

**Standard Operating Procedures Manual**  
**City of Poquoson Fire and Rescue**



**City of Poquoson  
Fire and Rescue**

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**SAFETY AND HEALTH**

**SOP#:** SH 1.00

**Title:** Hearing Conservation

**Effective Date:** 11/30/2008

**Revised Date:** 11/30/2008

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Fire Chief's Signature

  
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City Manager's Signature

**HEARING CONSERVATION**

**I. PURPOSE**

To provide minimum requirements for establishing a hearing conservation program for the prevention of occupational noise-related hearing loss.

This SOP is not all-inclusive and cannot encompass all situations that may be encountered.

**II. Reference**

Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) Standard for General Industry CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure.

NFPA 1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program, 7.16.1.

NFPA 1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program, 7.16.2.

### **III. Definition**

Department Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) requires employee exposed to hazardous noise levels at or above an 8-hour time weighed average of 85 dBA or more (Action Limit), or 140 Db peak sound pressure (impulse or impact), to utilize engineering controls, if feasible, to reduce employee's noise exposure. Only when it has been determined that engineering controls are technologically unavailable or cost prohibitive will the utilization of personal hearing protective devices be considered a permanent means of control.

### **IV. POLICY/POSITION**

It is the policy of the Poquoson Fire/Rescue Department (PFD) to provide and to operate with the highest possible level of safety and health for all members. The prevention and reduction of obtaining a hearing loss while performing firefighter/medic functions are the goal of the PFD and shall be a primary consideration at all times.

### **V. RESPONSIBILITY**

Management will:

- Comply with and enforce the Department HCP.
- Ensure all respective employees participating in the HCP receive baseline and annual audiometric testing and training.
- Ensure, if possible, to obtain audiometric evaluation on exiting employees.
- Ensure all work areas and equipment that has the potential of being a noise hazard is identified as such, including all work performed off site.
- Ensure hearing protectors are available for all employees or visitors that enter or work around noise hazards.

**VI. PROGRAM**

Noise Monitoring performed by citizens or employees at stations will be reviewed to determine if hearing protection is required at the location or with equipment.

- Hearing Protectors shall be provided by the Fire Department.
- Types of hearing protection devices provided will be inserts and/or muffs.
- All Department employees exposed to equipment or performing tasks that generate noise levels of 90 dBA or more required to wear inserts or muffs.
- Employee shall wear insert and muffs when equipment generates noise levels over 108 dBA.
- Employees are required to wear hearing protection while:
  - Operating power tools and equipment, e.g., chain saws, K-12 saws, lawn mowers, string trimmer, etc.
  - Filling air bottles while utilizing the in-house compressors.
  - Performing routine apparatus checks and cleaning, unless engine is shutdown.
  - Engage in training evolutions that involves working around apparatus while the engine is running.
  - Engage in other activities in which the supervisor deems the noise level may be injurious to hearing.
  - Engine and Aerial Truck Operators, when engaged in pumping operations, shall don and utilize the on-board hearing protection and radio monitor headphones as soon as possible after setting up.
- When riding on apparatus, employees shall utilize the on-board hearing protection and radio monitor headphones with the following exceptions:

- Drivers shall wear and utilize the on-board hearing protection and radio monitor headphones only when traveling in response to a fire alarm or emergency call. At all other times, when driving, drivers shall not wear hearing protection devices.
- When actively engaging in firefighting or patient care, it is imperative that personnel be able to hear clearly. For this cause, the personal hearing protection device is not issued, nor is the intent of this SOP to require it to be worn while actively engaged in firefighting or patient care.

**Equipment Requiring Hearing Protection**  
(Samples Only)

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>A-Scale (dBA)</b>
Apparatus: Diesel	87.2
Siren	126.5
Air Horn	113.0
Blower (yard)	99.0
Chain Saw: Idle Speed	106.8
Fast Speed	127.8
Circular Saw: Idle Speed	103.6
Fast Speed	119.2
Concrete Saw	104.0
Dryer	72.8
Generator (Station)	101.0

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Generator (HM-1) Fast Speed	148.7
Generator on Truck	90.6
Hurst Tool	98.5

**Equipment****A-Scale (dBA)**

Ice Machine	76.0
Mower (Push)	94.0
Mower (Riding)	97.2
Pass Device	93.7
Portable Generator	101.3
Reciprocating Saw	87.3
Vacuum: Shop	81.2
Weed Eater	97.1
Washer	71.4