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HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Hearing Conservation Program

What is it?

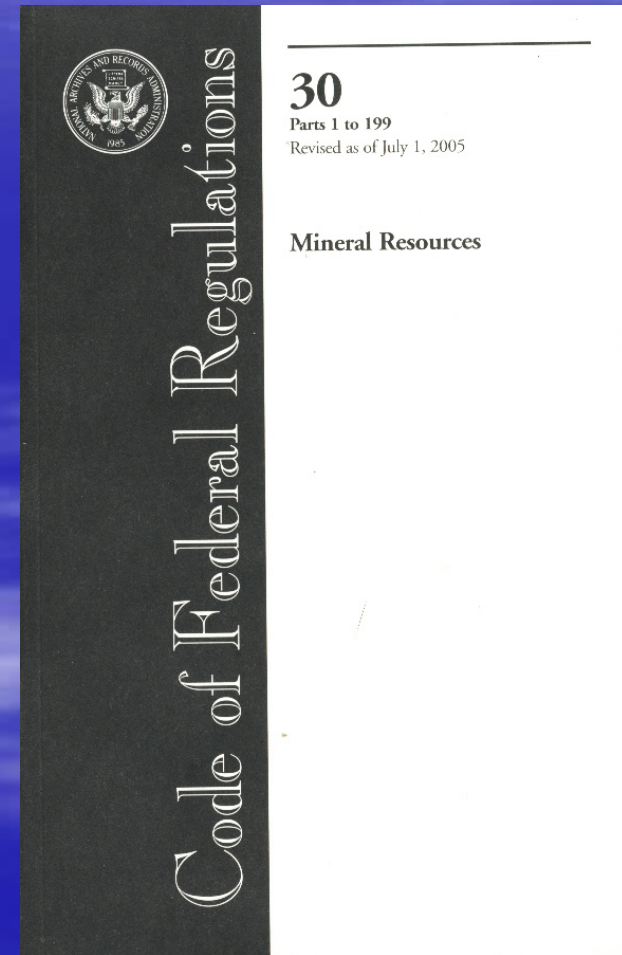
A program provided by the mine operator to reduce occupational hearing loss among mine personnel

- Monitors the miner's noise exposure via dosimeter or Sound Level Meter (SLM)
- Provides hearing protectors for protecting the miner's hearing
- Monitors the sensitivity of the miner's hearing via audiometric testing
- Trains the miner to protect their hearing

Hearing Conservation Program

It MUST include:

- A system of monitoring
- Provision and use of hearing protectors
- Audiometric testing
- Training
- Record keeping



What is a system of monitoring?

An evaluation of a miner's work environment

- A noise survey of equipment and work tasks

- Measurement of a miner's noise dose

Dosimeter



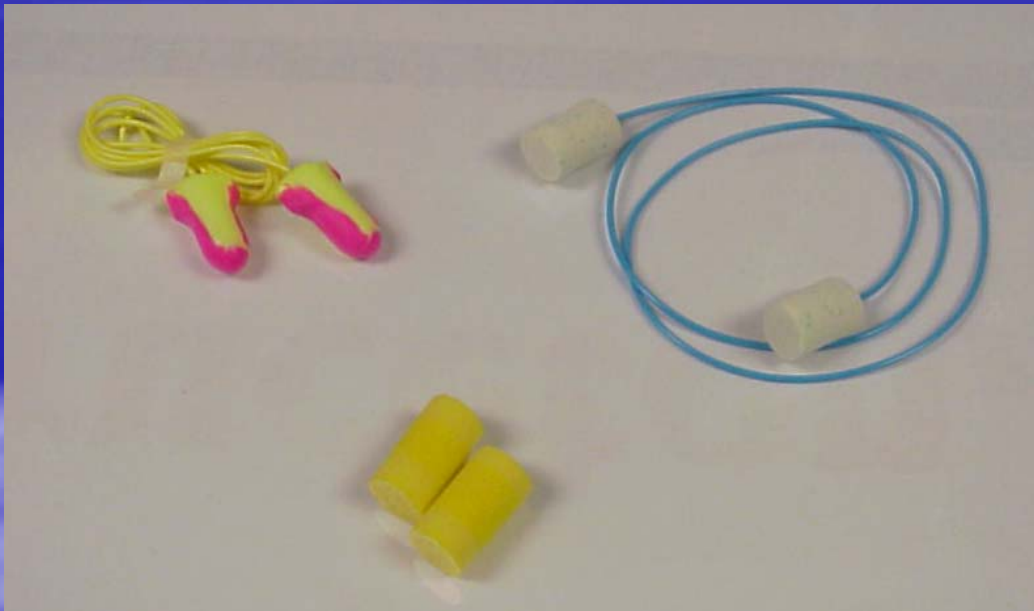
What is a system of monitoring?

An evaluation of a miner's work environment

- Operator notifies the miner of...
 - Exposure determination
 - Provided the miner has not been notified in the last 12 months
 - Action being taken if exposure...
 - Equals or exceeds the action level
 - Exceeds the permissible exposure level
 - Exceeds the dual hearing protection level
- Operator maintains a copy of miner's notification

Hearing Protectors

- Earmuffs, Earplugs, or combination of plugs and muffs



<http://www.msha.gov/1999noise/hearingprotect.xls>

Hearing Protectors

When and what type...

TWA_8 – Time-weighted Average 8-hour sound level (dBA)

D – Noise Dose (%)

- Action Level ($TWA_8 \geq 85$ dBA or $D \geq 50\%$)
 - Operator must provide two plug types & two muff types of hearing protection
 - It is the miners option to wear hearing protection, UNLESS
 - The miner has incurred a Standard Threshold Shift (STS); or
 - More than 6 months will pass before the miner can take a baseline audiogram
- Permissible Exposure Level ($TWA_8 > 90$ dBA or $D > 100\%$)
 - Miner must wear one type of operator-provided hearing protection
- Dual Hearing Protection Level ($TWA_8 > 105$ dBA or $D > 800\%$)
 - Miner must wear both earplug and earmuff type operator-provided hearing protection

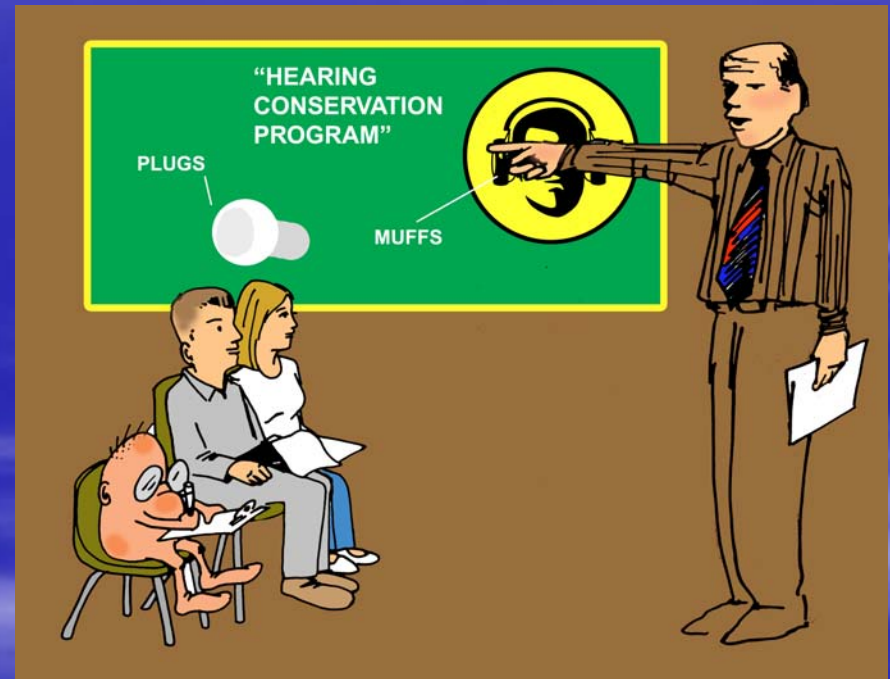
Audiometric Testing

- The operator must offer miners the opportunity to take an annual audiogram
- The miner must avoid high levels of noise for at least 14 hours prior to taking a baseline audiogram; Hearing protectors may be used as a substitute for this quiet period



Annual Training Topics

- Effects of noise on hearing
- Purpose and value of engineering controls & wearing hearing protection
- Pros and Cons of hearing protection offered
- Care, fit, and use of available hearing protection
- General requirements of CFR 30 Part 62
- Maintaining noise controls
- Purpose, value, and procedures of audiometric testing



Record Keeping

- The mine operator is required to keep accurate records of the following...
 - Training certifications
 - Notice of exposure
 - Audiogram results
 - Reportable hearing loss
- It is recommended that the miner keep copies of any information provided by the mine operator for their own record



Hearing Conservation Programs

- Miners' hearing is precious and we need to work together to preserve their quality of life

