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American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

July 1, 2020

### CAOHC Position Statement: Resuming Occupational Hearing Conservation Audiometric Examinations during the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic

CAOHC recognizes that providers of hearing conservation services are obligated to respond to the resumption of economic activity while maintaining a safe environment for consumers and hearing conservation professionals and technicians.

CAOHC recommends that audiometric testing providers make informed decisions before resuming audiometric examinations. For example, audiometric testing providers should consider the regional epidemiology and trajectory of coronavirus disease (COVID) cases, and their capacity to safely administer audiometric examinations while minimizing the risk of transmission and exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing COVID.

CAOHC recommends that audiometric testing providers develop and implement viral-transmission risk reduction procedures if audiometric testing is necessary and include processes that enable a rapid response to a resurgence of local or regional COVID cases. Examples of useful references include:

1. Protective guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.
2. National Hearing Conservation Association (NHCA) guidance document entitled, "NHCA Task Force COVID-19 Guidelines," offers an outline of tactics that should be considered by hearing conservation programs and hearing testing centers. The NHCA guidance is available publicly for download from their website, <https://www.hearingconservation.org>.
3. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), "Guidance on Returning to Work", <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>.

CAOHC has not rescinded the original position statement dated 24 March 2020 since it is still applicable in some regions and could be again as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. Further, OSHA amplified CAOHC's position in the Enforcement Memorandum entitled, "Discretion in Enforcement when Considering an Employer's Good Faith Efforts During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic," dated 16 April 2020.

CAOHC recognizes the challenges that hearing conservation professionals and technicians face in promoting occupational hearing conservation and preventing occupational hearing loss during the challenging conditions in which the COVID pandemic has established. CAOHC will continue to adapt and respond to this pandemic by providing ongoing guidance and responding to the needs of hearing conservation professionals and technicians, particularly as it relates to the maintenance of professional and technical credentials. As always, look to our website, <https://www.caohc.org>, for updates to guidance, products, and services. Furthermore, please feel free to submit questions and feedback in writing to [info@caohc.org](mailto:info@caohc.org).

Sincerely,

Raúl Alexander Mirza, D.O., MPH, MSc, CPS/A, FACOEM

[www.caohc.org](http://www.caohc.org)