

Okolona Fire Department
Standard Operating Procedure

HEARING PROTECTION

Page Number: Effective Date: Reviewed with No Changes: Supersedes Editions:
Page 1 of 1 04/01/2007 04/01/2011 01/01/2007, 11/10/97, 01/01/2004

Purpose: *Firefighters are exposed to numerous noise hazards. This procedure is intended to reduce the risk of hearing loss from these noise hazards.*

Procedure:

1. OSHA requires employers to monitor noise exposure levels in a manner that will accurately identify employees who are exposed to noise at or above 82 dB averaged over 8 working hours, or an 8 hour TWA (Time Weighted Average). The fire department safety officer or his/her designee shall periodically check sound levels at the fire stations and during training evolutions using the department decibel meter to evaluate sound/noise levels.
2. Members working in high noise environments as identified by the department safety officer shall wear proper hearing protection. This includes areas within the fire stations as well as performing training using various powered and striking equipment. Signs shall be posted in areas where hearing protection is required.
3. All gasoline powered equipment emits loud noise which can damage hearing. Hearing protection shall be worn by all members operating such equipment except when at the scenes of emergencies where hearing protection is impractical, or wearing protection may pose a greater danger to the member's safety. Only essential persons shall be in the immediate vicinity of gasoline powered equipment.
4. Windows of fire apparatus should be closed whenever responding to emergencies and sirens or air horns are being used.
5. Members having sirens on their personal vehicles are encouraged to mount speakers behind the grille whenever possible. Speakers mounted in light bars should be avoided.
6. Hearing protection shall be worn by persons in the self contained breathing apparatus compressor room, when the compressor is in operation.
7. Hearing protection shall be worn by persons in the immediate area while filling any SCBA cylinders. This shall include in the self contained breathing apparatus room, as well when using the mobile/portable filling unit.
8. Engineers operating pumps on apparatus shall wear radio headsets whenever practical, and the wearing headsets of does not pose a greater danger to member safety.
9. When other tools or equipment is being operated, and sound is produced, members should consider the use of hearing protection devices.
10. Members operating power tools and equipment in structural collapse training evolutions where they may be working within confined spaces shall wear proper hearing protection.

Standard Operating Procedures are meant only to be guidelines. Actual conditions may warrant alternative actions.