Safehold
SPECIAL RISK

Veterinary Insurance Program

Veterinary Loss Prevention Program

Noise Exposure in the Veterinary Setting

Products and services are offered through Wells Fargo Insurance Services USA, Inc. and Wells Fargo Insurance Services of West Virginia, Inc., non-bank insurance agency affiliates of Wells Fargo & Company.

Products and services are underwritten by unaffiliated insurance companies, except crop and flood insurance which may be underwritten by their affiliate, Rural Community Insurance Company. Some services may require additional fees and may be offered directly through third party providers. Banking and insurance decisions are made independently and do not influence each other.

Trainer's Overview

To have your employees get the most out of their training sessions, it is suggested that:

- **The training sessions should be conducted in a relatively quiet uninterrupted environment.**
- **The sessions should be held the same time and day of the month (i.e., first Tuesday at 12:30).**
- **Employee handouts should be given out along with pencils/pens.**
- **Review the trainers guide, employee handout and any references.**
- **Keep the sessions to a maximum of 20 minutes.**
- **Give personal examples of incidents or prevention techniques that worked for you.**
- **Ensure that all employees present sign the Safety Training Sign-in Sheet for documentation purposes.**
- **If some employees were not present, a second training session should be given.**

Trainer's Guide

Regulations

- In California, the regulations for the Control of Occupational Noise Exposure are in Article 105 – of the Cal OSHA General Industry Safety Orders (GISO) sections 5095 to 5099. http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/sb7g15a105.html

The standard establishes two noise exposure limits: A Time-Weighted Average (TWA) Action level of 85 decibels A-weighted scale (dBA), and a Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL-TWA) of 90 dBA. Both levels refer to an 8-hour exposure period.

The Time-Weighted Average (TWA) is a calculated noise level that combines all the discrete noise levels measured over specific periods of time into an weighted average noise level for the total sampling period. The most commonly used TWA is an 8-hour work shift, but it can be adjusted for longer or shorter time periods based on the TWA sound levels recorded.

- If an employee is exposed to an 8-hour TWA that equals or exceeds the 85 dBA Action Level a Hearing Conservation Program is required.

- A Hearing Conservation Program consists of the following items:
  - Baseline Audiometric testing at the time of hiring.
  - Annual Audiometric Testing.
  - Training Program on the effects of noise on hearing. (Many times, this training is given by the company conducing the audiometric testing).

- If an employee is exposed to an 8-hour time PEL-TWA that equals or exceeds 90 dBA then, in addition to the above, hearing protection is

- Repeated exposures to loud noise can lead to permanent, hearing loss or tinnitus.

- Continual loud noises can have the following effects:
  - annoyance,
  - sleep disturbance
  - interfere with communication,
  - decreased performance
  - increased levels of stress
  - permanent hearing loss
  - high blood pressure
  - ischemic heart disease

- Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) is an estimate of the reduction in decibels that a hearing protection device can deliver under ideal conditions. To determine which hearing protection will work take the time weighted average in decibels then subtract 78 and that will give you the minimum NRR that you require.

Safety Tips

required to be worn by all employees in the same job category at the location.

Regulations then require that affected employees have the choice of two types of hearing protection (both could be ear plugs.)

- Noise levels can be assessed in two ways:
  - Sound level meter that will give real-time decibel readouts of the work area.
  - Noise dosimeters placed on the employee to data log the real-time decibel readouts, and calculate a personal TWA exposure, and percent dose of noise over the sampling period.

  Both types of instruments are available from instrument rental companies. However, it is recommended that a qualified industrial hygienist conduct the noise assessment to ensure that proper calibration and testing methods are used, and the results are interpreted correctly.

Background

- Excessive noise exposure can occur in veterinary facilities.

. Much of the noise comes from the patients

themselves – especially on any kennels or dog runs.

-

Employees assigned to kennels or dog runs can be exposed to sound levels that exceed the level where a Hearing

Conservation Program is required – this is whether or not hearing protection is provided.

- Short-term or occasional exposure to loud noise may cause a temporary change in hearing (your ears may feel stuffed up) or

a temporary ringing in your ears (tinnitus). These

- Before using personal protection equipment (PPE) such as ear plugs or ear muffs Cal OSHA regulations require that engineering and administrative controls be evaluated first.

  Engineering controls are those that are built-in and do not require employee action. These may include sound proofing noisy areas to limit sound transmission; installing sound baffles or enclosures around noise producing equipment or areas; and using sound absorbing materials on walls, ceilings, or floors where employees work. There are a wide variety of architectural treatments and materials designed to reduce noise generation, transmission, or reverberation.

  Administrative controls refer to measures an employee can take to limit their exposure, such as work rotation in and out of high noise areas to reduce overall daily exposure; performing certain tasks when noise levels are lowest; Providing quiet areas where employees can gain relief from hazardous noise sources; or placing employees duties at a suitable distance away from noisy equipment. Controlling noise exposure through distance is often an effective, yet simple and inexpensive administrative control

- When engineering and administrative control are not sufficient to reduce the noise to below the Action Level, it becomes necessary to assign employees personal hearing protection devices.

  .

-

Types of Hearing Protection

- There are a wide variety of personal hearing protection devices on the market from single use disposable ear plugs, to custom molded reusable ear plugs, ear muffs, and noise cancelling ear plugs and ear muffs. Some are made of soft plastics, foam, silicone, and they come with cords, or posts.

-

- Earmuffs have a lower NRR than ear plugs and can be less comfortable to wear for extended periods of time.

- Ensure that reusable ear plugs and muffs are clean wearing them.

  Hearing protection devices are for personal use and should not be shared.

Note that cotton does not attenuate the sound level

and is not considered hearing protection.

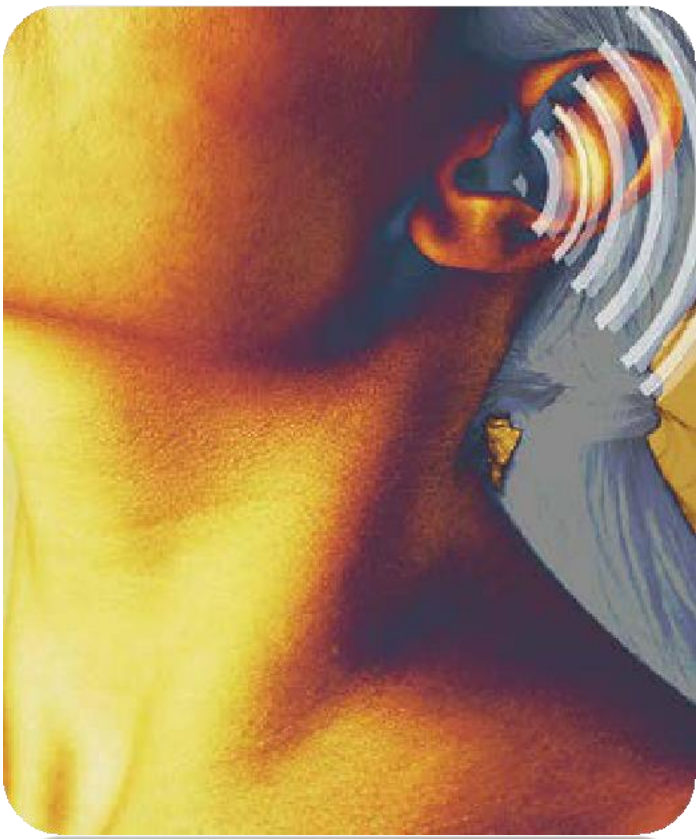
short-term problems usually go away within a few minutes or hours after leaving the noise source.

Noise Exposure in the Veterinary Setting

Trainer's Guide

Summary

Wearing hearing protection in noisy environments will help maintain your hearing and decrease stress levels at work



Questions for discussion:

Question:	What types of hearing protection are acceptable at a typical veterinary hospital or kennel?
Answer:	Any type of hearing protection including all ear plugs and muffs with a NRR of 33 or more.
Question:	Is cotton placed in the ear an acceptable hearing protection device?
Answer:	No. Cotton does not reduce the sound level.
Question:	What are some of the effects of loud noises?
Answer:	Irritability, sleep disturbance, high blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease, and temporary or permanent hearing loss.

Please complete the sign in sheet

Noise Exposure in the Veterinary Setting

Attendance Record

Date _____ Trainer _____

Print Name	Signature

The Employee Health & Safety exposures and loss prevention efforts are the responsibility of your company. Safehold services are intended to assist you and your management in evaluating potential exposures to loss and methods to minimize exposure. These services do not necessarily include every possible loss potential, code violation, or exception to good management practice.

Safehold
SPECIAL RISK

Veterinary Insurance Program

Noise Exposure in the Veterinary Setting

Employee Handout

- Excessive noise exposure can occur in veterinary facilities.
- Much of the noise comes from the patients themselves – especially on any kennels or dog runs.
- Employees assigned to kennels or dog runs can be exposed to sound levels that exceed the level where a Hearing Conservation Program is required – this is whether or not hearing protection is provided.

Continual loud noises can have the following effects:

- annoyance,
- sleep disturbance
- interfere with communication,
- decreased performance
- increased levels of stress
- permanent hearing loss
- high blood pressure
- ischemic heart disease

- Any type of hearing protection with a NRR of 33 dB, and that fits well can reduce the noise level to acceptable levels at most veterinary facilities. These can include:
  - Ear plugs
  - Molded ear plugs
  - Earmuffs
    - Noise cancelling ear plugs or ear muffs
    - Hearing protection devices are for personal use and should not be shared.
- Always ensure that the earplugs and earmuffs are clean before using.

Note: The use of cotton in the ears will not reduce the sound level.

Even if you are not required to use hearing protection you might want to for comfort purposes and communication purposes.