



Hearing Conservation Standard

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard is to provide minimum requirements to protect employees from occupational noise exposures and hearing impairment. In addition, all employees must follow mandatory local, state, and federal statutory rules and regulations.

2. SCOPE

This Standard is applicable to employees of Expand Energy (EXE), its affiliates or subsidiaries performing work on Expand properties or on the company's behalf.

Contractors **shall** have their own standard that meets or exceeds regulatory requirements.

3. DEFINITIONS

Action Level - A noise exposure level equal to or greater than an 8-hour time weighted average (TWA) of 85 decibels (dB), measured by a sound level meter set to "A-Weighting" (shown as dB(A)) and slow response or a dose of 50% as measured by a dosimeter.

Annual Audiogram - Repeated audiograms for employees exposed to Action Level noise are used to compare the results of previous tests for determination of any shift in the employees' hearing acuity.

Area Sound Level Survey - The sampling strategy designed to identify employees and work areas to include in the Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) and to enable the proper selection of hearing protection.

Baseline Audiogram - The initial test that establishes a level for comparison to subsequent audiograms.

Covered Employee - Employee exposed to occupational noise at or above the action level of 85 dB(A) for an 8-hour TWA and is subject to all the requirements set within the Hearing Conservation Program.

Decibel (dB) - A unit of measurement of sound level.

dB(A) - Decibel measured on A-weighting scale. Due to the close correlation between the A-weighted scale and the potential loss of hearing from prolonged noise exposure, this metric is used to measure occupational noise exposure.

Dosimetry Testing - The measurement of noise in the workplace environment whether continuous, intermittent, or impulse levels that range from 80 to 130 decibels.

Hearing Conservation Program – A program that strives to prevent initial occupational hearing loss, preserve and protect remaining hearing, and equip workers with the knowledge and hearing protection devices necessary to safeguard themselves.

Hertz – unit of frequency, equal to one cycle per second.

Noise Dose - Noise dose is the total sound exposure a person receives over a specific time period, expressed as a percentage of a maximum allowable, safe exposure limit. A 100% dose means a worker has reached the maximum permitted limit (e.g., 90 dBA for 8 hours per OSHA).

Noise Dosimeter - An instrument that integrates a function of sound pressure over a period of time in such a manner that it directly indicates a noise dose.

Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) - The maximum amount or concentration of a chemical, substance or other physical agent, such as high-level noise, that an employee may be exposed to under OSHA regulations.

Shall – Denotes a minimum requirement to conform to the Standard. To aid the reader, “shall” requirements are identified in bold. Any deviation from a minimum requirement must be approved via the Standard Exception Form.

Should – Denotes a recommendation, or that which is advised, but not required to conform to the Standard

Standard Threshold Shift (STS) - The standard threshold shift is a change in hearing relative to the baseline audiogram of an average of 10 decibels at 2000, 3000, and 4000 hertz (Hz) in either ear.

Time Weighted Average (TWA) - Average exposure within the workplace to any hazardous contaminate or agent using the baseline of an 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week work schedule.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors

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- Ensure appropriate hearing protection is available for employees and that it is worn as required by this program.
 - Identify and communicate high noise areas by posting signs that state hearing protection is required.
 - Identify changes in personnel responsibilities, processes or equipment that may result in employee noise exposures at or above 85 dBA. Rule of thumb: Any work area where raising your voice is required to talk to someone standing next to you would be considered a candidate for a sound level survey.
 - Inform the HSER Department of potential high noise conditions that need to be assessed.
 - Ensure covered employees receive audiograms (including baseline audiograms) and training annually.
 - Provide monitoring reports, noise surveys, and dosimetry results to employees, as requested.
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Employees

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- Repeat testing whenever workplace changes increase noise exposure or render protective equipment inadequate.
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- Wear hearing protection properly when performing tasks in high noise areas.
 - Maintain hearing protection. Request and obtain new hearing protection when needed.
 - Covered Employees **shall** complete audiograms and training annually.
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HSER

- Maintain and update the Hearing Conservation Standard and Hearing Conservation Program.
 - Ensure periodic area sound level surveys are conducted when changes in personnel responsibilities, processes or equipment may result in employee noise exposures at or above 85 dBA.
 - Analyze sound level survey data to determine if personnel noise dosimetry tests are warranted.
 - Arrange dosimetry testing with affected employees to determine if an employee's exposure may be equal to, or greater than, the action level.
 - Provide personal dosimetry test results to affected employees who are exposed at or above the action level.
 - Implement engineering and/or administrative methods to maintain employee exposures below the action level whenever feasible.
 - Provide guidance on the selection of hearing protection to employees and management.
 - Maintain dosimetry records for at least two years and audiometric test records of the affected employee for the duration of their employment, plus 30 years.
 - When an annual audiogram indicates an STS, provide written notification to the employee.
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5. REQUIREMENTS

5.1 NOISE EXPOSURE

Operational tasks and work areas with an expected exposure of 85 dBA or greater **shall** be evaluated to identify each high noise level source and the associated noise level, as well as occupational noise exposure for workers (including similar exposed groups).

The evaluation **shall** include all continuous, intermittent, and impulsive noise within an 80 dB to 130 dB range and **shall** be performed during a typical work situation. Monitoring and evaluations **shall** be repeated whenever changes occur that may increase noise exposure.

Hearing protection **shall** be utilized in areas where exposure to noise levels are at or above 85 dBA for an 8-hour TWA for workers and/or areas with posted signage.

5.1.1 MONITORING EQUIPMENT

All occupational sound level surveys **shall** be conducted with monitoring equipment which has been categorized by ANSI as either Type 1 or Type 2 and that has been properly calibrated in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Both pre-test and post-test calibrations **shall** be conducted with an acoustic calibrator that has been properly calibrated in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

The parameters of the monitoring equipment will be set to the A-weighted scale, to a minimum threshold of 80 dBA, to a maximum threshold of 140 dBA, and on slow response.

5.2 HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Workers who are determined to be potentially exposed to occupational noise levels at or above 85 decibels for an 8-hour time-weighted average **shall** be included in a Hearing Conservation Program, which includes periodic noise exposure monitoring, annual audiometric testing for covered personnel, employee training, and use of hearing protection.

5.3 AUDIOMETRIC TESTING

Audiometric testing **shall** be conducted annually for employees included in the Hearing Conservation Program (i.e., Covered Employees).

Audiometric testing **shall** be completed within 6 months of an employee's first determined exposure at or above the action level, to establish a valid baseline audiogram against which subsequent audiograms can be compared.

The testing **shall** be administered by a licensed or certified audiologist, an otolaryngologist (ENT specialist) or other physician, or by a technician who is certified by the Council of Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation (CAOHC).

Audiometric testing administrators **shall** be responsible for:

- Conducting tests using equipment and examination room(s) that meet the applicable current American National Standards Institute (ANSI) specifications
- Evaluating each employee's annual audiogram and comparing that employee's baseline audiogram to determine (1) if the audiogram is valid and (2) if a Standard Threshold Shift has occurred
- Properly documenting the basis for workers' removal from the Hearing Conservation Program
- Providing HSER with test results

5.4 STANDARD THRESHOLD SHIFT (STS)

If an STS is determined to have occurred, the employee **shall** be notified of the STS and **shall** undergo a retest within 30 days.

If the results of the retest confirm an STS has occurred, a determination of work-relatedness **shall** be conducted:

- Review by a medical professional and HSER of employee's past audiograms, informational statements provided by the employee, PPE used, and noise surveys conducted for the employee's current and previous operational position **shall** be used to determine work-relatedness of the STS.
- The employee **shall** receive written notification within 21 days of the determination.

If the determination of work-relatedness finds the STS is a result of occupational noise exposure, then:

- The employee **shall** be refitted and retrained in the use of hearing protection.
- The STS **shall** be documented as a recordable hearing loss on EXE's OSHA 300 log and the corporate recordkeeping system.

If the STS is determined to be non-work related:

- Notify the employee of the need for a medical exam if a condition has occurred that is suspected to be unrelated to the use of hearing protection.

A hearing loss will be recorded on the OSHA 300 log if it meets all of the following criteria:

The hearing loss is a work-related STS in one or both ears, and

- The employee's total hearing level is 25 dB or more above audiometric zero (averaged at 2000, 3000, and 4000 (Hz) in the same ear(s) as the STS.

5.5 EXEMPTIONS

In accordance with OSHA, employees engaged in oil and gas well drilling and servicing operations are not required to be included in the Hearing Conservation Program. The following **shall** be required for exempt personnel:

- Operational tasks with an expected exposure of 85 dBA or greater be evaluated using sound level surveys or dosimetry testing
- For exposure levels requiring hearing protection, ensure:
 - employees are provided and utilize the appropriate hearing protection

5.6 DOCUMENTATION

The following records **shall** be retained:

- Audiometric test results
- Hearing Protection training records
- Area sound level surveys and dosimetry results
- Copy of Employee Notification for STS
- Documentation for removing employees from the HCP

An accurate record of all audiometric testing is to be maintained by the contract testing organization. Employee audiometric test records are to be maintained for at least the duration of the affected employee's employment plus 30 years.

Employee dosimetry test results **shall** be maintained for at least two (2) years by the HSER Department. Copies of test results will be made available to employees tested.

Records of area sound level surveys will be maintained for at least two (2) years by the HSER Department.

6. TRAINING

Training **shall** be provided to personnel:

- Upon initial assignment and then biennially thereafter
- Annually if included in the Hearing Conservation Program

Hearing conservation training **shall** include:

- The effects of noise on hearing
- The purpose of hearing protectors
- The advantages and disadvantages of the various types of hearing protectors
- Instruction on selection, fitting, use and care of hearing protection devices

- Requirements of the Hearing Conservation Program
- The purpose of audiometric testing, and an explanation of the test procedures

7. AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

Audits **shall** be periodically conducted by HSER in order to confirm compliance with this Standard.

8. STANDARD EXCEPTIONS

Requirements outlined in this Standard **shall** be followed, unless a Standard Exception is filed on behalf of, and with the approval of the Operations Manager. The Company's Standard Exception Form is to be utilized to properly document any exceptions.

9. REFERENCES

- OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1020 – Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records
- OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95 – Occupational Noise Exposure
- OSHA 29 CFR 1904.10 – Recording Criteria for Cases with Occupational Hearing Loss

10. DOCUMENT CONTROL TABLE

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Originating Department: HSER				
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Version	Issue Date	Description	Author(s)	Approved By
1.0	06/25/2026	New Standard for EXE.	Katie Rhoads	OGB