



## Did you say a dead dog in your trunk?

Some years ago I had the best Burmese Mountain Dog named Chester, and it was time to make final arrangements. I had a dear friend who was a vet and was willing to come to my farm to do the deed. I planned for another friend with a tractor to prepare a gravesite with a hole for my large dog. On the day I had to do this, I was disappointed that the



hole hadn't been dug. I couldn't wait any longer so I took the dog into the vet's office. I decided that since I wasn't prepared to bury him, I thought I'd just let the vet dispose of the body for me. The next day I saw that the tractor had been utilized and there indeed was a hole, but I had been too upset to see it. Chester had been a dear companion of mine and I really wanted to bury him near me, so I went back to the vet's to get him back. The vet warned me that he'd be folded up frozen. Undaunted, I picked him up and

we put him in the trunk. I just had one stop I had to make.....

Occasionally I drive too fast and I needed to stop at the courthouse to discuss a speeding ticket I probably deserved. Well, I had brought Chester's buddy, Odie along as I have this thing that all animals need to see their buddies ending from life. So When I got to the court house parking lot,

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We are now able to provide your report electronically if you prefer receiving your data that way.

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Do you know how loud it is?

All noise producing workplaces need to have a formal sound level survey on file. If you don't have one, you're not in complete compliance. Quite simply, you cannot know what levels you're trying to protect your employees from without that information.

You need a time-weighted average exposure measured from each job process that represents any exposed workforce. We do offer sound surveys with the capacity of 10 dosimeters that will yield you a report to show OSHA it's been done on individuals recently.

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I didn't know how long I would be, so I nervously tied Odie up in the shade outside to a tree on the edge of the parking lot ,as I was concerned about the temperature. I proceeded to the courtroom to wait to be called for some time. After a while, a court officer came into the room to announce in a booming voice "Does anyone here have a white dog?". I meekly raised my hand and was escorted outside. Through the glass front door, there was Odie wagging his tail and greeting the courthouse pedestrians. When the officer began scolding me that no animals were allowed on the property, I burst into tears and broken sentences about my "dead dog in the trunk " and the heat in the car and so on. I suspect pure pity overcame the judge who excused me, but when I left the officer handed me a photocopy of a bible passage about life which I used later that day at Chester's funeral. The officer even offered to bury the dog on his property.

If I had been a safer driver, I wouldn't have been in this predicament. Ever heard that one at work before?....."If I had just been more careful about my safety gear".....or "if only.....I had worn that". We need to commit to make the use of hearing protection as the strongest piece of your hearing conservation program. We can measure your employees' hearing, but the only thing between them and hearing loss is protection. Lead by example and always wear your own hearing protection, even if it's only for a few minutes that you're on work floor or out in front of them. Make your choices about which brands to offer your employees based on hard data from your noise measurements. Or give a call to inquire about our new REAL ear measurement system to strengthen your program even more. It's a fairly new way of measuring the actual attenuation of the hearing protection and to provide additional training and documentation on proper insertion.

Finally, for our customers I'd like to announce that we are ready to go digital if you are....All of our reports, both noise measurement and audiometric tests are available on disc or data storage stick. We're talking about helping with report questions by way of webinar, so be sure to let me know if you have an interest in this! If there's anything we can do to help with your programs please call. Take good care now.

-Andi Hengen

# RE-TESTING. WHAT IS THE BEST METHOD AND WHEN?

Statistics show that roughly 6 percent of the participants in your hearing conservation program will demonstrate a Standard Threshold Shift (STS) on their annual audiogram. While the reasons vary for the cause of these shifts, one can find some relief in knowing that typically 60 percent of the shifts will prove temporary upon a re-test.

So, you have an employee that demonstrates an STS during their annual audiogram, now what? This is a point of controversy among many in our industry, with regard to the manner in which the "re-tests" are obtained. A "re-test" is meant to confirm the presence (or not) of an STS. Best practice is to wait at least 24 hours after the initial test, before conducting a "re-test". Not waiting at least that amount of time, risks confirming a shift that may have been temporary, and possibly having to enter it on the OSHA 300 log.

Some providers of on-site testing operate on a "one and done" model. They want to wrap up everything in one visit and not have to manage the follow-up procedures of handling "re-test" audiograms after their annual visit. These providers sell "same day re-testing" as a benefit to their clients, touting that it will eliminate the time and expense of having to send people out after the annual visit for a "re-test". It sounds very appealing, but if you have an employee who demonstrated an STS that may be temporary, and you don't wait at least 24 hours before re-testing, you will have missed the opportunity to identify it, and possibly need to unnecessarily place that employee on the OSHA 300 log for a hearing loss.

Our proprietary testing software gives us the ability to re-test individual frequencies that we identify a change from baseline in, as the test is in progress. This capability helps us to catch many test errors that would otherwise show up as STS on most standard microprocessor controlled audiometers.

So.....as with most things in life, the easiest and quickest methods are usually not the ones that yield the best results.

-Joe Houle, SPHR

## UPCOMING SAFETY CONFERENCES

Vermont Safety & Health Council Expo **October 6th, 2016** Stowe Mountain Resort, Stowe, VT [www.vshc.org](http://www.vshc.org)

CONN OSHA Roundtable **October 18th, 2016** Connecticut Dept. Of Labor Building, Wethersfield, CT [www.connosha.com](http://www.connosha.com)

New England AIHA Conference **October 18th, 2016** Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center, Sturbridge, MA <https://www.aiha.org>

PA Governor's Occupational Safety & Health Conference **October 31st - November 1st, 2016** Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, PA <http://www.pasafetyconference.com/>

NERC Fall Conference **November 1 - 2, 2016** Sheraton Portsmouth Harborside Hotel, Portsmouth, NH <https://nerc.org>

ASSE Region VIII New England Area Annual PDC **November 15th - 16th, 2016** Sea Crest Beach Hotel, No. Falmouth, MA

NHCA-Nat. Hearing Conservation Assoc. **February 23-25, 2017** ,Marriott Rivercenter Hotel San Antonio, TX <http://www.hearingconservation.org/>

We are also presenting educational material at many of the break out sessions at these conferences..



Serving Industries in Hearing Conservation Services across the Northeast