Employees who are exposed to hazardous levels of noise in the workplace are at risk for developing noise-induced hearing loss. Noise-induced hearing loss is 100 percent preventable but once acquired, hearing loss is permanent and irreversible. Noise-induced hearing loss can be reduced or eliminated through the successful application of engineering controls and hearing conservation programs (OSHA CFR 1910.95).

General Requirements per OSHA

- The employer shall administer a hearing conservation program whenever employee noise exposures equal or exceed the Action Level of 85 decibels for an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA)
- Employee noise exposures should not exceed the Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) of 90 decibels for a 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA)
- Engineering and administrative controls shall be utilized when employees are exposed to hazardous levels of noise. When such controls are not feasible or do not provide sufficient protection, hearing protection must be provided and used.

Main Components of a Hearing Conservation Program

- **Noise Monitoring**
  - Area monitoring (performed by EHS) and personal monitoring (dosimeters worn by employee)
  - NYU must conduct semi-regular noise monitoring for employees enrolled in the Hearing Conservation Program. This survey should occur in the relevant work locations in order to monitor for changes in noise level.
- **Employee Training**
  - Annual requirement for employees in the program
  - Must cover hearing protection, effects of noise on hearing, and audiometric testing procedures
- **Noise Controls**
  - Engineering control (ex: sound insulation, noise barrier)
  - Administrative control (ex: employee rotations)
  - Personal protective equipment (ex: earplugs or earmuffs)
- **Audiometric Testing Program**
  - Annual hearing testing- scheduled by EHS
  - Initial Baseline:
    - Within 1 year of first exposure, supervisors of employees in high noise areas should contact EHS to schedule initial baseline testing for new employees.