

Executive Summary

THE BGSU HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

In 1970, the United States Congress established the right of workers to "safe and healthful working conditions" through the Occupational Safety and Health Act. This act created the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). In July 1994, Federal OSHA standards became effective for Ohio public employers, including Bowling Green State University and other state agencies through the Ohio Public Employee Risk Reduction Act. On October 7th of that same year, the BGSU Board of Trustees established the following policy: "It is Bowling Green State University's policy to comply with the occupational safety and health standards of the Ohio Public Employees Risk Reduction Act and all applicable Federal, State and Local rules, regulations and directives."

Occupational noise exposure is one of the OSHA standards adopted under the Ohio Public Employees Risk Reduction Act. This standard details specific provisions for protection against the effects of noise exposure in the workplace. The standard requires the development of a written Hearing Conservation Program, a document describing steps to protect employees from occupational noise associated with their work environment, when employees noise exposures equal or exceed a time weighted average sound level of 85 dBA. As a rule of thumb, work place hazards that may require the use of noise control measures or hearing protection devices are those areas or activities during which employees need to shout to be heard 3 feet away. The Hearing Conservation Program outlines safe practices and procedures for noise control measures and hearing protection devices used by BGSU employees.

The objective of the Hearing Conservation Program is to identify and control noise hazard areas, and to identify and protect all employees who have the potential to develop occupational noise-induced hearing loss. This program applies to all University employees, including Firelands, who work in noise hazard areas or who have the potential to develop noise-induced hearing loss as a result of their occupation. The program provides information on noise hazard assessments, employee inclusion, audiometric testing, noise control measures including hearing protection devices, and initial and annual employee training. The program also identifies the responsibilities of all parties involved including: the Occupational Safety and Health Specialist, contracted audiologist/physician, Office of Design and Construction, management (department chairpersons and directors), supervisors, and employees.

Revised: 3-21-03