

# UMA HEARING CONSERVATION PLAN

## Administration

- This written hearing conservation plan serves as a record of the details of the hearing conservation program in place at UMA.
- This program is in place to protect the hearing of all workers in UMA.
- Elements of the hearing conservation program include:
  - Monitoring,
  - Audiometric testing program,
  - Hearing Protection,
  - Training and Information, and
  - Recordkeeping.
- The Projects, Environmental & Safety Manager (PESM) has overall responsibility for the Hearing Conservation Program. The PESH shall review and update the program as necessary.
- Copies of the written program may be obtained from the PESH in the Safety Department.

## Responsibilities

- Participation and support of the program by Supervisors, Team leaders, Employees, Administration staff, Contractors, and Visitors is essential for the efforts to be successful.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Identification of high noise areas in the plant.
- Providing employee education about the effects of noise and ways to preserve hearing.
- Use of personal hearing protectors (Plugs and Muffs).
- Schedule employees for hearing test (audiometry).
- Engineering changes to reduce or isolate machine noise.

The Employee is responsible for:

- Using the hearing protection devices supplied in accordance with instructions of the program
- Maintaining the hearing protection in a clean and working condition.
- Report hearing or hearing protection problems to supervisor immediately.
- Participate in annual Hearing Conservation training.
- Participate in annual hearing tests with a certified Audiologist.

The Facility Maintenance Supervisor is responsible for:

- Evaluating noise control alternatives for reducing or isolating machine noise.
- Designing and implementing approved noise control modifications.

The Certified Audiologist is responsible for:

- Conducting hearing tests.
- Discussing test results with employee tested.
- Referring employees for additional evaluation as needed.
- Fitting ear protectors.
- Summarizing employee hearing trends.

## Monitoring

- The monitoring program is in place to provide an ongoing means of determining employee exposure to noise and protect employees based on excessive exposure.
- When information indicates that any employee's exposure may equal or exceed an 8-hr time-weighted average of 85 decibels, Uchiyama Mfg America LLC will monitor noise levels using a dosimeter.
- UMA currently uses dosimeters through company insurance carrier and receives reports from the same concerning the noise levels within the plant.

# **UMA HEARING CONSERVATION PLAN**

- Additionally, monitoring is repeated whenever a change in production, process, equipment, or controls increases noise exposures to the extent that either additional employees may be exposed at or above the action level or the attenuation provided by hearing protectors used by employees may be rendered inadequate to meet the requirements of the noise reduction.
- Currently only Metal Press employees are under the hearing conservation program.
- The dosimeter testing/measuring identified this area as the only area with noise levels that exceed the action level of 85 dba.
- Monitoring also provides the means to identify all employees for inclusion in the hearing conservation program and to select proper hearing protection.
- UMA notifies employees exposed at or above 8-hr time-weighted average of 85 decibels of the results of the monitoring through the Weekly Safety Briefings, and the new employee orientation.
- Uchiyama Manufacturing America LLC provides an opportunity for affected employees or their representatives to observe any noise measurements conducted through participation in the sample testing or
- Uchiyama Manufacturing America LLC selects a variety of types of Hearing Protection Devices for affected employees which provides minimum protection of Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) of 26 to reduce the noise hazard of the worst case scenario at UMA to below the action threshold of 85dba.
- The audiometric testing program is in place and available at no cost to all affected employees to ensure that noise exposures are kept at proper levels.

## **Audiometric Testing Program**

- The program ensures that a valid baseline audiogram is established for exposed employees within 6 months of their first exposure or within one year if mobile vans are used, with employees wearing hearing protection for any period exceeding six months; UMA uses UNC Health ENT for baseline and annual testing and currently all new employees must attend our hearing conservation training within 90 days of becoming a permanent employee.
- Audiometric testing is repeated annually for the Standard Threshold Shift and Baselines, if needed.
- UMA determines if standard threshold shift has occurred.
- The UNC Audiologist will determine if there is a potential STS of an employee and at that time, UMA will schedule a retest through alternate local resources and use those test results as the annual testing IAW 29 CFR 19.10.95(g)(7)(ii).
- If subsequent audiometric testing of an employee whose exposure to noise is less than an 8-hr (time weighted average) TWA of 90 decibels indicates that a standard threshold shift is not persistent, UMA informs the employee of the audiometric interpretation by notifying the employee within 21 days.

## **Hearing Protection**

- UMA makes hearing protectors available to each affected employee exposed to the 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels or greater at no cost to the employee.
- HPDs are available (hanging on the wall) at the plant entrance and the entrances to manufacturing floor areas that require the use of HPDs.
- There are additional HPDs in various locations throughout the plant for replacement use.
- If an employee is not comfortable wearing these one-time HPDs, the employee or affected person should contact a supervisor for replacements of a different type.
- UMA ensures that employees have a variety of suitable protectors that attenuate (lower) employee exposure at least to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels, or lower for employees who experienced a standard threshold shift in their hearing
- UMA provides one-time use foam formable HPDs and reusable HPDs such as earmuffs and preformed/pre-molded ear plugs.

# **UMA HEARING CONSERVATION PLAN**

- UMA ensures for adequacy of the hearing protection attenuation for the specific noise environments in which the protector will be used, according to specifications given in an appendix to the standard using the NRR.
- UMA reevaluates attenuation whenever employee noise exposures increase to the extent that current hearing protectors no longer provide attenuation, and then provides more hearing protection, by using the

## **Training and Information**

- Uchiyama Manufacturing America LLC has instituted a hearing protection program for each employee exposed to a noise at or above and 8-hr time-weighted average of 85 decibels.
- UMA ensures employees participation in the hearing protection training program by mandating that affected employees are required to get baseline hearing tests and all employees receive Hearing Conservation training.
- Also, when employees are identified as violating HPDs where required, will receive disciplinary action.
- UMA makes copies of the standard available to affected employees or their representatives by making the OSHA standard available at all times for viewing in the safety office and on the safety bulletin board in the cafeteria.
- There is also an abbreviated Occupational Noise Exposure Standard and Hearing Conservation Amendment on each communication board.
- This plan is also available at all times for associates to review on each department floor computer.
- UMA repeats the training program annually. We update the training material to be consistent with changes in the protective equipment and work processes performing Job Safety Analysis reviews annually.
- Annual Training performed at UMA assures that each affected associate is informed of at least the following information:
  - The effects of noise on hearing;
  - The purpose of hearing protectors, the advantages, the disadvantages, and attenuation of various types and instructions on selection, fitting, use, and care; and
  - The purpose of audiometric testing, and an explanation of test procedures.

## **Recordkeeping**

- Recordkeeping is an essential element of the hearing conservation program, since it is the means by which hearing levels are tracked and assessed over a period of years.
- UMA has in place a series of measures to maintain comprehensive and up-to-date records.
- UMA maintains accurate records of employee exposure measurements according to the following method:
  - Through electronic records from USMHE, UMA maintains accurate records of employee audiometric test records.
  - UMC Helth Ear Nose & throat ENT provides documentation of baselines and annual testing.
- UMA retains noise exposure measurement records and audiometric test records as required by OSHA.
  - They are in electronic format and maintained both electronically and hard copy in each individual personnel record.
- UMA provides access to records to employees, former employees, representatives designated by the individual employee, and OSHA, upon request, viewing records is performed through the HR department.
- In addition, when an employee experiences a standard threshold shift, and the standard threshold shift is work-related, and the employee's total hearing loss equals or exceeds 25 dB from audiometric zero in the same ear(s) as the standard threshold shift, then the hearing loss case must be recorded on the OSHA 300 Log, in accordance with 29 CFR 1904.

## **Additional Information**

- Any questions, concerns, or suggestions can be directed towards the PESM.