

WAC 296-307-63235 Identification and correction of deficiencies in a hearing loss prevention program. (1) The employer must use audiometric testing to identify hearing loss, which may indicate program deficiencies;

(2) The employer must take appropriate actions when deficiencies are found with the employer's program.

A deficiency may be indicated when:

(a) Any employee experiences measurable hearing loss indicated by a standard threshold shift;

OR

(b) Any employee isn't wearing appropriate hearing protection during an audit when auditing is used in place of baseline audiograms for short term employees (see WAC 296-307-638, Option to audiometric testing).

Note: A standard threshold shift or audit deficiency does not necessarily indicate that a significant hearing loss has occurred. These criteria are intended to help identify where there may be flaws in the employer's hearing loss prevention program that can be fixed before permanent hearing loss occurs. There are additional statistical tools and tests that may be used to improve the effectiveness of the employer's program. Staff conducting audiometric testing and auditing may be able to suggest additional ways to improve the employer's hearing loss prevention program and tailor it to the worksite.

(3) The employer must evaluate the following, at a minimum, when responding to a standard threshold shift:

(a) Employee noise exposure measurements;

(b) Noise controls in the work area;

(c) The selection of hearing protection available and refit employees as necessary;

(d) Employee training on noise and the use of hearing protection and conduct additional training as necessary.

Reference: The employer may use the option of auditing hearing protection (see WAC 296-307-638) for employees hired or transferred to jobs with noise exposure for less than one year. The employer may also use audiograms provided by a third-party hearing loss prevention program in some circumstances. Details of these program options are found in WAC 296-307-638, Options to audiometric testing.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, and 49.17.060. WSR 20-21-091, § 296-307-63235, filed 10/20/20, effective 11/20/20; WSR 05-01-166, § 296-307-63235, filed 12/21/04, effective 4/2/05.]