

Hearing test requirements for NSW employers and workers



Businesses who frequently use hearing protection to protect workers from hazardous noise must provide audiometry from 1 January 2026.

What's required?

To help prevent hearing loss in the workplace, employers must provide hearing tests (audiometric tests) to workers who frequently use hearing protection to control noise that exceeds the exposure standard*:

- within 3 months of starting their employment (baseline test)
- and a follow-up test at least every 2 years

When?

This law will be enforced for NSW workplaces from 1 January 2026.

Who is affected?

If you employ workers who frequently use hearing protection to control noise that exceeds the exposure standard for noise, you will need to provide your workers with regular hearing tests.

For more information contact us



Scan the **QR code** or call **13 10 50**
Visit **safework.nsw.gov.au**



Hearing tests

Email **workingenvironment@safework.nsw.gov.au**

*The Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 (section 56) sets an exposure standard for noise at an LAeq, 8h of 85dB(A) and a peak noise level at 140dB(C).

What's a hearing test?

They are painless, non-invasive tests that measure the softest sound a person can hear across a range of different frequencies.

Who performs a hearing test?

A competent person will perform the hearing test, this can include an audiologist.

What to expect?

Your hearing test may be conducted at an audiology clinic, or a hearing service may visit your workplace. On the day of the test:

- your hearing test will be done in a quiet space, away from loud noises
- your ears will be examined for any blockages that could affect the test
- you'll be asked about your past exposure to noise, both at and outside of work
- you'll wear headphones and will be asked to listen to a series of sounds.

What happens after the test?

Your hearing test results will be provided, including an explanation of what the results mean. If any hearing loss is detected, you may need further testing conducted 16 hours after the first test.

What records are kept?

Employers must ensure that all hearing test reports are kept as confidential documents.

What legislation is this covered in?

Clause 58 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025.

Who arranges and pays for a hearing test?

Employers are responsible for organising and paying for hearing tests for their workers. An appointment can be made at any audiology clinic or a competent person may come to your business.

What are the benefits of a hearing test?

The benefits of conducting regular hearing tests include:

- the early detection of hearing loss
- the prevention of further hearing loss
- assessing the effectiveness of workplace noise controls.

What should happen if a threshold shift or tinnitus is reported?

When a significant permanent threshold shift is detected, or diagnosis of tinnitus, the PCBU must review noise control measures at the workplace to ensure they remain effective in reducing the risk of further hearing impairment. Actions may include:

- review worker tasks to identify changes that may have caused an increase in noise exposure
- ensure higher order controls, e.g., isolation, engineering, are used where reasonably practicable to minimise worker exposure to noise
- substitute ototoxic chemicals for less hazardous chemicals or review workplace controls related to hazardous chemical exposure
- ensure hearing protectors worn by workers are adequate for the level of noise exposure
- retrain workers to ensure hearing protectors are fitted and worn correctly
- ensure workers wear hearing protection consistently throughout their work shift.

A business must notify its workers' compensation insurer when an audiometric assessment identifies a worker as having a permanent threshold shift. The insurer will then assess liability and support the worker in completing any further required evaluations.



Where hearing loss is detected, employers must review workplace controls to ensure they are effective. Suitable arrangements must also be made at the workplace to accommodate a worker's hearing loss.

Disclaimer

To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation. Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the **NSW legislation website (legislation.nsw.gov.au)**.

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.