

## SAFETY HEALTH ENVIRONMENT WORKCOVER SUSTAINABILITY (SHEWS) HEARING CONSERVATION

### 1 PURPOSE

CQUniversity has an obligation to provide a work environment without risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable. This obligation includes eliminating or minimising, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks associated with working in noisy environments.

The intention of this procedure is to meet or exceed obligations under current legislation.

### 2 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all CQUniversity staff, students, contractors and their staff, and all visitors whilst at CQUniversity worksites including individuals participating in work activities that are conducted off-site.

### 3 EFFECTIVE DATE 1 June 2016

### 4 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

[Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)

[Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#)

[Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice 2011](#)

### 5 PARENT POLICY

[Work Health and Safety Policy](#)

### 6 PROCEDURE

This document is to be read in conjunction with the current Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice.

These procedures provide guidelines for aspects of noise management, noise exposure and control measures. The OHS Unit will assist with the assessment of reported noise hazards under the relevant legislation and Australian Standards.

A noise induced hearing loss (NIHL) may be acquired through exposure to excessive noise in the work environment and/or other activities. A comprehensive noise assessment of the employee's workplace and audiometric testing is required to determine if the hearing loss may be related to noise exposure in the CQUniversity work environment.

#### Noise Assessment / Risk Identification and Management

6.1 A Noise Assessment will be conducted by a competent person in accordance with AS/NZS1269.1 Measurement and assessment of noise emission and exposure.

A Noise Hazard Identification Checklist (Appendix B of the Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work Code of Practice 2011) will be completed and a copy provided to the OHS Unit for further attention.

6.2 If indicated by the assessment, practical action will be taken to control and reduce noise emissions in that area.

- 6.2 Areas as designated 'hearing protection use areas', where excessive noise cannot be practically controlled by engineering or administrative strategies shall be display signage at all entry points as per Australian Standard 1319: Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment.
- 6.3 Entry to such areas is prohibited (even for a brief period of time) unless appropriate personal hearing protection (e.g. ear muffs or ear plugs) providing suitable attenuation is worn. Advice on the appropriate selection of such personal protective equipment is available from the OHS Unit.
- 6.4 A decision concerning the provision of hearing protection to students who are required to work in 'hearing protection use areas' can be made by the respective organisational unit.

## **Staff Audiometric Testing**

- 6.5 New employees who may be required to work in, or in the vicinity of a 'hearing protection use area' will undergo a baseline audiometric test within two months of their commencement and will be retested on a two yearly basis. These will be costed to the respective organisational unit.
- 6.6 Current employees who are new to working in, or in the vicinity of a 'hearing protection use area' will undergo an initial baseline audiometric test prior to their commencement and will be retested on a two yearly basis. These will be costed to the respective organisational unit.
- 6.7 To initiate a referral for an audiometric test, the employer's supervisor submit and email to the OHS Unit. It will then be registered and forwarded to the facility that is to conduct the test.
- 6.8 With each audiometric test, employees result will be provided to the OHS Unit will be kept confidential. Provision of this information is prohibited without the written approval of the employee concerned.
- 6.9 In the event of abnormal results, the employee will be requested to undergo a repeat test after at least 16 hours in a quiet (less than 75 dB(A)) conditions. If a hearing impairment is confirmed the employee will be offered a specialist audiological or medical referral. Test results and their implications will be made known to the employee.
- 6.10 At cessation of employment with CQUniversity, staff who work in or in the vicinity of excessive noise will undergo a final audiometric test. The employer's supervisor is responsible for ensuring that this final test is conducted and will submit an email request to the OHS Unit upon receipt of the employee's resignation.
- 6.11 If a NIHL has been diagnosed:
  - the employee is entitled to lodge a compensation claim
  - a CQUniversity Incident Report and a supporting medical certificate must be lodged
  - CQUniversity will provide audiometric test results to the assessor
  - the assessor will advise the OHS Unit concerning the acceptance of the claim

If the claim is accepted, the OHS Unit will manage the compensation claim under the CQUniversity Rehabilitation.

## **Education and Training**

All individuals who are required to work in 'hearing protection use areas' will be provided with information regarding the noise levels and the requirements for suitable attenuated hearing protection for the respective area.

Work Area Supervisors responsible for the supervision or teaching of staff and/or students are responsible for:

- ensuring that individuals under their supervision have been educated regarding these procedures to ensure that health risks associated with noise exposure is understood and that they comply with these procedures.
- understanding the risks involved and compliance with these procedures
- advising their supervisor concerning difficulties in achieving compliance.

Training objectives must result in:

- detailing the risks to hearing
- providing the steps that can be taken to reduce such risks; and

- the use and maintenance of hearing protection equipment

## Considerations of Noise Control Measures

### 6.12 New Plant and Workplaces

Invitations for tenders to supply new plant should specify a maximum acceptable level of noise emission. Suppliers should provide noise emission data. Table 5 in the Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work Code of Practice 2011 (LINK) provides the suggested pro-forma.

New workplaces and installation sites for new plant in existing workplaces are to be designed and constructed to ensure exposure to noise is as low as possible. If new plant is likely to expose persons to excessive noise, design features are to include engineering noise control measures.

### 6.13 Existing Plant and Workplaces

Once the Noise Assessment has been conducted and the need to reduce noise exposure is established, the task of control the noise can be addressed. Priority should be given to those noise sources that contribute to higher noise exposure levels to the largest number of individuals.

There are two basic engineering noise control measures for managing noise levels:

- engineering control of the source – the preferred method of permanently removing the noise; and
- engineering control of the noise transmission path – diverting airborne energy (noise) and structure-borne energy vibrations.

The need for controls should be considered with production methods and/or processes and may involve modification, partial redesign or replacement of noise-emitting objects.

## 7 RESPONSIBILITIES

### Compliance, Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 CQUniversity management have a duty to exercise due diligence to ensure that CQUniversity complies with relevant legislation (e.g. Work Health and Safety Act, Work Health and Safety Regulations, Codes of Practice, Guides).

CQUniversity staff, students, contractors and their staff, and all visitors at CQUniversity worksites (including any work activities that are conducted off-site) have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and must not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons. They must comply with any reasonable instruction and co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to health and safety at the workplace.

The OHS Unit of CQUniversity assists management and others to facilitate compliance, monitoring and review.

Please also refer to the [Work Health and Safety Roles and Responsibilities Procedure](#).

### Reporting

- 7.2 Non-compliances with this procedure are to be reported to via the OHS Incident Report Form and will be investigated as an OHS Incident.

### Records Management

- 7.3 All records relevant to this document are to be maintained in a recognised University recordkeeping system.

## 8 DEFINITIONS

Refer to the University [glossary](#) for the definition of terms used in this policy and procedure.

Other definitions in relation to Work Health and Safety can be located in the respective legislative documentation (e.g. Work Health and Safety Act, Work Health and Safety Regulations, Codes of Practice, Guides)

## 9 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

### Related Policy Document Suite

[OHS Incident Report Form](#)

### Related Legislation and Supporting Documents

Australian Standard AS/NZS1269:2005 Occupational noise management

Australian Standard AS/NZS1269.4:2005 Occupational noise management – Auditory assessment

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