Hearing Protector Fit Testing/Ensuring Appropriate Noise Protection at Work: Occupational Safety and Health Administration Bulletin

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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("OSHA") issued a Safety and Health Information Bulletin titled:

Hearing Protector Fit Testing: Ensuring Appropriate Noise Protection at Work ("Bulletin").

See SHIB 02-17-2026.

The Bulletin addresses hearing protector fit testing ("HPFT") which is described as:

- A critical advancement in workplace hearing conservation.
- Recognized as a best practice.

While HPFT is noted to not be required under OSHA's Occupational Noise Exposure standards, the Bulletin nevertheless states it can be a valuable training tool for workers.

HPFT can:

- Measure the amount of noise reduction a hearing protection device provides.
- Help train workers on what a properly inserted earplug "feels like" in the ear.
- Allows workers to select the most effective hearing protection devices that:
- Are comfortable.
- Can be inserted correctly.
- Provide adequate noise reduction while allowing them to hear important communication and warning signals necessary for safety in the workplace.

OSHA states that since its noise standards were enacted several HPFT systems have become readily available to employers.

The Bulletin addresses:

- What workplace noise exposure is considered hazardous.
- Health issues associated with excessive workplace noise.
- Prioritization of noise reduction and its benefits.
- Fact that each worker's ear canal size and shape are unique.
- Role of the HPFT to provide a measure of how well the earplug fits the worker.
- The two types of HPFT systems.

- Role of OSHA in regulating occupational noise.
- Required employer training in regard to the occupational noise exposure standard.
- Factors employers should consider when selecting an HPFT device for the workplace.
- Implementation of HPFT.

Note that the Safety and Health Information Bulletin is not a standard or regulation and does not create new legal obligations.

A copy of the Bulletin can be found here.