



## Statement on Emerging Technology and Science

This statement supersedes the original position statement on Tablet Audiometry published April 2019.

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The Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation (CAOHC) broadly supports technological advances that promote hearing conservation. CAOHC encourages regulators and industry to incorporate these advances and the latest scientific and medically- based information about noise and ototoxic hazards into policies and procedures to prevent and mitigate occupationally-induced hearing injury and disease.

In recent years, mobile audiometric screening platforms have emerged from advanced hardware and software. These platforms appeal to employers seeking potential practical and financial feasibility options while executing their hearing conservation program's medical surveillance. CAOHC cannot remark on any specific mobile audiometer's performance specifications nor validate manufacturers' claims about product compliance to Federal and state regulations. However, CAOHC stresses all hearing conservation programs to strive for high-quality hearing conservation equipment and practices and adherence to relevant regulations.

Employers must comply with Federal and state labor laws that provide basic requirements for conducting occupational hearing conservation. For example, in the United States, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration establishes under the Code of Federal Regulations Part 1910, Standard Number 1910.95, entitled, "Occupational Noise Exposure," conveys its requirements and responsibilities of occupational hearing conservation programs, including basic requirements of audiometers and the acoustical environment.

Hearing loss is the third-highest chronic health condition among adults in the United States, behind hypertension and arthritis. About 25% of all workers have been exposed to hazardous noise, and the prevalence of hearing loss among noise-exposed tested workers for all industries combined decreased less than 1% over 30 years (1981-2010)<sup>1</sup>. These statistics underscore that much work remains to be accomplished by industry, regulators, and hearing conservationists to curtail the prevalence of occupational hearing loss. CAOHC believes regulators have a duty to revise policy and statutory requirements concurrent with technology advances and emerging scientific evidence about physical and chemical occupational hazards to hearing. CAOHC encourages Federal and state regulators, researchers (e.g., National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) and developers, and standards establishing entities (e.g., American National Standards Institute, International Organization for Standardization) to assess emerging audiometric technologies' performance and reliability and opine on their practical use in hearing conservation programs.

Sincerely,

Raúl Alexander Mirza, DO, MPH, MSc, CPS/A, FACOEM

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/oh/overall.html>, last updated August 27, 2019, accessed on 2 April 2021.