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 8 (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.

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