



Hearing Loss

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Hearing Loss

Reference Number: MTAS-1989

If a work-related injury or illness results in a hearing loss, the employee is required to record, by checking the "hearing loss" column on the OSHA 300 Log, all cases in which an employee's hearing test (audiogram) revealed that a Standard Threshold Shift (STS) in hearing acuity had occurred. 29 C.F.R. § 1904.10(a). An STS is defined in 29 C.F.R. § 1904.10(b)(1) as "a change in hearing threshold, relative to the most recent audiogram for that employee, of an average of 10 decibels or more at 2000, 3000 and 4000 Hertz (Hz) in one or both ears."

The recordkeeping rule itself does not require the employer to test employee's hearing. However, OSHA's occupational noise standard (29 C.F.R. § 1910.95) requires employers in general industry to conduct periodic audiometric testing of employees when employees' noise exposures are equal to, or exceed, an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85dBA. Under the provisions of § 1910.95, if such testing reveals that an employee has sustained a hearing loss equal to an STS, the employer must take protective measures, including requiring the use of hearing protectors, to prevent further hearing loss.

DISCLAIMER: The letters and publications written by the MTAS consultants were written based upon the law at the time and/or a specific sets of facts. The laws referenced in the letters and publications may have changed and/or the technical advice provided may not be applicable to your city or circumstances. Always consult with your city attorney or an MTAS consultant before taking any action based on information contained in this website.

Source URL (retrieved on 10/01/2020 - 4:34pm): <https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/reference/hearing-loss>



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