

Audiometry is an assessment of hearing ability used to detect signs of hearing loss as a possible result of noise exposure at work.

Why is it needed?

- To comply with The Control of Noise at Work Regulations (2005).
- To fulfil the employer's hearing protection / noise reduction programme.
- To detect any early noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) to enable a review of risk assessments and for remedial measures such as re-training to be taken.
- To reduce the risk of civil claims for noise induced hearing loss.

Who needs it?

- All employees working in noisy areas, as identified by risk assessment.
- Employees regularly working above the upper exposure action value, 85dB(A).
- Employees regularly working above the lower exposure action value, 80dB(A).
- Employees that have additional risk factors, such as existing hearing loss.
- Where good hearing is considered essential to an individuals or others' role health and safety.

If in doubt, Hobson Health can recommend an occupational hygienist to conduct a noise survey.

How often is it needed?

- Baseline audiometry is recommended prior to employment in a noise zone.
- Annual review for the next 2 years, then 3 yearly.
- Younger workers may need screening every six months.
- More frequently with pre-existing hearing loss or significant changes.

What is the process?

- Employers can make an audiometry appointment at Hobson Health within a soundproofed booth, or on site (if on site a very quiet private room should be provided).
- For the most accurate results, at least 48 hours away from work or loud noise is needed.
- Audiometry will be completed by a screening nurse or occupational health adviser.
- A questionnaire with relevant noise exposure history will be completed, along with an ear examination.
- If the employee has an infection or significant ear wax a follow up repeat test may be required.
- The hearing test involves wearing ear muffs and is linked to a computerised audiometer.
- The results will be compared with any previous audiometry results.
- Results will be discussed with the employee who will be advised about any recommended hearing protection and warned in the event of hearing loss.
- Where there is any concern about the results, they will be discussed with the OH Physician and a referral to the employee's GP may be required.
- A report will be sent to the employer for their records indicating any concerns and a review date.
- Hobson Health's proactive recall programme helps clients to maintain schedules.

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