection in the area;
- c) a pictogram, as recommended by CSA Standard CAN/CSA Z321-96, Signs and Symbols for the Workplace, indicating that hearing protection is required to be worn.

### **5.7 Recordkeeping**

**5.7.1** Employee audiometric test results shall be retained, confidentially, in the employee's personal employee file.


**5.7.2** Employee audiometric test results shall be retained for the duration of the employee's employment and 20 years from the date of termination.

**5.7.3** Noise exposure assessment records shall be retained by the Manager, Health, Safety and Environment for as long as the Caesars Windsor facility is in operation.

## **6. COMMUNICATION**

**6.1** This policy shall be communicated in the:

- a) Health and Safety Manual located in the Document Library of the corporate intranet site;

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6.2 The Manager, Health, Safety and Environment shall:

- a) post the results of noise exposure assessments on the designated Health and Safety information boards;
- b) provide a copy of the results to the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

## 7. EVALUATION

8.1 The Hearing Conservation Program shall be reviewed on an annual basis by the Manager, Health, Safety and Environment and the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

## 8. REFERENCES

- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Regulation 851 for Industrial Establishments, Section 139
- CSA Z107.56-06 Procedures for the Measurement of Occupational Noise Exposure
- CSA Z94.2-02 Hearing Protection Devices – Performance, Selection, Care and Use

## 10. REVISION LOG

Revision Number	Revision Date	Revision Summary
Rev. 1	January 2014	Deleted references to medical center
Rev. 2		
Rev. 3		

## 11. AUTHORIZATION

  
 Kelly Wolfe-Gregoire  
 Vice-President, Human Resources