

INDUSTRIAL HEARING TESTING

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WAVELENGTH

Volume 4

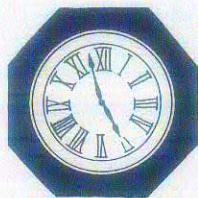
No. 1

HAVE YOU HEARD

about all of the other
services available at
IHT????

Hearing Conservation Products & Services

- Noise Surveys
- Customized
Employee Training
Sessions
- Hearing Protection
- Audiometer Sales
- Equipment
Calibration
- Recordkeeping
Software
- Posters & Support
Literature
- Audiological
Referrals



Office Hours

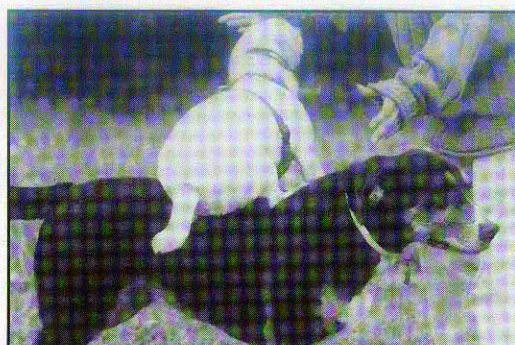
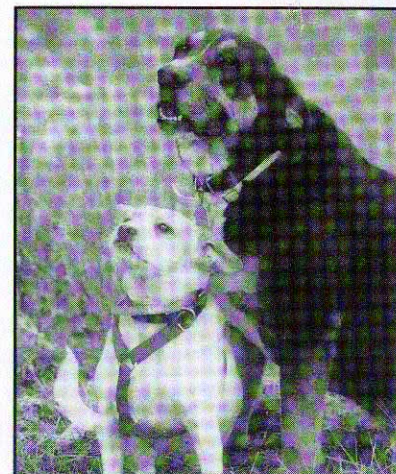
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Closed weekends
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PERSONALLY SPEAKING

I go to bed kind of early these days, so I don't get a lot of opportunity to tune in to Jay Leno or Late Night. As a matter of fact I don't have a TV anymore and it's been a very liberating experience. A while back, I was at the mail room and my dad dropped off a package to post to David Letterman. As much as we try not to interfere in each other's affairs (which is a challenge in a family business), my curiosity prevailed and I had to ask what he was doing. Turns out, he was sending a Cornhusker shirt to Dave, sponsored by Easterners for Cornhuskers, or some group they've founded here in the East for misplaced Nebraskans. Apparently they meet at pre-appointed bar rooms across New England to watch Cornhusker games. I should also explain that my parents are both from the same town in Nebraska called Wahoo (population about 300 when they were married back in 18 . . . just kiddin' - actually they're celebrating their 40th anniversary!). Anyway, all these Wahooians as I like to refer to them as, rallied to Letterman to change his home office to Wahoo, Nebraska (for that top ten list things he does). In the end, they won, defeating the original home office of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Obviously, Michigan needs a better football team or something!

I can now say I've been to Dave's home office which, by the way, is a pay phone on the corner of East 5th and Broadway in the booming downtown metropolis of Wahoo.

All of this brings me to the explanation of the photos. I've been waiting a long time for Disney to discover my pets' talents and strike a movie partnership. I just know I'd make millions, have the pets do the work, and just write an occasional guest column about hearing stuff. Now that we have this vague rapport developing with Letterman, I decided to put a call into his office to get on the Stupid Pet Tricks show. What happened instead, is while I was at a horse show in Vermont last month a photographer spotted my dynamic duo pictured here (my dogs) and started shooting some film. Sensing a possible Disney opportunity, I asked my dogs to perform one of their special tricks which we caught on film. Odie, the Jack Russell is jumping onto and over Chester, who patiently stands for all this. He has accepted the somewhat selfish nature of a Jack Russell, and obliges by letting Odie be the "headliner." This must be from his Suisse Mountain Dog bloodlines. The nature of a terrier is rather self-



centered. As a matter of fact, the day before the final draft of this column, Odie ran away. He was chasing a deer and got lost in the woods. I walked miles that day, hysterically calling him until I was hoarse, I finally drove to work imagining all the horrible things that might befall him. In actuality, he had already made his way to a pool party overlooking a beautiful lake, where

Continued on page 2

he was served grilled chicken and then napped for the remainder of the day. My number on his collar had alerted their suspicions though that he wasn't in dire straits as he sometimes pretends, and I happily retrieved him by the day's end.

By the way, for any of you who may remember my sister was living in Africa, I just wanted to mention how particularly lucky we feel. My sister has just returned from Kenya literally hours before the blast in Nairobi. She has been living and working in Nairobi for the last couple years working in public health for an international organization focusing on women's health issues. Anyway, she is back in the U.S. I'm happy to report!

Back to the hearing business thing . . . When's the last time you have evaluated the hearing protection you offer your employees? Is it the same cylinder-shaped plugs your predecessor ordered in '82? Or maybe the same dusty box lurking in the dark corner of the locker room? From the exterior this probably doesn't look too appealing to insert in one's ear. Perhaps you could look over the column on evaluating the noise reduction rating (NRR) of the hearing protection you offer your employees to gather some fresh ideas.

You can always implement training beyond the required minimum of once a year to strengthen your company's program. We have promoted Frank DiMinuco to Senior Field Rep. to be able to assist us in the demand for additional staff to make these training presentations. The feedback is that employees seem to have an improved sense of obligation to take better care of their hearing, with the use of hearing protection at home as well as work. Remember, the "burden of proof" is upon the employer, so it is in your company's best interest to promote hearing protection in all phases of your employees lives. Some employers host "health awareness days," and utilize the mobile test van for the day's events. It seems to help improve employee morale because of this public demonstration of an employer's concern for their employees' well being. Be aware we're happy to work with any clients with a similar scenario.

Monitoring noise levels continues to be a required step and it often seems to be one of the most overlooked components of a Comprehensive Hearing Conservation Program. If you need some assistance on documenting this survey work, please call us. You must conduct a formal sound survey whenever there is a major change in process or equipment, i.e. renovations, new facility, new product line with different machinery, etc. The decibel levels that your workforce is exposed to is a necessary piece of information. We are also in the process of developing services to offer engineering

controls as an additional tactic in your program. Scott and Steve are taking a two year course at Penn State University in noise control. On another staff note we are pleased to mention Bill Davidson has assumed the title of Fleet Support Technician.

I can't believe another year has gone by and we're still not able to offer a final rule article on the OSHA 200 Log (soon to be 300?) recordability criteria for those employees demonstrating STS's. Anyone in our office however, can give you some time to explain what criteria to use. I have summarized the criteria again for our clients on page 6.

I would like to mention the Honor Roll Club. We have some client companies who have been with us hitting the ten year mark, and would like to publicly acknowledge their patronage and thank them. Also, we have developed a web site, as well as an email address to communicate with our clients. The address is listed in the margin. If there is anything any of our staff can do to enhance your Hearing Conservation Program, answer questions, etc., please don't hesitate to call upon us.

I just have one more burning question; if I can get David Letterman to call me back, and I get my pets on the show, do I have to stay up that late?

~ ANDI HENGGEN, *Editor*

ONE SALES REP'S VIEW ON TRADE SHOWS

It has been my experience, in the beginning, to be a ball of nerves before each show. It's the anticipation of meeting hundreds of people, or maybe only a handful - one never knows. Will these people be friendly or completely ignore me? I have much to offer these people, if they would only stop and talk to me! Then about an hour into the show, I can't talk fast enough to meet the demand! Some are patient, some want to avoid eye contact and just grab literature off of my table, while still others are distracted by those models they hired down the row posing in sparkly evening wear.

One show in particular stands out in my head. I find it to be the most exciting show that our company exhibits in - EASTEC in Springfield, MA. The booths are gorgeous, almost exotic. There are four buildings full of exhibitors. Each day we probably talked to two hundred people or more. (They passed on those models!) The days are long and the food usually leaves something to be desired, but this year the food was actually good!

So just in case you thought sales was easy, I wanted you to know that's not always the case!

~ STEPHANIE PARKS

WILL OUR HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM SURVIVE AN OSHA INSPECTION?

So you've hired Industrial Hearing Testing (hopefully) to provide your company with a complete Hearing Conservation Program. You've studied the competition, you've weighed costs & benefits, and in the end, hired who you hope is the best for your company's needs.

I would like to remind our clients of a few details that still need to be attended to after we've visited on the day of the hearing testing (you know, the other 364 days of the year).

Hearing Conservation is about providing a safe and healthy workplace, but let's not forget you want to survive an OSHA inspection at any moment. I've developed a check list here with OSHA compliance in mind, so that you are sure to address the other items mentioned that are NOT happening on the day of our visit. This check list applies specifically to our clients who have used our particular mobile services, as I cannot speak to other vendor's techniques.

1. Comprehensive noise survey on file **is a requirement.**

You must have documentation on file to ensure that you accurately identified employees exposure measurements in their work areas. This survey needs to be done, not necessarily annually, but whenever there is a major change in process, equipment, or new address of operations. This should also help determine who must be included minimally in your annual test program, as well as help to calculate what hearing protection attenuation is sufficient.

2. A written program in place **is a requirement.**

It is my understanding that OSHA does not accept copying the regulation verbatim from the Code of Federal Regulations. Instead, they are looking for a written program designed to incorporate your company philosophy and situation. IHT provides a written program in poster format, intended to be placed in accessible areas for your employees' right to know. These are provided from us with the report results.

3. Follow-up to STS employees **is a requirement.**

YOU MUST

A. Notify your employee IN WRITING within 21 days of your knowledge of the STS occurrence, and record on OSHA log if necessary. The letters included with your report from us are to distribute to your employees!

B. Re-train your employees on hearing protection.

C. Require them to wear hearing protection at 85 dB. These issues seem to be getting overlooked with some programs. Re-testing is an option as well that should be seriously considered and might help avoid some of the steps listed above.

4. Enforcing the use of hearing protection (with the proper attenuation values for your specific workplace) **is a requirement.**

You can spend all the money you wish on any program, but ultimately if your employees are not carrying through on wearing personal protective equipment, specifically in this argument - hearing protection, this is all for naught! I cannot stress this point enough. I know it is one of the most difficult points for any program, but create a culture in which it is unacceptable and simply not cool to forego personal protection.

5. Signage indicating high noise areas where hearing protection must be worn **is a requirement.**

Don't let an OSHA inspection catch your program missing any ingredients. We here at IHT continuously strive to fulfill your expectations for a long professional relationship. Please utilize our staff as a resource for clarification of any of these issues!

Do you know why the Egyptians wrote on their walls? They knew if they put it in their files it would be lost forever.

UNDERSTANDING NRR's - HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

The Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) is a "quantitative term" used to identify how much noise a hearing protection device (HPD) is capable of attenuating. One method is measured in the laboratory, using a standardized procedure called "real ear attenuation threshold." Noise signals at a variety of frequencies are presented to trained listeners with and without hearing protectors, and the two varying conditions reflect the protection's attenuation. The examiner then combines the attenuation values for the frequencies tested over a series of tests and makes some adjustments to the data. The resulting number is the noise reduction rating or the NRR. The main purpose of the NRR is not to predict exactly what the worker will hear with the protector in place, but to enable the purchaser to choose among a variety of products, thus enabling the customer to choose the appropriate NRR for their workplace environments.

Before assessing the hearing protection you use in your work place, assume that you agree your goal should be to reduce the exposure of all of your work force to 85 dB(A) and less. We always recommend 85 dB as the max allowable level, or you will always be making exceptions for different circumstances. (For a complete review of this rationale, please request a reprint article "When Do You Need To Implement Hearing Protection?")

Employers are given a choice of methods by which to estimate the adequacy of attenuation of hearing protection, several of which are listed in the appendices of the regulation. The chart displayed here is a combined formula IHT recommends to make adjustments on the published NRR of any hearing protection product.

Take the published NRR, which by law must be prominently displayed on the original box (not necessarily each individual package). Let's use the most common example - 29 NRR.

So, the hearing protection that was advertising an attenuation of 29 decibels is actually able to offer only 11 decibels of attenuation. Now subtract the adjusted attenuation to your work force's noise exposure and you should have factored their exposure down to 85 dB.

I hope there's at least a few of you clients out there who have your morning coffee out of the mug we deliver to everyone with this calculation prominently displayed! Call if you didn't get one!

THE CORRECT WAY TO CALCULATE ATTENUATION FOR ALL HEARING PROTECTION USING NIOSH METHOD #2 AND OSHA DERATING INSTRUCTION IS:

	EXAMPLE
1. Take NRR from package	29 NRR
2. Subtract seven (7) dB	-7 dB
	<hr/>
	22
3. Divide by two (2) or 50%	/2
	<hr/>
OSHA Adjusted NRR	11
4. Noise level of exposed worker	95 dB
5. Subtract Adjusted NRR	-11
	<hr/>
	84 dB
	<hr/>

**YOUR GOAL SHOULD BE TO
REDUCE EXPOSURE LEVELS TO
85 dB (A) OR LESS**

UPDATE ON OSHA 200 LOG RECORDABILITY

As there is still no final rule in place for recordability guidelines for management regarding employees suffering a change for the worse in their hearing, our recommendation remains the same. Any average change of 25 dB in one or both ears from the original baseline audiogram is recordable as an occupational illness, column "f." In some states, a more stringent recordability is required when there is a change of 10 dB. Those states are WA, CA, MI, TN, NC, SC.

Playwright George Bernard Shaw once wrote to Churchill:

*"Dear Mr. Churchill,
Enclosed are two tickets to my new play which opens Thursday night. Please come and bring a friend, if you have one."*

Churchill sent back the reply:

*"Dear Mr. Shaw,
I am sorry, I have a previous engagement and cannot attend your opening. However, I will come to the second performance, if there is one."*

HONOR ROLL CLUB

As is our custom, we like to give honorary mention to those clients of ours that have passed the 10 year mark with an exemplary Hearing Conservation Program intact. We would also like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation for their patronage through these years as well.

AND THE WINNERS ARE

Allied Metals Production Corp.
Worcester, MA • Bill Moss

Automatic Specialties, Inc.
Marlboro, MA • Bev Drohan

E.R. Buck Chair Co.
Clinton, MA • Oscar LaBrack

Tuthill Corp. / Coppus Murray Group
Millbury, MA • Carol Comstock

Creative Packaging
Worcester, MA • Ernie McLeod

Kennedy Die Casting, Inc.
Worcester, MA • Cathy Collins

New England Tape Co.
Hudson, MA • Donna Lambert

Northeast Cable Corp.
S. Attleboro, MA • Sandra Rinebolt

Patriot Metals
Worcester, MA • Ron Strauss

L.S. Starrett Co.
Athol, MA • Jean Cox

There are some drugs (both prescription and over the counter) that cause Temporary Threshold Shift and/or Tinnitus (ringing in the ears). If you have employees undergoing chemotherapy or other physically traumatic treatments, you may wish to obtain a listing of these drugs known to be ototoxic. Call our office for details.

The new employee stood before the paper shredder looking confused. "Need some help?" asked a passing secretary. "Yes, how does this thing work?" he replied.

"Simple" she said taking the fat report from his hand and feeding it into the shredder.

Totally puzzled, he asked, "Thanks, but where do the copies come out?"

I don't want to bore anyone with the same subjects every newsletter, so if you've missed something previously printed, please call for a copy.

INDEX OF ARTICLES PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED:

NO. 1-1995

- OSHA 200 Log - "Which Hearing Losses are Recordable?"
- "Do You Know What Your Noise Levels Are?"

NO. 2 - 1995

- "When Do You Need To Implement Hearing Protection?"
- Honor Roll - 10 Year+ HCP's
- New York Nuisance Noise Law
- Free Hearing Conservation Speaker Available For Your Professional Group Meetings.

VOL. 2 • NO. 3 - 1996

- Boston Federal Safety & Health Council Info.
- OSHA VPP (Voluntary Protection Programs)
- "How to give a Whale an Audiogram."

VOL. 3 • NO. 4 - 1997

- "To Re-Test or Not To Re-Test?"
- "What To Do Following An STS."

"Groups with guitars are on their way out" read the rejection letter from Decca Records in 1962 to the Beatles.

Don't accept your dog's admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful.



OUR MOBILE FLEET

is always available to service any size company in Connecticut, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont!

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