

# Hearing Conservation



Health Hazard Information Card HH-31



## Why did MSHA develop a new noise rule?

MSHA developed the Part 62 Rule to prevent the occurrence and reduce the progression of occupational noise-induced hearing loss.

Part 62 states that a Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) must be established at every operation where any worker's noise exposure is measured at 85 dBA TWA<sub>8</sub> (50 percent of the allowable noise dose measured using 80 dBA low threshold) or higher.

## What are my employer's responsibilities in an HCP?

Your employer must:

- Make exposure determinations for each miner.
- Offer initial and annual audiograms (hearing tests) to all workers enrolled in an HCP.
- Train you in:
  - » effects of noise on hearing;
  - » purpose and value of wearing hearing protectors (HPs);

- » advantages and disadvantages of HPs offered by your employer;
- » various types of HPs offered by your employer; care, fitting, and use of each type;
- » general requirements of Part 62;
- » operator's and miner's respective tasks in maintaining noise controls; and
- » purpose and value of audiometric testing and summary of procedures.
- Allow you to choose HPs from at least two types of ear plugs and two types of ear muffs.
- Ensure that HPs are in good condition, fitted, and maintained according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Provide HPs and necessary replacements at no cost to you.
- Ensure that you wear HPs when required, including dual hearing protection (plugs and muffs) in areas where noise reaches levels of 105 dBA or higher.
- Keep full records.

## What are my responsibilities?

Your responsibilities include:

- attending training;
- wearing hearing protectors (HPs) when needed;
- keeping HPs in good condition;
- telling your employer if the HPs you selected are not effective or are damaged;
- complying with established administrative controls, such as divided work shifts;
- maintaining engineering controls in good working order, promptly reporting needed repairs and replacements; and

- reporting any signs of exposure to high noise levels, such as ringing in your ears after being exposed to noise, to your employer.

## What else can I do to protect my hearing?

You should try to avoid noisy locations and activities away from the job unless you are wearing proper hearing protection.

Remember: occupational noise-induced hearing loss is preventable.

Part 62 does not require you to take the audiograms your employer offers, but it is in your best interest to do so.

## Where can I find out more?

For additional information and assistance, contact:

- » Your local MSHA office
- » Metal/Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health  
Arlington, VA — 202-693-9630
- » Coal Mine Safety and Health  
Arlington, VA — 202-693-9510
- » Pittsburgh Safety and Health  
Technology Center  
Pittsburgh, PA — 412-386-6901

See Card HH-15 "The Hazards of Noise."