



Hearing Conservation Program

The Hearing Conservation Program (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 2011](#). The Program includes employees most at risk of exposure to excessive noise and, as a consequence, Noise Induced Hearing Loss. A Hearing Conservation Program is aimed at achieving the safe management of noise within a workplace. The department's Program consists of four steps:

1. Monitoring of noise levels
2. Audiometric testing (hearing tests)
3. Hearing protection
4. Education and training.

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).

Audiometric testing (Hearing tests)

The Program includes audiometric assessments (hearing tests) upon appointment to the Department and then at two yearly intervals. It is a mandatory requirement for all staff in the employee categories above to have the hearing test - even if they wear hearing aids.

Attune Hearing is the approved provider to conduct the hearing tests for all departmental employees. Hearing tests are conducted at individual appointments and are staggered throughout regions in order to accommodate the 4,000 employees that are part of the Program.

Schools will be contacted by Attune Hearing to organise appointment times. Staff and schools need to be aware that [Attune Hearing](#) will visit a region only **once during the two year cycle**. It is essential that:

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

Schools with **new staff** appointed in the employee groups (listed above) should contact Attune Hearing directly on the dedicated Department of Education phone number **1800 344 677** to arrange a hearing test.

On-site Testing

Attune Hearing travel to metropolitan, regional and remote schools throughout Queensland conducting the hearing tests on-site as much as possible utilising their mobile testing equipment. This service provides 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. Hearing tests at an Attune Hearing clinic are also an option to accommodate department employees.

Service delivered by Attune Hearing	Cost per person
Hearing test and healthy hearing training	\$240
Musician's earplugs - for instrumental music teachers/instructors (fit and supply)	\$150
Specialist Hearing Protection - Pro Impulse Earplugs - for ITD Teachers and ITD Teacher Aides	\$100

Please note: If staff are unable to attend an appointment time 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 staff member (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.

Hearing Protection

Schools are to regularly review the hearing protection they have in place for staff and how this is being used. Schools pay for hearing protection for all staff, this includes musician's earplugs for instrumental music teachers.

Instrumental Music staff

As part of the audiometric testing process, 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 staff.

ITD staff and Schools Officers

The type of hearing protection (Class 5 ear muffs) required by ITD teachers, ITD teacher aides, schools officers and agricultural staff is readily available in metropolitan and regional areas and must comply with Australian Standards.

ITD teachers and ITD teacher aides can opt for the Pro Impulse earplug at their hearing test appointment. An impression of the ear is not required, the ear plug will be ordered and sent to the employee's school. This earplug enables staff to block out damaging noise whilst still being able to communicate i.e. ITD staff protecting 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](#).

Education and training

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

- why noise can be hazardous
- identifying noise hazards



- strategies to protect yourself from hearing damage and loss
- appropriate use of hearing protection.

Further information

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

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

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