

§ 227.113

§ 227.113 Noise operational controls.

(a) Railroads may use noise operational controls at any sound level to reduce exposures to levels below those required by Table A-1 of appendix A of this part.

(b) Railroads are encouraged to use noise operational controls when employees are exposed to sound exceeding an 8-hour TWA of 90 dB(A).

§ 227.115 Hearing protectors.

(a) *General requirements for hearing protectors.* (1) The railroad shall provide hearing protectors to employees at no cost to the employee.

(2) The railroad shall replace hearing protectors as necessary.

(3) When offering hearing protectors, a railroad shall consider an employee's ability to understand and respond to voice radio communications and audible warnings.

(4) The railroad shall give employees the opportunity to select their hearing protectors from a variety of suitable hearing protectors. The selection shall include devices with a range of attenuation levels.

(5) The railroad shall provide training in the use and care of all hearing protectors provided to employees.

(6) The railroad shall ensure proper initial fitting and supervise the correct use of all hearing protectors.

(b) *Availability of hearing protectors.* A railroad shall make hearing protectors available to all employees exposed to sound levels that meet or exceed the action level.

(c) *Required use at action level.* A railroad shall require the use of hearing protectors when an employee is exposed to sound levels that meet or exceed the action level, and the employee has:

(1) Not yet had a baseline audiogram established pursuant to § 227.109; or

(2) Experienced a standard threshold shift and is required to use hearing protectors under § 227.109(h).

(d) *Required use for TWA of 90 dB(A).* The railroad shall require the use of hearing protectors when an employee is exposed to sound levels equivalent to an 8-hour TWA of 90 dB(A) or greater. The hearing protectors should be used to reduce sound levels to within those

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levels required by appendix A of this part.

§ 227.117 Hearing protector attenuation.

(a) A railroad shall evaluate hearing protector attenuation for the specific noise environments in which the protector will be used. The railroad shall use one of the evaluation methods described in appendix B of this part; "Methods for Estimating the Adequacy of Hearing Protector Attenuation."

(b) Hearing protectors shall attenuate employee exposure to an 8-hour TWA of 90 decibels or lower, as required by § 227.115.

(c) For employees who have experienced a standard threshold shift, hearing protectors must attenuate employee exposure to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels or lower.

(d) The adequacy of hearing protector attenuation shall be re-evaluated whenever employee noise exposures increase to the extent that the hearing protectors provided may no longer provide adequate attenuation. A railroad shall provide more effective hearing protectors where necessary.

§ 227.119 Training program.

(a) The railroad shall institute an occupational noise and hearing conservation training program for all employees included in the hearing conservation program.

(1) The railroad shall offer the training program to each employee included in the hearing conservation program at least once each calendar year. The interval between the date offered to any employee for the training in a calendar year and the date offered in the subsequent calendar year shall be no more than 450 days and no less than 280 days.

(2) The railroad shall require each employee included in the hearing conservation program to complete the training at least once every 1095 days.

(b) The railroad shall provide the training required by paragraph (a) of this section in accordance with the following:

(1) For employees hired after February 26, 2007, within six months of the