



OSHA REGIONAL INSTRUCTION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

DIRECTIVE NUMBER: CPL-04-00-024G

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

SUBJECT: Local Emphasis Program for Noise in the Workplace

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This instruction renews a region-wide local emphasis program (LEP) for inspections in workplaces with noise hazards.

References: OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-025, Scheduling System for Programmed Inspections, January 4, 1995.

OSHA Instruction CPL 04-00-002, Procedures for Approval of Local Emphasis Programs (LEPs), November 11, 2018.

OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-163, Field Operations Manual (FOM), September 13, 2019 or successor guidance.

OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-051, Enforcement Exemption and Limitations under the Appropriations Act, May 28, 1998, (including annually updated Appendix A).

U.S. Department of Labor Strategic Plan, FY 2018-2022.

Cancellations: OSHA Regional Notice CPL 04-00-024F, Local Emphasis Program for Noise in the Workplace, October 1, 2018

State Impact: None

Action Office: All Region 1 Area Offices

Originating Office: Boston Regional Office

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By and Under Authority of:

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Regional Administrator

Executive Summary

This notice is a renewal of the OSHA Regional Instruction CPL 04-00-024, July 29, 2013, Region-Wide Local Emphasis Program for Noise in the Workplace, which provided a comprehensive framework of guidance and direction to ensure effective targeting, enforcement and outreach regarding hazards associated with workers that are exposed to high noise levels in certain industries and are at risk for developing occupational noise-induced hearing loss at workplaces in Region I, New England.

Significant Changes

The LEP review process changed from a one-year program, reviewed annually before renewal (by Regional Notice) to a five-year program (by Regional Instruction), reviewed at the mid-point and completion of the LEP.

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I. Purpose.

This instruction renews a region-wide local emphasis program (LEP) for the purpose of scheduling and conducting inspections in workplaces with high noise levels.

This LEP consists primarily of two elements. The first element is the outreach that will be conducted to raise employer and employee awareness of the hazards associated with exposure to high levels of noise. Outreach will continue throughout the duration of this LEP. The second element is an inspection targeting initiative whose goal is to reduce employee exposure to noise through enforcement. Inspections conducted under this LEP will focus on evaluating noise hazards.

II. Scope.

This instruction applies to establishments engaged in activity under the applicable North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)/Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes located in Region 1 area offices.

III. References.

- A. OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-025, Scheduling System for Programmed Inspections, January 4, 1995.
- B. OSHA Instruction CPL 04-00-002, Procedures for Approval of Local Emphasis Programs (LEPs), November 11, 2018.
- C. OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-163, Field Operations Manual (FOM), September 13, 2019.
- D. OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-051, Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations under the Appropriations Act, May 28, 1998, (including annually updated Appendix A).
- E. U.S. Department of Labor Strategic Plan, FY 2018-2022.
- F. OSHA Instruction TED 01-00-015 (TED 1-0.15A), OSHA Technical Manual, January 20, 1999.
- G. U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Industry Injury and Illness Data (<https://www.bls.gov/iif/>)
- H. U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Can you hear me now? Occupational hearing loss, 2004 – 2010*. Monthly Labor Review. July 2012.
- I. OSHA Instruction CSP 02-00-003, Consultation Policies and Procedures Manual, November 19, 2015.

J. OSHA Instruction ADM-04-00-002, OSHA Safety and Health Management System, October 5, 2016.

IV. Effective Date. This instruction renewal becomes effective on October 1, 2019

V. Expiration. Unless extended by the Regional Administrator, the LEP will expire on September 30, 2024.

VI. Background.

In accordance with the Department of Labor Strategic Plan 2018-2022, Strategic Goal 2.1 to “secure safe and healthful working conditions for America’s workers,” this LEP targets workplaces with excessive noise levels to prevent permanent hearing loss.

Approximately twenty-two million workers are exposed to potentially damaging noise each year, and thousands of workers every year suffer from preventable hearing loss due to high workplace noise levels. In 2015, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported more than 20,000 cases of work-related hearing loss (BLS, 2015).

Exposure to high noise levels can cause permanent hearing loss that cannot be corrected through surgery. High noise levels also cause temporary loss in hearing sensitivity, tinnitus, and acoustical trauma. Tinnitus is a condition in which people complain of a sound in the ear such as a hum, buzz, ring, or whistle. Tinnitus is predominantly caused by long-term exposure to high sound levels, though it can be caused by short-term exposure to very high sound levels. Acoustical trauma is temporary or permanent hearing loss due to acute exposure to excessive noise such as an explosion. Noise-induced hearing loss can impair a person’s ability to communicate and understand speech. Exposure to excessive noise can also have other health effects such as increased physiological stress, muscle tension, loss of sleep, and fatigue. Besides health effects, excessive noise levels can interfere with communication and concentration, the audibility and clarity of emergency warning devices, and a person’s ability to perform tasks.

BLS summarized occupational hearing loss data collected from 2004 – 2010 (*Can you hear me now? Occupational hearing loss, 2004 – 2010*), showed that the manufacturing and utilities industries have the highest hearing loss rate among private sector industries (excluding construction, agriculture, and oil and gas drilling and servicing industries). Other industries consistently had high rates such as the air transportation industry, food manufacturers, paper manufacturers, and fabricated metals manufacturers. OSHA inspection data through FY18 showed that the manufacturing industry had the most violations of OSHA’s occupational noise exposure standard, 29 CFR 1910.95, when looking at the first two digits of the NAICS code (32).

Based on the BLS and OSHA data, the following industries are included in the LEP:

NAICS	Description
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3323	Architectural and Structural Metals Manufacturing
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3321	Forging and Stamping
3328	Coating, Engraving, Heat Treating, and Allied Activities
3329	Other Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
3261	Miscellaneous Plastics Products
3211	Sawmills and Planing Mills
3212	Millwork, Veneer, Plywood, and Structural Wood
3219	Wood Containers
3219	Miscellaneous Wood Products
3273	Concrete, Gypsum, and Plaster Products
3279	Cut, Stone and Stone Products
3116	Meat Products
3115	Dairy Products
3118	Bakery Products

VII. Program Procedures.

- A. Outreach and Compliance Assistance Activities: Outreach activities will continue throughout the duration of the LEP.
- B. On-site Consultation Visits and Enforcement: In an employer requests an on-site consultation visit from the 21(d) State Consultation Program (for either full or limited service) and that visit is in progress, OSHA will withdraw from the premises until the consultation visit has been completed. Consultation visits are considered “in progress” from the beginning of the opening conference to the end of the correction due dates (including extensions).
- C. Inspection Scheduling: The Directorate of Technical Support and Emergency Management (DTSEM), Office of Statistical Analysis (OSA) will generate a master list of establishments in the targeted NAICS codes within Region 1 and then assign a random number to each establishment. The area office can obtain the randomized master list from OSA through the ListGen application.

Sites that have had a comprehensive health inspection within the past 24 months will be removed from the list prior to making the selections for a given year, unless the Area Director, using his/her discretion, has a compelling reason to believe that another inspection is justified.

If, throughout the duration of this LEP, an establishment falling within the targeted NAICS codes becomes known, it will be numbered and added at the end of the primary establishment list and will be eligible to be inspected if randomly selected for inclusion in a subsequent inspection cycle.

Within a cycle, the establishments may be scheduled and inspected in any order that makes efficient use of available resources. When a cycle is completed, the Area Office may generate a new cycle. All of the establishments in a cycle must be inspected before any establishments in a new cycle may be inspected. Carryovers will be allowed, as provided in OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-025.

A minimum of one inspection cycle per year will be conducted by each Area Office. All selected companies, regardless of size, will be inspected, including establishments which employ fewer than ten employees, as these employers are not currently exempt from health inspection activity under the Appropriations Act per CPL 02-00-051. Follow CPL 02-00-051 when addressing safety hazards in establishments with 10 or fewer employees in a NAICS code listed in Appendix A of that instruction.

- D. Programmed Inspections: Some establishments may be selected for inspection under one or more other OSHA enforcement initiatives (National Emphasis Program (NEP) or LEP. This LEP shall be run concurrently with other NEPs and/or LEPs. CSHOs shall use all OIS codes applicable for the inspection.
- E. Unprogrammed Inspections: This LEP will not affect the selection of inspections of employers subject to this LEP under existing OSHA unprogrammed activities. Imminent danger, fatality/catastrophe, and formal complaints will be scheduled in accordance with current OSHA policy. Health inspections initiated as a result of a referral, complaint, accident, fatality, or a catastrophe in an establishment within the targeted NAICS codes will be expanded to include an evaluation of employee exposure to noise.
- F. Referrals: All guidelines in the current FOM regarding CSHO referrals shall be followed. Based upon information obtained during the health inspection, if a safety inspection is warranted, a referral will be made to the Area Director for appropriate action.

For any programmed or unprogrammed safety inspection, such as a complaint, referral, fatality or catastrophe, in an establishment within the targeted NAICS codes, the CSHO can make a health referral if information gathered during the inspection indicates the facility contains high noise levels.

VIII. Inspection Procedures.

- A. Scope: The scope of the inspections conducted under this LEP shall generally be health inspections focusing on evaluating noise hazards. In accordance with the FOM, other health and safety hazards may be addressed based on information gathered during the inspection and walk-around. Section XI. of CPL 02-00-051 addresses handling safety hazards in establishments with 10 or fewer employees in a NAICS code listed in Appendix A of that directive.

- B. Safety and Health Considerations for CSHOs: Inspections under this LEP are to be conducted by CSHOs who have received the Safety and Health Management System (ADM 04-00-002) training on noise, training on the LEP, and training and/or experience with recognizing and evaluating noise hazards in the workplace. The Area Director will ensure that appropriate training is provided to the Area Office staff. CSHOs shall be provided with and use hearing protectors when conducting inspections under this LEP. Other personal protective equipment such as respirators, gloves, eye-protection, safety-toed shoes, etc., will be selected based on the hazards known in the targeted industries and will be worn during the course of the inspection.

CSHO self-monitoring for noise is encouraged. Real time self-monitoring (a sound level meter) is necessary to determine when hearing protection is not adequate and the situation requires a change in location or different hearing protection for the CSHO. CSHOs are also encouraged to perform self-monitoring with a noise dosimeter when noise levels are expected to exceed the action level or permissible exposure limit. In situations other than noise inspections, CSHOs may self-monitor for noise exposure any time they believe it is necessary (Chapter 27, ADM 04-00-002).

C. Procedures:

1. Upon entering, the CSHO shall verify the NAICS code of the establishment. If the NAICS code is not one of those targeted in this LEP, the CSHO shall exit the facility and code the OIS form "No Inspection."
2. During the opening conference, the CSHO shall determine the presence of noise hazards in the facility by reviewing the OSHA 300 injury and illness logs for any standard threshold shifts in hearing; if one has been established, the employer's hearing conservation program, including the use of hearing protectors, training, and audiometric testing; and noise monitoring conducted by the employer. If the review of information indicates the presence of high noise levels in the facility, the CSHO shall continue with the inspection. If the review of information indicates that high noise levels do not exist, the CSHO shall conduct a brief walk-around of the facility and obtain sound level meter readings to verify that noise levels are below OSHA's exposure limits. If the sound level meter readings are below OSHA's permissible exposure limits, the CSHO may terminate the inspection.
3. CSHOs shall conduct noise monitoring, which include sound level meter readings and full shift noise dosimetry. Noise measurements will be conducted in accordance with Section III, Chapter 5 of the OSHA Technical Manual TED 01-00-015 (TED 1-0.15A). The case file will contain documentation of noise surveys, screening, and sampling results.

4. When made available, CSHOs are encouraged to use the *Occupational Noise Exposure Reduction: Engineering Controls* guidance document, which is currently under review. The guidance document summarizes engineering control options to reduce worker exposure to noise exposure from various equipment used in general industry and construction.
5. Citations for violations of 29 CFR 1910.95 will be issued in accordance with current OSHA policy and with Section XI.B, Chapter 4 and other applicable chapters of the FOM.

IX. OIS Coding Instructions.

Inspections conducted under this LEP will be identified in the OIS as follows:

- A. The OSHA-1 for any programmed inspection under this LEP shall be marked as “Programmed Planned” in the Inspections Types, initiating and secondary type’s drop-down menu. In the Inspection Emphasis Programs section, select “R1Noise” from the local emphasis program drop-down menu. CSHO referrals are to be recorded as program-related inspections.
- B. The OSHA-1 for any unprogrammed inspection conducted under this LEP shall be appropriately marked “Unprogrammed” in the Inspections Types, initiating and secondary type’s drop-down menu. In addition, it shall be marked as “LEP” in the Inspection Emphasis Programs section. Complaints and referrals from outside federal OSHA are to be recorded as unprogrammed inspections.

X. Program Evaluation.

The Regional Office will complete a program report at the midpoint and completion of the LEP. The midpoint assessment will take place no later than September 30, 2022. The midpoint and final program report will include quantitative and qualitative measures, including recommendations regarding the continuation of this LEP. In addition to activity and impact measures, the report will include the following:

- Number of employees and/or establishments impacted by outreach activities;
- Number of employees removed from exposure.
- Number of noise violations cited;
- Percent of noise violations cited;
- List of other types of health hazards cited;
- Number of noise dosimetry measurements conducted;
- Number of overexposures documented; and
- Number of employers who implemented a hearing conservation program (i.e., number of violations of 1910.95(c)).