**12.02.03.1 HEARING PROTECTION**

**1.0 REFERENCE**

WAC 296-305-02004(2)

WAC 296-817

**2.0 POLICY**

2.1 The XXXXX will administer a continuing, effective, hearing conservation program whenever members noise exposure equal or exceed an eight-hour time-weighted average (TWA) sound level of 85 decibels (dBA) or a short term exposure of the 115 dBA ceiling limit.

**2.2** Although noise levels may exceed the 115 dBA ceiling limit for noise exposures during structural firefighting activities, 140 dBA (fast response sound level meter, identifying almost instantaneous noise exposures), hearing protection that will survive these conditions and not interfere with other essential PPE may not always be available and is not required.

**2.3** Noise levels in apparatus, in the station/work area, next to pump operations, and when starting and running cutting equipment, will be determined by the Safety Officer for the purpose of the hearing conservation program using a decibel meter. Signs will posted in Station areas where hearing protection is required.

**2.4** We will reduce employee noise exposure, using feasible controls (such as mufflers, shields, etc), wherever exposure equals or exceeds 90 dBA TWA.

**2.5** Hearing protection shall be provided for and used by all members when exposed to an eight-hour time weighted average of 85 dBA or greater or when exposed to noise in excess of 115 dBA from power tools, engine starts, pump operations, training with chainsaws or power saws, drafting, or other such activities.

**2.6** All members shall participate in the hearing conservation training program, including annual training on use of hearing protection.

**2.7** Our members will receive audiometric testing as described by WAC 296-817-400 is supervised and reviewed by one of the following licensed or certified individuals: An audiologist or an otolaryngologist. See 4.3.

**2.8** We will review our program by using audiometric testing to identify hearing loss, which may indicate program deficiencies and take appropriate actions when found.

**2.8** If there is a threshold shift found in our exposed members, we will evaluate the following employee noise exposure measurements:

1. Noise controls in the work area. The selection of hearing protection available and refit members as necessary
2. Employee training on noise and the use of hearing protection and conduct additional training as necessary.

**3.0 DEFINITIONS**

N/A

**4.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

**4.1** The Safety and Health Officer is responsible for administering the Department Hearing Conservation Program and making

**4.2** Our Department uses: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (example Washington Audiology) as our annual audiometric testing service.

**4.3** Documentation provided by the testing organization will be recorded in the members personnel file.

**4.3** Members are responsible for selecting the appropriate level of hearing protection consistent with the risk or hazard involved.

**5.0 GUIDELINES**

**5.1** Hearing protectors will be placed on each apparatus for each assigned person**.**

**5.2** Members shall use the hearing protection provided during non-emergency situations where loud noise is present e.g. pump tests, apparatus and power equipment checks and on appropriate drills.