

04-02: Revised OSHA Hearing Loss Recordkeeping Requirements

Pacific Maritime Association
Accident Prevention Department
550 California Street, P. O. Box 7861
San Francisco, California 94120-7861

SAFETY BULLETIN #4-02

Revised OSHA Hearing Loss Recordkeeping Requirements
July 26, 2002

INFORMATION

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a Final Rule on July 1, 2002 revising the criteria for recording work-related hearing loss. This rule requires that if an employee's hearing test (audiogram) reveals that the employee has experienced a work-related Standard Threshold Shift (10 dB shifts in hearing acuity) in one or both ears, and the employee's total hearing level is 25 decibels (dB) or more above audiometric zero (averaged at 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hz) in the same ear(s) as the STS, the employer must record the case on the OSHA 300 Log.

Employers can make adjustments for hearing loss caused by aging, seek the advice of a physician or licensed health care professional to determine if the loss is work-related, and perform additional hearing tests to verify the persistence of the hearing loss. Recording under these new criteria is scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2003.

Background: OSHA published revisions to its rule on recording and reporting occupational injuries and illnesses (29 CFR parts 1904 and 1952) in the January, 2001 Federal Register (66 FR 5916-6135) with the hearing standard and the mechanics of recording on the OSHA 300 log unresolved. These regulations took effect on January 1, 2002. The final rule on the criteria for recording work related hearing loss was published in the July 1, 2002 Federal Register: (67:44037-44048). These requirements take effect on January 1, 2003. OSHA will publish an additional rulemaking on adding the hearing loss column back into the OSHA 300 log. This requirement may take place on January 1, 2004. Detailed information on the Agency's [recordkeeping](#) requirements is available on OSHA's web site (www.OSHA.gov)

Cal-OSHA hearing loss recordation requirements (25 db shift) are published in Title 8 Section 14300.10 and currently do not reflect this new change. However the hearing conservation program requirements in Section 5097 focus on the standard threshold shift of 10 db.

WISHA hearing loss recordation requirements are published in WAC Chapter 297-27. WISHA adopted the Federal OSHA 300 Recordkeeping Rule substantially identically and so they do not reflect this new change. However the hearing conservation program requirements starting in WAC 296-62-09015 focus on the standard threshold shift of 10 db.

ACTION

Employers should take note of the above requirement. The preamble to the above rules contain a great deal of background information on hearing loss and audiometric testing.