

Safety Fact Sheet



Hearing Test Requirements – Wall & Ceiling Industry (NSW)

Effective from 1 January 2026

What You Need to Know

Noise from power tools, mechanical fixings, sanding and on-site plant can damage hearing over time. In the wall and ceiling industry, exposure often occurs gradually and without warning.

From **1 January 2026**, NSW regulations require some employers to provide regular hearing tests for workers exposed to hazardous noise.

If hearing protection is worn regularly to manage noise, hearing tests are now required.

Who must provide hearing tests?

You must provide hearing tests if your workers: - Are exposed to noise above the legal exposure standard, and - Frequently use hearing protection (earplugs or earmuffs).

When are tests required?

- Within 3 months of starting work (baseline test)
- At least every 2 years after that

What is a hearing test?

A hearing (audiometric) test is a painless, non-invasive test that measures how well a person hears different sound frequencies.

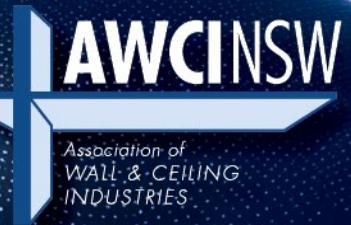
Who arranges and pays?

- Employers are responsible and pay for hearing tests
- Tests can be done at an audiology clinic or by a mobile provider attending your workplace

Why it matters

Regular hearing tests help: Detect hearing loss early - Prevent permanent damage - Confirm that noise controls and hearing protection are working

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If hearing loss or tinnitus is detected

Employers must review noise controls and hearing protection and notify their workers' compensation insurer if a permanent threshold shift is identified.

Legislation: Clause 58, Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 (NSW)

HEARING TESTS: WHAT TO EXPECT & NEXT STEPS

What is a hearing test?

Hearing tests (audiometric tests) are painless, non-invasive tests that measure the softest sounds a person can hear across a range of different sound frequencies.

Who performs a hearing test?

A hearing test must be carried out by a competent person, which may include a qualified audiologist or approved hearing service provider.

What to expect on the day

Hearing tests may be conducted at an audiology clinic or by a mobile service visiting your workplace.

On the day: - The test is conducted in a quiet space, away from loud noise - Ears are checked for blockages that could affect results - Workers may be asked about previous noise exposure at work and outside of work - Headphones are worn and responses are given to a series of tones

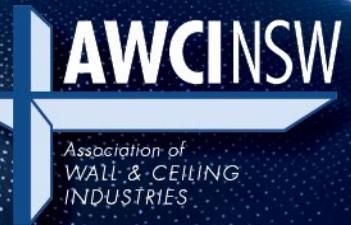
What happens after the test?

- Results are provided with an explanation of what they mean
- If hearing loss is detected, further testing may be required, including a follow-up test conducted at least 16 hours after noise exposure

What records are kept?

- Employers must keep all hearing test reports
- Records must be treated as confidential health documents

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Who arranges and pays?

- Employers are responsible for organising and paying for hearing tests
- Tests may be arranged through an audiology clinic or mobile provider

Benefits of regular hearing tests

Regular hearing testing helps with:

- Early detection of hearing loss
- Prevention of further hearing damage
- Assessing whether workplace noise controls are effective

If a threshold shift or tinnitus is reported

If a **significant permanent threshold shift** or **tinnitus** is identified, the PCBU must review noise controls to reduce the risk of further hearing impairment. This may include:

- Reviewing work tasks for increased noise exposure
- Using higher order controls such as isolation or engineering where reasonably practicable
- Reviewing exposure to ototoxic (hearing-damaging) chemicals
- Ensuring hearing protection is suitable for the noise level
- Retraining workers on correct fit and use of hearing protection
- Ensuring hearing protection is worn consistently during noisy work.

Where a permanent threshold shift is identified, the business must notify its workers' compensation insurer, who will assess liability and support further assessment.

DISCLAIMER

To ensure you comply with legal obligations, always refer to the appropriate legislation. The latest laws can be checked at legislation.nsw.gov.au. This publication is general guidance and does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law. Seek independent legal advice for your specific situation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **SafeWork NSW:** safework.nsw.gov.au or call 13 10 50
- Email: workingenvironment@safework.nsw.gov.au