



# AUDIOMETRIC TESTING



Occupational noise-induced hearing loss (ONiHL) is a significant health and economic problem in Australia. Between July 2002 and June 2007 there were about 16 500 successful workers' compensation claims for industrial deafness involving permanent impairment due to noise.

*Safe Work Australia*

Excessive noise in the workplace has become a global occupational health hazard with considerable impact on productivity. Besides hearing loss, occupational noise is associated with tinnitus, cardiovascular disease, depression and an increased risk of accidents.

The Australian Standard AS/NZS 1269.4:2014 requires that a 'prescribed workplace' must provide Audiometric Testing (hearing test) for employees within 3 months of commencing work (baseline test) and then at least every 2 years thereafter. A 'prescribed workplace' is defined as one where the worker is exposed to a continuous noise of 85dB or more in an 8 hour working day or a peak exposure of 140dB and wears PPE.

**An Audiometric Test measures an individual's hearing threshold level. Specifically, it measures:**

- Hearing levels with the help of an audiometer
- The ability to discriminate between different sound intensities
- The ability to recognize pitch
- The ability to distinguish speech from background noise

Damage to hearing can occur from exposure to very loud noise for a short time or prolonged exposure to moderate noise levels and can begin immediately or gradually. Depending on the intensity of the noise and the duration of exposure, hearing loss can range from a small shift in the threshold at which sounds at different frequencies can be detected to total deafness. Typically, hearing loss is painless and thus your workers may not even be aware it.

## Key Messages

- ▶ Occupational noise-induced hearing loss (ONiHL) is a significant health and economic problem in Australia
- ▶ An audiometric test measures an individual's hearing threshold level
- ▶ JTA provides mobile onsite audiometric testing at a time to suit you
- ▶ We know and understand the legal requirements in each state
- ▶ JTA Noise has been conducting Audiometric Testing for over 30 years



Audiometric Testing allows you to identify workers who are at risk of significant hearing loss by identifying changes in their hearing threshold. Once testing has been completed, legislation requires an employee to be referred to an audiologist for further testing when there is a difference of 15dB or more from their previous test result. ONIHL is a serious condition that causes irreversible damage to the cochlear hair cells of the inner ear and is the most common cause of noise-induced hearing loss in adults. It needs to be taken seriously.

## What is the process for JTA's Audiometric Tests?

- Each employee visits our mobile unit parked conveniently onsite
- They are taken into a small, soundproof booth in the mobile unit
- Headphones are fitted over their ears
- Each ear is tested individually
- The employee indicates if they can or cannot hear certain sounds through a range of frequencies
- The test takes approximately 10 minutes

## Why use JTA's Audiometric Testing service?

- We comply with the relevant requirements of AS/NZS 1269.4:2014 - Occupational noise management – auditory assessment
- We have properly trained audiometric technicians and audiologists
- Our equipment is regularly calibrated
- We know and understand the legal requirements in each state
- We have over 30 years' experience
- We ensure a minimum amount of downtime

All audiometric test results need to be reported to employees under the relevant regulations and Australian standards. Our reporting service, Datagram, provides the following:

- A confidential letter to the employee explaining the results and providing a copy of the test
- A report for the OHS/WHS professional who is representing the employer. This alphabetical listing of all tests includes percentage loss and indicates if any further action such as a medical or audiological examination is necessary.

Audiometric Testing is a painless and non-invasive hearing test that measures a person's ability to hear different sounds, pitches, or frequencies. We provide mobile onsite audiometric testing at a time to suit you and your workforce, no matter what shifts they work. Our skilled Audiologists will ensure that your Audiometric Testing is conducted professionally and accurately in accordance with all the relevant regulations.

Noise is unwanted sound and it's everywhere around us where we live, work and play. JTA is an expert in dealing with noise control and noise mitigation whether it's from occupational or environmental sources. We'll identify and measure noise sources to assess if you need to take action, determine what's causing the noise and then focus on how to reduce or eliminate the noise to healthy and acceptable levels.

## Did you know?

- ▶ Exposure to loud noise is the most common preventable cause of hearing loss and impairment
- ▶ Occupational noise accounts for about 10% of adult-onset hearing loss.
- ▶ About 12% of the workforce was exposed to excessive noise in 2001/02.
- ▶ Research has demonstrated a link between occupational noise and employee absenteeism

*Safe Work Australia, Occupational Noise Induced Hearing Loss in Australia – Aug 2010*

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