

Noise Induced Hearing Loss – Workers and Employers

If a worker believes their hearing loss is due to workplace noise exposure, they may be eligible to pursue a workers compensation claim for noise induced hearing loss (NIHL).

Key Points

Act ref: Part 2 Division 8 Reg Ref: Part 4 Division 7

- If a worker is required to wear personal hearing protection to reduce the risk of hearing loss that exceeds the noise exposure standards, the employer is deemed to be a 'noisy employer' and, if requested by the worker, required to pay for an audiological test performed by an authorised audiologist, and where required a NIHL assessment by a ENT specialist.
- Where the employer does not agree it is a noisy workplace, a worker may apply for WorkCover WA to make a binding determination.
- In order to make a successful claim, a worker must have both an audiological test showing hearing loss at or above the required threshold and a NIHL assessment showing NIHL at or above the required threshold.
- Only hearing loss due to the nature of employment is compensable hearing loss.
- A worker with NIHL must complete a NIHL claim form *CF2 NIHL Compensation claim form*, found on the WorkCover WA website and submit it to the last liable employer as determined in the NIHL Assessment, along with other documents.
- The employer has 7 days to forward the claim documents to their insurer. The insurer will then assess the claim and either accept or decline it.
- NIHL claims are paid as a lump sum based on the NIHL assessment. The cost of the claim may be apportioned to other liable employers.

Questions & Answers

Q. What are the thresholds for accessing compensation for noise induced hearing loss?

A. The thresholds for initial noise induced hearing loss is at least 10% NIHL and further noise induced hearing loss is at least 5% NIHL.

Q. What compensation is available for a NIHL claim?

A. Compensation is paid as a lump sum up to 75% of the General Maximum Amount. Compensation is paid as a proportion of assessed NIHL.

Q. How frequently is a noisy employer required to pay for audiological tests or ENT assessments?

A. No more frequently than once every two years.

Q. Can a worker pay for their own audiological test?

A. If an employer is not required to pay for testing, a worker may pay for their own audiological test and (where appropriate) NIHL assessment. The worker will be reimbursed these costs and any reasonable expenses if the claim is successful.

Q. What are the noise exposure standards?

A. The noise exposure standards align with noise exposure standards under WHS law and are:

- an LAeq,8h of 85dB(A); or
- an LC,peak of 140dB(C).