Hearing Conservation Program

What is it?

A program provided by the mine operator to reduce occupational hearing loss among mine personnel

– Monitors the miner’s noise exposure via dosimeter or Sound Level Meter (SLM)
– Provides hearing protectors for protecting the miner’s hearing
– Monitors the sensitivity of the miner’s hearing via audiometric testing
– Trains the miner to protect their hearing
Hearing Conservation Program
It MUST include:

- A system of monitoring
- Provision and use of hearing protectors
- Audiometric testing
- Training
- Record keeping
What is a system of monitoring?

An evaluation of a miner’s work environment

- A noise survey of equipment and work tasks
- Measurement of a miner’s noise dose
What is a system of monitoring?

An evaluation of a miner’s work environment

- Operator notifies the miner of...
  - Exposure determination
    - Provided the miner has not been notified in the last 12 months
  - Action being taken if exposure...
    - Equals or exceeds the action level
    - Exceeds the permissible exposure level
    - Exceeds the dual hearing protection level

- Operator maintains a copy of miner’s notification
Hearing Protectors

- Earmuffs, Earplugs, or combination of plugs and muffs

http://www.msha.gov/1999noise/hearingprotect.xls
Hearing Protectors

When and what type…

TWA₈ – Time-weighted Average 8-hour sound level (dBA)
D – Noise Dose (%)

- Action Level (TWA₈ ≥ 85 dBA or D ≥ 50%)
  - Operator must provide two plug types & two muff types of hearing protection
  - It is the miners option to wear hearing protection, UNLESS
    - The miner has incurred a Standard Threshold Shift (STS); or
    - More than 6 months will pass before the miner can take a baseline audiogram

- Permissible Exposure Level (TWA₈ > 90 dBA or D > 100%)
  - Miner must wear one type of operator-provided hearing protection

- Dual Hearing Protection Level (TWA₈ > 105 dBA or D > 800%)
  - Miner must wear both earplug and earmuff type operator-provided hearing protection
Audiometric Testing

- The operator must offer miners the opportunity to take an annual audiogram.

- The miner must avoid high levels of noise for at least 14 hours prior to taking a baseline audiogram; Hearing protectors may be used as a substitute for this quiet period.
Annual Training Topics

- Effects of noise on hearing
- Purpose and value of engineering controls & wearing hearing protection
- Pros and Cons of hearing protection offered
- Care, fit, and use of available hearing protection
- General requirements of CFR 30 Part 62
- Maintaining noise controls
- Purpose, value, and procedures of audiometric testing
Record Keeping

- The mine operator is required to keep accurate records of the following...
  - Training certifications
  - Notice of exposure
  - Audiogram results
  - Reportable hearing loss

- It is recommended that the miner keep copies of any information provided by the mine operator for their own record.
Hearing Conservation Programs

- Miners’ hearing is precious and we need to work together to preserve their quality of life