



# UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES



FEB 3 2011

## SUBJECT: Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) Hearing Conservation Program

### Instruction 6056

(EHS)

#### ABSTRACT

This Instruction provides information on the underlying methods for identifying noise hazard areas as well as outlining requirements and responsibilities for implementing the USUHS Hearing Conservation Program.

#### **A. Reissuance and Purpose.**

This Instruction reissues USUHS Instruction 6056<sup>a</sup> and establishes procedures for conducting all aspects of the USUHS Hearing Conservation Program.

#### **B. References. See Enclosure 1.**

#### **C. Applicability.**

This Instruction applies to all University personnel (military and civilian), Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine (HMJF) employees, temporary employees, and guest workers to include hearing-impaired employees that perform duties in the University's facilities.

#### **D. Policy.**

The purpose of the USUHS Hearing Conservation Program is to provide for the identification and abatement of hazardous noise areas. It is the policy of the USUHS to ensure that this policy is in compliance with applicable Federal and DoD regulations.

#### **E. Responsibility.**

1. The Office of Environmental Health and Occupational Safety (EHS) shall:

- a. Issue personnel hearing-protection devices;
- b. Conduct noise surveys;
- c. Post signs/labels regarding ambient noise levels in areas and on equipment as appropriate;
- d. Schedule audiometric exams;
- e. Ensure that effected staff receive training and related educational materials.
- f. Maintain appropriate records.

2. Employees shall properly wear approved hearing-protection devices as prescribed in this Instruction.

3. Managers/Supervisors shall:
- a. Set an example by properly utilizing hearing-protection devices in accordance with this Instruction; and



b. Take disciplinary action in cases of known non-compliance with the guidelines provided for this program.

**F. Evaluation of Hazard.**

1. The recognition and evaluation of occupational noise exposure through noise surveys is the first step toward preventing occupational hearing loss. The purpose of the noise (sound level) survey is to document employee noise exposure as required by DoD Instruction 6055.12<sup>b</sup> and Title 29 CFR, Part 1910.95<sup>c</sup>. A noise survey will involve the following:

- a. Recording a number of sound measurements to assess and notate the machinery use by employees.
- b. Labeling or posting of noise hazardous equipment and surrounding work areas.
- c. Interviewing supervisors and employees.
- d. Evaluating hearing protection and engineering controls.

2. Noise surveys will be conducted by EHS personnel during scheduled work place audits, with noise measurement surveys performed as necessary.

**G. Control Measures.**

1. Caution Signs and Labels

All designated hazardous noise areas must be clearly identified by signs located at entrances or boundaries. Each tool or piece of equipment producing sound levels of 85 decibels (dBA) or greater will be conspicuously marked to alert personnel, except when an entire space is designated a hazardous noise area and the equipment is stationary. All caution signs and labels will be provided and posted by EHS personnel.

2. Noise Abatement

Engineering controls will be the primary means of reducing or eliminating personnel from exposure to hazardous noise.

All design approaches to reduce noise levels below hazardous levels by engineering controls will be approved by the Director, EHS.

3. Personal Hearing-Protection Devices

a. The use of personal hearing-protection devices to limit noise exposure is considered an interim protective measure while the engineering control methods are evaluated. Such devices will constitute a permanent measure only if the engineering controls are not technologically or operationally feasible. EHS will issue all personal hearing-protection devices.

b. All personnel working in or entering designated hazardous noise areas will carry hearing-protection devices at all times. When noise sources are operating, personnel will wear their hearing- protection devices regardless of the duration of exposure.

c. All supervisors and managers, by personal example and precept, will ensure compliance with the prescribed use of hearing-protection devices. Additionally, educational programs should stimulate peer pressure to strengthen compliance. In cases of noncompliance, management will consider disciplinary action as a corrective measure against the offender and the supervisor.

**H. Education.**

All personnel who routinely work in designated hazardous noise areas will receive annual training on:

1. The effects of noise on hearing.
2. The purpose of hearing protection.



3. The advantages, disadvantages, and effectiveness of various hearing-protective devices.

4. Instruction on selection, fitting, use, and care of hearing-protective devices.

5. The purpose of audiometric testing.

6. An explanation of the test procedures.

Also, they will be encouraged to use hearing-protective devices whenever they are exposed to hazardous noise during off-duty activities. Annual training will be provided by EHS.

#### **I. Hearing Conservation Program.**

##### **1. Audiometric Testing**

a. The Occupational Medicine Division in EHS will be responsible for scheduling all audiometric testing. All personnel routinely exposed to hazardous noise will be placed in a hearing testing and evaluation program. This program will include pre-placement, periodic (at least once annually), and termination audiograms. Personnel who infrequently or incidentally enter designated hazardous noise areas need not participate in the audiometric testing program.

b. Audiometric test results will be reviewed by a qualified audiologist or occupational health physician. The reviewer will examine all military and civilian occupational health records and make recommendations to the EHS Occupational Health Nurse for resolution of any problems. The input of the reviewer will be used to determine if hearing losses are a result of environmental factors.

##### **2. Access to Information and Training Materials**

a. Upon request, the Administrative Support Division (ASD) will make copies of

this Instruction and DoD Instruction 6055.12<sup>b</sup> available to University personnel. Upon request, EHS will provide University personnel with any information or materials related to the EHS training and education program on hazardous noise and hearing conservation.

b. Upon request, EHS will provide copies of all records pertaining to an employee's audiometric testing and noise exposures to present personnel, former personnel and their representatives, if designated in writing by the individual civilian employee. In addition, upon request, EHS will provide representatives of the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health with all records pertaining to the USUHS Hearing Conservation Program.

#### **J. Records.**

EHS is responsible for the selection, maintenance and storage of all records as follows:

1. As stated in Title 29 CFR, Part 1910.95<sup>c</sup> all audiometric testing data will be maintained for the duration of employment plus 30 years.

2. Results of hearing tests performed for hearing conservation purposes, as well as exposure documentation, will be a permanent part of an individual's occupational health record.

3. Noise exposure data will be kept in the work space files for a minimum of 30 years.

4. All personnel who routinely work in designated hazardous noise areas will be identified, and a current roster maintained.

**K. Effective Date.**

This Instruction is effective immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles L. Rice".

Charles L. Rice, M.D.  
President

Enclosure:  
References

**REFERENCES**

- (a) USUHS Instruction 6056, "USUHS Hearing Conservation Program," dated January 19, 1988 (hereby cancelled)
- (b) DoD Instruction 6055.12, "Department of Defense Hearing Conservation Program," dated March 26, 1991
- (c) 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1910.95, "Occupational Noise Exposure," dated July 9, 2010. Current Edition