

University of Alaska Anchorage	Section EHS/RMS
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANUAL</b>	Statement 11
<b>Policies and Procedures</b>	Page 1 of 2
Title <i>HEARING PROTECTION</i>	Effective Date 05/04/2012

*Hearing  
Conservation  
Program*

To help protect employee hearing, UAA has established a hearing conservation program. The program includes sound surveys, noise controls, hearing protection, and education.

*Sound Surveys*

Sound surveys are used to identify work location where hazardous noise levels exist. Employee exposures to noise are monitored periodically with a sound level meter. Contact EHS/RMS (<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/EHSRMS/ehspersonnel.cfm>) if an area or operation is suspected to have associated sound hazards.

*Noise Controls*

When possible, noise will be reduced or eliminated by modifying existing machinery and placing noise limit specification on new equipment. You can do your share by maintaining equipment in good operation, properly using noise controls when installed, and reporting noisy equipment to your supervisor when it needs attention.

*Hearing  
Protection*

Hearing protectors can be very effective but only if they fit properly and are worn correctly. Although labeled Noise Reduction Ratings (NRRs) typically range from 20-30 decibels, in practice the protection that normally can be achieved is about 10-20 decibels. The more carefully you select and wear hearing protectors, the higher your protection will be. There are several types of ear protectors. Each can be effective but some require frequent, careful cleaning and others have a

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*Use of Radios  
And MP3  
Players*

Use of entertainment devices with or without hearing protection impedes the users' ability to react to emergency situations that may arise during the course of their duties. Therefore, these types are highly discouraged if not actually prohibited during most work activities where their use is determined to be inappropriate. EHS will assist supervisors with making these types of determinations.

*Exposure  
Levels*

Ear protection must be worn when there is a possibility of hearing damage. This occurs when there is continuous exposure to certain noise levels or exposure to loud impulse or impact noise. The current permissible exposure level (PEL) and action level (for increased monitoring and evaluation) for noise is an average noise level of 85db (decibels) for a duration of eight hours. A rule of thumb is that if normal conversation can be understood about two feet away, the noise level is probably less than 90db. Proper protection is required when employees are exposed to noise of 90db for over 2 hours or 105db for over 1 hour. Employees working under these conditions will be furnished with and required to wear personal protective equipment when directed by their supervisor.

Specific areas where the noise level is regularly above 90db must be