APPENDIX N

HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

1. Purpose. This program assigns responsibility and establishes guidance for implementing an effective Hearing Conservation Program to protect Pacific Ocean Division (POD) employees against the effects industrial noise exposure.

2. Applicability. This program applies to all POD employees, both military and civilian.

3. References.

a. DODI 6055.12, Department of Defense Hearing Conservation Program

b. AR 40-5, Preventive Medicine

c. AR 385-10, The Army Safety Program

d. ER 385-1-89, Hearing Conservation Program

e. 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure

f. DA PAM 40-501, Hearing Conservation

g. EM 385-1-1 05.C, Hearing Protection and Noise Control

4. General.

a. Occupational noise is capable of producing temporary or permanent hearing loss. Permanent hearing loss is the result of damage to the inner ear. It is the repeated exposure to intense sound that causes the damage. There is no known treatment.

b. Regardless of duration and without regard to any attenuation provided by hearing protection, the Department of the Army has established the level of 85 dB(A) or greater for steady noise, as exposure criterion for inclusion in the Hearing Conservation Program. Employees routinely exposed at or above this level shall be provided audiometric testing, formal orientation in the prevention of hearing loss, and be required to wear hearing protectors. Safety and Occupational Health personnel will evaluate situations where employees are subjected to impulse, or intermittent noise hazards,on a case by case basis.

5. Employer Responsibility.

a. The Division Commander will support this Hearing Conservation Program according to AR 40-5, AR 385-10, and ER 385-1-89.

b. The Safety and Occupational Health Office:

(1) Conduct initial noise evaluations of areas and operations which are potentially noise hazardous.

(2) Establish noise contours and advise supervisors on how to properly post these contours.

(3) Survey suspected noise hazardous areas at least annually and within 30 days of any change in operations.

(4) Establish time-weighted average (TWA) noise measurements for employees working in noise hazardous areas.

(5) Maintain a current inventory of noise hazardous operations and areas using DD Form 2214, Noise Survey.

(6) Assure noise hazard areas are adequately posted.

(7) Establish Risk Assessment Codes (RAC) for all noise hazard areas.

(8) Provide the names of noise exposed employees and the magnitude of their exposure to; the employee, the employee's supervisor, the Civilian Personnel Office, and the proper medical support agency.

(9) Report all violations of this program for inclusion in the Violations Inventory Log.

c. Branch Directorates, Office Chiefs, Resident Engineers, Area Engineers, and first line supervisors will be responsible for:

(1) Requisition hearing protectors and ensure an adequate supply is available.

(2) Scheduling employees for audiograms.

(3) Ensuring employees report for medical examinations and training.

(4) Enforcing the use of hearing protectors in noise hazardous areas.

(5) Ensuring that duties involving hazardous noise are reflected in civilian employee's job description.

(6) Notifying the Safety and Occupational Health Office when changes in operations may effect noise levels.

6. Employee Responsibility. Noise exposed employees shall:

a. Wear approved and properly fitted hearing protectors when exposed to hazardous noise levels.

b. Report for all scheduled medical examinations and training concerning hearing conservation.

c. Maintain hearing protectors in a sanitary and serviceable condition.

d. Wear noise dosimeters to evaluate noise exposure, when required.

7. Noise Surveys.

a. The Division Safety and Occupational Health Office shall conduct and document noise surveys at all work areas and operations which are potentially noise hazardous.

b. Noise surveys shall be conducted annually, or sooner if any of the following occur:

(1) Within 30 days of any change in process or equipment which could create higher noise levels, or expose additional employees.

(2) An employee exhibits a hearing loss based on audiometric testing.

8. Noise Control.

a. Noise levels above 85 dB(A) must be controlled by engineering methods where feasible. Engineering methods may include but are not limited to any one or combination of the following: enclosures, isolation, absorption of noise by acoustical materials, equipment modification or substitution.

b. If engineering methods are not feasible, administrative controls such as employee rotation, or limited access to the noise hazard shall be considered.

c. Noise levels of new equipment shall be considered prior to procurement.

9. Hearing Protectors.

a. Hearing protectors will be provided and used anytime employees are exposed to 85 dB(A) or greater levels of noise.

b. Hearing protectors shall be evaluated for their adequacy in providing noise attenuation through the use of the following formula:

dB(A) - (NRR - 7) = Attenuated noise level to ear

Where NRR is the EPA noise reduction rating as tested buy the manufacturer.

c. Only those hearing protectors which have been tested in accordance with ANSI Z24.22 are acceptable. Some types, such as pre-molded plugs, require fitting by a health professional.

d. Level of hearing protection shall be determined following a noise survey of the area or operation.

10. Audiograms.

a. A baseline audiogram shall be given to all employees, permanent and temporary, who perform duties in a noise-hazardous environment. Audiograms shall be repeated annually.

b. Yearly evaluations shall be made by the medical support agency by comparing the most recent audiogram with the baseline.

c. Audiograms will be given by a certified technician in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.95.

d. Audiograms shall become a permanent part of the employees occupational health record.

11. Training.

a. Annual training shall be conducted for all employees exposed to hazardous noise levels.

b. Employees shall be trained on the following aspects of hearing conservation:

(1) The effects of noise on hearing.

(2) Advantages and disadvantages of different types of hearing protectors.

(3) The purpose of audiograms.

12. Signs. Warning signs shall be posted at entrances to or on the periphery of all noise hazard areas.