CITY OF HAMILTON - CORPORATE SAFETY PROCEDURE

DEVELOPED BY: CORPORATE WORKPLACE SAFETY SECTION    PROCEDURE #: COH-RQ-WI-028

DATE:  2005-06-30    APPROVED BY: Corporate Management Team

UNDER REVIEW

HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE:

a) To implement a "hearing conservation program" promoting the proper management of high noise level work environments within the City of Hamilton, to ensure the protection and health of employees.

b) To ensure that the management of high noise level work environments will be achieved through the progressive implementation of engineering controls, administrative controls and the proper use, care and maintenance of personal "hearing" protection equipment, as may be required.

c) To support the existing City of Hamilton "Personal Protective Equipment Procedure" which requires that: --

1. When regularly exposed to noise levels in excess of 85 decibels for an 8 hour shift, all workers in the immediate vicinity shall wear approved hearing protection.

2. In all buildings or fixed structures where noise levels in excess of 85 decibels may exist, the area of possible noise exposure shall be evaluated and tested in accordance with CSA Standard Z107.56 – Measurement of Occupational Noise Exposure, and clearly marked by a sign at all accesses indicating the following:

"DANGER"
HAZARDOUS NOISE LEVELS -- ____DBA
HEARING PROTECTION REQUIRED FOR EXPOSURE IN EXCESS OF ___ HRS
3. If a disagreement exists as to the requirement for hearing protection the worker shall wear the protection until an investigation by the joint health and safety committee in consultation with the Corporate Workplace Safety Section is completed and indicates otherwise.

And

d) That workers, who regularly work in areas of high noise exposure, are properly monitored, as part of an agreed upon “audiometric screening process”, to ensure that they are adequately protected by the control programs, such as training and the personal protective equipment issued by the employer. These “audiometric” tests shall be conducted annually and shall incorporate a refresher training program on proper equipment selection, fit, care and maintenance of the provided PPE.

II. SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITY:

Applies to all City of Hamilton workers, who regularly work in high noise level areas for the full duration of their shift, and to work locations where audits have indicated that noise control and/or "hearing protection" may be required.

Also refer to procedure – PPE (COH-RQ-WI-010)

Corporate Workplace Safety Section:

1. Will assist departments in establishing protocols to ensure that all selected hearing conservation program requirements meet legislative standards.

2. Provide technical assistance for determining the need for noise abatement controls or hearing protection (PPE).

3. Provide technical assistance in the selection of appropriate hearing protection.

4. Assist departments in acquiring the proper "audiometric testing" protocols for their employees.

Department:

1. Ensure that an assessment is conducted on all high noise level areas identified within the Department and to ensure that appropriate engineering controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment are implemented.
2 Ensure that employees use the controls implemented and wear hearing protection issued, as required.

3 Ensure all workers who use hearing protection are properly trained, assessed and are offered the opportunity to participate in the audiometric testing program provided.

4 Ensure that a competent person/s is/are designated to co-ordinate the hearing conservation program and the audiometric testing program within the Department.

The Worker shall:

1. Participate in the required audiometric testing programs and use the employer supplied hearing protection in accordance with the training provided. It is understood that whereas OHSA requires an employer to establish a medical surveillance program, that participation by workers is strictly voluntary.

2. Clean, disinfect, inspect, and store the supplied hearing protection in accordance with the training provided and the manufacturer’s instructions.

3. **Report all hearing protection problems or noise related concerns to the immediate supervisor.**

III. **PROCEDURE:**

1) Each Department shall ensure that a competent person is designated to co-ordinate the Hearing Conservation Program within the Department.

2) Each Department shall complete an assessment of all high noise level areas and/or occupations within their Department in consultation with their respective [Joint Health and Safety Committees](#).

3) Once identified, each potential high noise area or job will be evaluated by the Joint Health and Safety Committee, in consultation with the Department Safety Advisor to ensure the proper controls and PPE are available and provided.

4) Each Department where high noise levels have been determined as a hazard shall set up, through the Hearing Conservation Program Coordinator, annual audiometric testing for all workers exposed to high noise level areas or occupations.
The audiometric testing shall be performed by qualified, trained technicians, certified by an approved Occupational Health Organization and approved by the Corporate Workplace Safety Section. Departments may use internal or external expertise to establish this testing program.

Results of the tests shall be kept in the division of the Human Resources Department designated to maintain all such medical documentation.

NOTE:
Workers and their supervisors shall be held accountable for violations of health and safety rules, regulations, and procedures. Disciplinary action, where necessary, will be dictated by the City of Hamilton disciplinary procedure and will be based on the merits of the specific case.

Prior to disciplinary measures being taken, management is advised to consult with Labour Relations.