

Hearing Conservation Program

The Hearing Conservation Program (the Program) commenced in 2009 and is conducted to meet the requirements of the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (Qld) and [Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice 2021](#). The purpose of the Hearing Conservation Program is to achieve the safe management of noise within a workplace. The Program focuses on employees most at risk of exposure to excessive noise and as a consequence, **noise induced hearing loss**. The Department's Program consists of three steps:

1. Monitoring of noise levels
2. Audiometric testing (hearing testing) and healthy hearing education and training
3. Hearing protection.

Noise monitoring

Preliminary assessments of noise levels throughout a sample of schools determined the following employee groups were most at risk of being exposed to excessive levels of noise and are included in the Program:

- Instrumental Music Teachers and Instructors
- Industrial Technology and Design/Manual Arts Teachers
- Industrial Technology and Design/Manual Arts Teacher Aides
- Schools Officers (Janitor/Ground staff working a minimum of 10 hours per week)
- Agricultural Teachers and Assistants (if they conduct similar work to Schools Officers where they are exposed to loud noise on a regular basis i.e. ride on mowers, whipper snippers, leaf blowers).

Hearing testing and healthy hearing education and training

The Program includes an individual appointment for employees approximately every two years, for:

- a hearing test
- healthy hearing education and training.

Hearing testing

Attune Hearing is the approved provider to conduct hearing tests for all identified Department employees. Attune Hearing travel to metropolitan, regional and remote schools throughout Queensland conducting the hearing tests on-site utilising their mobile testing equipment.

This service ensures less disruption to the school working day. For some remote schools where access can be difficult other arrangements will be made to conduct the hearing tests.

Schools will be contacted by Attune Hearing to organise appointment times.

Schools and employees need to be aware that [Attune Hearing](#) will visit a region only once during the two-year cycle in order to accommodate the 4000 employees that are part of the Program. It is essential:

- schools and employees respond to appointment requests from Attune Hearing
- employees attend the appointment time.

It is a mandatory requirement for all employees in the groups listed above to have the hearing test and receive healthy hearing education and training - even if they wear hearing aids.

Schools with **new** employees appointed in the listed groups are to contact Organisational Safety and Wellbeing at hsw@qed.qld.gov.au to discuss a hearing test appointment and ensure adequate hearing protection is provided to the employee.

Healthy hearing education and training

Education and instruction regarding healthy hearing will be provided during the hearing test appointment. Attune Hearing Audiometrists will provide information about:

- why noise can be hazardous
- identifying noise hazards
- strategies to protect yourself from hearing damage and loss
- the right type and appropriate use of hearing protection.

Hearing protection

Schools are to regularly review the hearing protection they have in place for employees and how this is being used. Schools pay for hearing protection for all employees, this includes musician's earplugs for Instrumental Music Teachers.

Instrumental Music Teachers

As part of the Hearing Conservation Program Instrumental Music Teachers are fitted and provided with specialist hearing protection called musician's earplugs. These are moulded to the wearer's ear and can only be worn by the individual. There is no "off the shelf" hearing protection available for Instrumental Music Teachers.

ITD/Manual Arts Teachers and ITD/Manual Arts Teacher Aides Schools Officers and Agricultural Teachers and Assistants

The type of hearing protection (Class 5 earmuffs) required by ITD Teachers, ITD Teacher Aides, Schools Officers and Agricultural Teachers is readily available in metropolitan and regional areas from safety suppliers. Class 5 hearing protection must comply with Australian Standards.

ITD Teachers and ITD Teacher Aides can opt for the PACS IMPACT earplug which can be supplied at their hearing test appointment. This earplug enables staff to block out damaging noise whilst still being able to communicate i.e. ITD staff can protect their hearing from workshop noise whilst being able to hold conversations with students. This earplug has been tested for wear in humidity and for 12-hour comfort. It protects hearing from equipment such as drop saws, hammers, nail guns, riveting etc.

Hearing protection only works if it is being worn and being worn consistently in accordance with instructions. Factsheets about hearing protection are available on the [Creating Healthier Workplaces website](#). **Principals and supervisors are to provide reminders to employees about hearing protection and document this monitoring and supervision.**

Cost of Services

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| ▪ Hearing test and healthy hearing education and training | \$240 pp |
| ▪ Musician's earplugs for Instrumental Music Teachers | \$150 pp |
| ▪ PACS IMPACT earplugs for ITD Teachers/Teacher Aides | \$100 pp |

Please note: If employees are unable to attend an appointment with Attune Hearing the individual or school is to notify Attune Hearing on **1800 344 677**. A non-attendance fee of \$100 will be charged directly to the school if the employee (or school) fails to advise Attune Hearing of a cancellation 24 hours prior to the appointment. This is in line with Attune Hearing's standard procedure for non-attending clients.

Further information

For information regarding exposure to noise, hearing protection and healthy hearing access the [Creating Healthier Workplaces website](#).

For enquiries regarding hearing test appointments contact: Attune Hearing on 1800 344 677

For questions regarding the Hearing Conservation Program contact Organisational Safety and Wellbeing at: hsw@ged.qld.gov.au