

# Noise Induced Hearing Loss - Audiological testing and assessment



## Noisy Employer Obligations

A 'noisy employer' is required to pay for an audiological test of a worker once every two years. An audiological test is the first step to claiming noise induced hearing loss (NIHL) compensation.

Employment is noisy employment if a worker is frequently required to wear personal protective equipment to reduce the risk of hearing loss that exceeds the noise exposure standards.

The noise exposure standards align with the exposure standards under work health and safety law:

- an LAeq,8h of 85dB(A), or
- an LC,peak of 140dB(C).

If the audiological test indicates hearing loss above a certain threshold, the worker may progress to a NIHL assessment by an Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist. The employer is also obliged to pay for this assessment.

## Booking a test or assessment

At the time of booking an audiological test or NIHL assessment, the worker should confirm:

- the test is for WorkCover WA purposes
- who is paying for the audiological test or NIHL assessment.

## Conducting a test or assessment

Only authorised audiologists are permitted to conduct and register audiological tests, and only authorised ENT specialists are permitted to conduct NIHL assessments.

## Noisy employer responsibilities

1. Pay for the worker's audiological test and any associated reasonable expenses.
2. If required, pay for the worker's NIHL assessment and any associated reasonable expenses.

## Worker responsibilities

1. Ensure they have had 16 hours of quiet prior to audiological testing (less than 80dB(A)).
2. Provide the details of their employer to the authorised audiologists conducting the audiological test (e.g. contact details, ABN).
3. Complete all necessary paperwork prior to a NIHL assessment.

## Worker may pay for testing

If the employer is not required to pay for testing, the worker may pay for their own audiological test and (where appropriate) NIHL assessment. The worker will be reimbursed these costs and any reasonable expenses if the claim is successful.

# Authorised Audiologist and ENT Specialist responsibilities

## 1. Authorised audiologist requirements

An authorised audiologist:

- Is required to measure hearing loss according to standards set by the WorkCover WA CEO.
- Must ensure any equipment used for audiological testing is properly calibrated according to the specifications of the manufacturer of the equipment.
- Must ensure background noise levels do not exceed standards required to ensure accurate test results.

The audiological testing standards approved by the WorkCover WA CEO are published on the WorkCover WA website.

## 2. ENT specialist requirements

An ENT specialist is required to consider the audiological test, obtain a worker's noise exposure and employment history - along with any other relevant records - and make a NIHL assessment.

An ENT specialist is required to identify on the approved form the 'last employer' and any additional employers who contributed to the worker's NIHL.

The last employer is the most recent employer who employed the worker in work, the nature of which led to the worker suffering NIHL.

## 3. Reporting results to WorkCover WA

Audiological test reports must be completed in the approved form and the report and results of the testing submitted via WorkCover WA Online within one month of the test being conducted.

A thorough search of the WorkCover WA Online database is required for each worker to avoid duplicated results. Search criteria includes:

- first few characters of the first name
- full surname
- date of birth.

NIHL assessments should be completed in the approved form and sent to WorkCover WA via email ([noise@workcover.wa.gov.au](mailto:noise@workcover.wa.gov.au)) within one month of the assessment being completed.

All approved forms can be found on the WorkCover WA website – [workcover.wa.gov.au](http://workcover.wa.gov.au)

Test and assessment results are confidential and can only be released under conditions specified in the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Regulations 2024*.

## 4. Information to workers and employers

Once completed, a copy of the Audiological Test Report should be provided to the worker (and employer paying for the test) within one month of the assessment being conducted.

On completion of the audiological test, the authorised audiologist must review the results and advise workers who have at least 10% loss of hearing (or 5% if it is a subsequent claim) of the need for a NIHL assessment conducted by an ENT specialist to progress the claim. If required, the worker should be provided with a list of ENT specialists in metropolitan and country areas.

The *Noise Induced Hearing Loss Directory of Service Providers* can be found on the WorkCover WA website.

Once completed, a NIHL Assessment Report should be provided to the worker (and employer paying for the assessment) within one month of the assessment being completed.



## Need further assistance?



Call WorkCover WA's Advice and Assistance Service on **1300 794 744** (8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday)



Visit [workcover.wa.gov.au](http://workcover.wa.gov.au)

