

12.3.5 Noise Control Program

Introduction

The Dow Chemical Company's *Minimum Requirements for an Industrial Hygiene Program*, states that, when feasible, engineering controls are the preferred method of controlling exposure to chemical and physical agents. In the event that engineering controls are not feasible for controlling exposure to potentially harmful noise levels, adequate hearing protection will be furnished to employees and will be used in areas in which sound pressure levels meet or exceed 90 dBA for any length of time.

Personal Noise Exposure

The date of the last area and personnel noise survey was March 1994. Since the previous survey, job assignment responsibilities had not changed significantly.

(List data below. The following are examples:)

- The average full-shift exposures for all operations job assignments ranged from 6% (70 dBA) for Lab personnel to 46% (84 dBA) for Control B Operators (formerly Control C Operators).
- The average full-shift exposures for all maintenance job assignments ranged from 12% (75 dBA) for I&E personnel to 38% (83 dBA) for welders.
- Since the average dose for each job classification was less than 85 dBA (<50% of the OSHA allowable dose), employees are not required to participate in a formal hearing conservation program.
- Control B Operators must be remonitored if there is any change in job procedures that would have the potential to increase their overall dose.
- Audiometric testing will be performed by the Occupational Health Department during their routine biennial health surveillance checkup.

Training

Communication of the potential hazards of noise exposure, and training on the proper use and care of hearing protection should be conducted at least once every three years.

Noise-Regulated Areas

- Currently, the entire process area at this plant site is designated as "noise-regulated areas," and requiring hearing protection for entry.

Area	Hearing Protection	Noise (dBA)
All of the Process Area	Division Approved	

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Hearing Protection Tasks

- Hearing protection is also required during the performance of any *task* where noise levels may meet or exceed 90 dBA. Where equipment may produce noise levels at or above 90 dBA, temporary signs must be posted, requiring the use of hearing protection.

Hearing Protection Types

Hearing protection devices utilized at this department need to have a NRR rating of at least 22 dBA. See the PPE program for a list of approved devices.

Other devices are available through the Approved Texas Operations Personal Protective Equipment List.

Noise Abatement Plan

Plant supervision will consider the impact of new equipment installation, existing equipment modification, or process alteration on area noise levels and personal noise exposure *prior* to implementing changes. In accordance with Management of Change procedures, the plant Industrial Hygienist will be consulted. Where feasible, engineering controls will be utilized to maintain or reduce noise levels below 85 dBA.

Currently, this facility is in the process of devising a long-term noise abatement scheme.