

WAC 296-20-1101 Hearing aids and masking devices. The department or self-insurer is responsible for replacement or repair of hearing aids damaged or lost due to an industrial accident only to the extent of restoring the damaged item to its condition at time of the accident. If the hearing aid is repairable and the worker determines he prefers replacement, the department or self-insurer is responsible only to the extent of the cost to repair the original and the worker is responsible for the difference between repair and replacement costs.

When the department or self-insurer has accepted a hearing loss condition either as a result of industrial injury or occupational exposure, the department or self-insurer will furnish a hearing aid (hearing aids when bilateral loss is present) when prescribed or recommended by a physician.

The department or self-insurer will bear the cost of:

- (1) Repairs due to normal wear;
- (2) Replacement due to normal wear;
- (3) Replacement upon request five years after the issue date of the current hearing aid; and
- (4) Battery replacement for the life of the hearing aid.

If the worker has been issued a linear analog hearing aid and it becomes inoperable or if the worker is unable to hear, the department or self-insurer will replace the linear analog hearing aid with a non-linear digital or nonlinear analog hearing aid in accordance with existing medical aid rules and fee schedules and at no cost to the worker even if the linear analog hearing aid is repairable.

In cases of accepted tinnitus, the department or self-insurer may provide masking devices under the same provisions as outlined for hearing aids due to hearing loss.

Provision of masking devices and hearing aids require prior authorization.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 51.04.020(1) and 51.04.030. WSR 19-08-076, § 296-20-1101, filed 4/2/19, effective 5/15/19. Statutory Authority: RCW 51.04.020, 51.36.080, 7.68.030, 7.68.080. WSR 08-05-093, § 296-20-1101, filed 2/15/08, effective 3/22/08. Statutory Authority: RCW 51.04.020(4), 51.04.030, and 51.16.120(3). WSR 81-01-100 (Order 80-29), § 296-20-1101, filed 12/23/80, effective 3/1/81.]