Background

As an employer, by law you are required to provide audiometric testing for employees in certain circumstances. If you provide hearing protectors to control your employees’ noise exposure so that it does not exceed the noise exposure standard, you must provide audiometric testing for those employees (‘mandatory audiometric testing’).

What are employers required to do?

When providing audiometric testing for employees, it is recommended that employers ensure the service provider complies with the relevant requirements of AS/NZS 1269.4:2005 - Occupational noise management - Auditory assessment (eg include it in your agreement with the service provider). This is to ensure testing is accurate and carried out by an appropriate person.

Mandatory audiometric testing must be provided within three months of an employee starting work that requires hearing protectors, at least every two years and when reasonably requested by a health and safety representative of the employee’s designated work group.

If two consecutive audiometric tests indicate a reduction in hearing levels equal to or greater than 15dB at 3000, 4000 and 6000 Hz, an audiological examination needs to be provided as soon as reasonably possible. Employers should ask the audiometric service provider to compile a report or provide test results to enable the comparison between consecutive audiometric tests.

If an audiological examination is required, employers must ensure they receive a report from the audiological examination provider for each employee tested that contains the examination results and states whether the employee has suffered hearing loss that is likely to be due to exposure to noise.

Employers must retain any audiometric test results and audiological examination reports as a confidential record for as long as they are applicable, which may depend on individual circumstances.

Before discarding test results or examination reports, employers should consider matters such as whether the person tested is still an employee, whether the employee is required to use hearing protection, and whether the employee has been given an audiological examination. Employers should also be aware that the audiometric tests they provide will be considered by hearing loss assessors in the event an employee makes a claim for impairment benefits.

In addition, employers must ensure that each employee is given a copy of their own audiological examination report and audiometric test result.

Contact Details

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