

Washington Township Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure

Division 300: Occupational Safety & Health
Section 308: Protective Clothing & Equipment
Subject 308.01: Hearing Protection
Supersedes: General Order 97-02 (4/22/97)
Training Bulletin 90-3-32 (11/9/90)



Approved By:

Date: October 31, 2005

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PURPOSE:

To establish the guidelines for the use of hearing protection for all personnel.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It shall be the responsibility of all members, when exposed to high levels of noise, to utilize hearing protection. Each member shall become familiar with and refresh themselves as necessary to maintain the effectiveness of these provisions.

PROCEDURES:

The department will provide hearing protection where necessary. This may include hearing protection provided for each member, or providing hearing protection in various areas or environments for members to utilize. Areas/tasks where hearing protection may be needed include, but are not limited to, riding apparatus, operating power equipment, maintenance areas, etc. All personnel shall utilize hearing protection when noise levels exceed, or could exceed, 85 dB (TWA-time weighted average).

This Department issues hearing protection, to reduce ambient noise levels. Hearing protection shall be used according to manufacturers instructions. Each member is expected to maintain hearing protection and have it available when needed.

This Department will provide, when necessary, hearing protection for vehicles and apparatus in the form of intercom system/ear protectors, or other means to provide hearing protection while riding on the apparatus. Where hearing protection is provided on the apparatus it shall be utilized by members in each position where the hearing protection is provided, unless otherwise prohibited by traffic regulations. This includes both non-emergency and emergency conditions when riding on the apparatus. If the apparatus does not have hearing protection provided, members shall utilize their other hearing protection methods.

Exceptions to wearing intercom system/ear protectors, but still use other hearing protection:

1. While actively performing semi-annual fire hydrant inspections.

Exceptions to wearing intercom system/ear protectors or hearing protection:

1. While performing auscultation procedures upon a patient.
2. While verbally communicating with a patient in the module portion of the EMS medic unit.
3. When reduced hearing capability in an emergency operations setting creates a greater hazard.

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Hearing protection shall not be used in situations where the use of such protective equipment would create another or additional hazard to the user. It should be noted that ear muff style devices, unless specifically designed to not do so, may interfere with the use of helmets, and foam type ear plugs may melt at higher temperatures.

Replacement hearing protection equipment can be obtained by the normal procedures for replacement equipment. If a piece of hearing protection is damaged in such a manner that it is not safe to use or does not provide proper hearing protection, it shall be taken out of service and replacements requested.

References:

Occupational Safety & Health Administration
29 CFR 1910.95 Occupational Noise Exposure