BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

HEARING CONSERVATION

College/Dept: FO&M and Auxiliaries	Division: Campus Operations
	Revision: 1.0

Approval

	Name, Title	Signature	Date
Authored by:	Dustin Hughes, Safety Training Coordinator		6/23/2014
Reviewed and Approved by:	Barbara Beagles, EHS&S Director	on file	9/22/2014

Overview

This SOP outlines standards to protect hearing, and the proper use of PPE for hearing conservation. The recommendations set forth in this document are to be followed by employees working in noisy environments on the Boise State University campus.

Potential Hazards

☐ Chemical	☐ Thermal	☐ Hydraulic	☐ Electrical	☐ Slip/Trip	☐ Biological	
☐ Mechanical	☐ Radiation	☐ Pneumatic	☐ Fire	☐ Fall	☒ Other	

Hazard Specifics: Noise can hinder the ability to communicate in the workplace, and can lead to deteriorated hearing after exposure to long or short term noise. Care should be taken to protect hearing when working in noisy environments. Those using hearing protection should also be aware of the impacts of hearing protection so that it does not negatively affect workplace communication.

Additional Safety Information

Hearing protection will made available to all staff who are exposed noise at or above 85 decibels (dB(A)), when averaged over an 8 hour shift. A variety of suitable protectors shall be available. If your job tasks are noisy and you have concerns about their impact on your hearing, please contact the EHS&S office to discuss your concerns.

Procedure

To prevent permanent hearing loss it is imperative that proper protection be worn.

1. If average noise is greater than or equal to 85 dB(A), but less than or equal to 108 db(A), personnel must wear single protection.
2. If average noise is greater than 108 db(A), but less than or equal to 118 db(A), personnel must wear earplugs and noise attenuation muffs in combination.

Steps

1. **Proper insertion of a foam ear plugs**

   Step 1. Make sure your hands are free of dust and dirt to prevent transfer to plug and irritation of the ear canal.

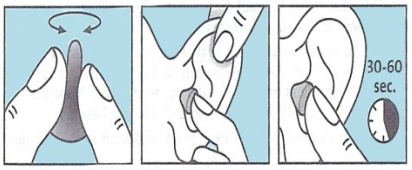
   Step 2. Begin by gently rolling the earplug with the thumb and forefinger being careful to not cause wrinkles.

   Step 3. Once a small cylinder has been achieved reach over the head with the opposite arm and lift gently upward on the ear opening the ear canal.

   Step 4. Insert the earplug and hold for thirty to sixty seconds until it conforms to the ear canal leaving just enough protruding to allow for extraction.

2. **Ear muffs**
   - In environments with average noise greater than 108 db(A), but less than or equal to 118 db(A), personnel must wear earplugs and noise attenuation muffs in combination.
   - Ear muffs may be preferred and can be used in a shop setting for convenience. Care should be taken to avoid obstruction of the seal by safety glass frames, and hair.

Inserting a foam earplug.



When improperly inserted earplugs (below) will do little to prevent hazardous noise exposure.

Hearing Conservation Plan Requirements

1. **Staff shall be trained at least annually on the following:**
   - effects of noise
   - need to protect hearing
   - purpose, advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation of various types of hearing protection
   - proper use and care of hearing protection

Requests for noise studies can be made at any time. If you feel the area you are working in would require the use of hearing protection you may request EHS&S to complete a noise study of your work environment. Please contact 426-3999 with any questions regarding hearing conservation.