

Industrial Audiometric Facility Authorization Process

Under section 7.8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, employers in B.C. must ensure that hearing tests are administered to workers only by hearing testers, or industrial audiometric technicians (IATs), that are authorized by WorkSafeBC. This document describes the requirements and process to obtain and maintain authorization to operate a testing facility to provide industrial audiometry in B.C. for the purposes of the Regulation.

1.0 WorkSafeBC's authority

WorkSafeBC has established the following oversight mechanisms and process to authorize and regulate IATs and industrial audiometric businesses (IABs):

- WorkSafeBC sets standards for the conduct of IATs regarding administration of hearing tests and the equipment and facilities used.
- WorkSafeBC sets requirements for how a person may become an authorized IAT, reviews candidates, and certifies candidates that meet the requirements.
- WorkSafeBC monitors the conduct of IATs, the administration of hearing tests, and the management of hearing test records.
- Where WorkSafeBC's standards are not met, WorkSafeBC may investigate the situation, provide the IAT an opportunity to respond, and suspend or remove an IAT's authorization where appropriate.

2.0 Minimum requirements for an authorized testing facility

WorkSafeBC requires that testing equipment and facilities meet or exceed the recommendations for testing equipment and facilities set out in *CSA Z107.6-16, Audiometric testing for use in hearing loss prevention programs*.

WorkSafeBC authorizes both fixed testing facilities and mobile testing facilities, which must each meet the following requirements:

2.1 Fixed facilities

2.1.1 As set out in *CSA Z107.6-16*, a fixed testing facility must constitute a permanent installation built inside a larger facility, such as in a building on site or as part of a medical test centre.

2.1.2 The testing facility must be in a location as quiet as reasonably practicable inside the premises, away from busy hallways and noisy equipment, to meet the acoustical requirements in clause 2.3.3.

2.2 Mobile facilities

2.2.1 A mobile testing facility refers to an installation built as a self-contained portable facility that can be deployed to a temporary location.

2.2.2 At each location visited, the IAT must take all precautions to ensure that the mobile testing facility is located as far as practicable from sources of excessive noise and vibration to meet the acoustical requirements in clause 2.3.3.

2.3 General requirements for both fixed and mobile facilities

2.3.1 The testing space, which must include test booth(s) and a counselling space, must be a self-contained room or area of at least 50 square feet (4.6 square metres). The maximum number of booths per testing space is two.

2.3.2 A separate space must be available to allow private individual counselling of workers. This area shall ensure good face-to-face communication and an adequate level of privacy when carrying out conversations at a raised voice level, as might be required for some individuals with hearing loss.

Privacy may not be achieved by leaving other workers inside a test booth or outside the facility to await their turn for counselling.

2.3.3 Sound-treated rooms must be used to ensure maximum background noise levels are not exceeded according to the American National Standards Institute standard *ANSI S3.1-1999 (R2013)*. A commercially available booth may be required to meet *ANSI S3.1-1999 (R2013)*. The room door must be able to open a full 90 degrees.

2.3.4 The testing facility must be designed in such a way that the worker always remains visible to the IAT, by means of a window, mirror, or surveillance camera. However, the individual shall not be able to observe operations of the audiometer controls by the IAT.

2.3.5 The testing facility must be equipped with audiometer(s) that meet the current standard (*ANSI S3.6-2010*) for at least Type 4, and the following additional requirements:

- (a) Minimal set of test frequencies shall be 500, 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 6000, and 8000 Hz.
- (b) The minimal range in signal level at each frequency shall be from 0 to 90 dB HL, but an expanded range from -10 to 100 dB HL is recommended.

2.3.6 The testing facility must be equipped with at least one double power outlet for each booth and audiometer.

2.3.7 Samples of hearing protection devices (HPDs) typically provided by workers' employers must be available for use by the IAT in counselling workers on fit, care, and use of HPDs. To ensure an adequate variety of hearing protection for proper counselling of workers throughout B.C., at least one of each of the following types of HPDs must be on display in all testing facilities:

- Class A and Class B earmuffs (including helmet mount sample)
- Compressible earplugs
- Pre-formed reusable earplugs

- Custom moulded earplugs
- Canal caps or headband plugs

The testing facility must also make information available about level-dependent HPDs and HPDs for those with hearing loss.

2.3.8 Each IAT at a testing facility must display their current authorization from WorkSafeBC to conduct hearing tests. The IAT may display the authorization in the testing facility's testing area or it may be worn by the IAT. Testing is not permitted by persons with expired certificates.

2.3.9 Insert earphones and circumaural domes are prohibited from use at a testing facility.

2.3.10 To maintain authorization for a testing facility, the IAB must provide proof of annual audiometer calibration, conducted by a service provider acceptable to WorkSafeBC. IABs must be prepared to submit proof of calibration upon request.

3.0 Additional requirements for an authorized mobile testing facility

3.1 Noise monitors are required in all mobile testing facilities. The noise monitor shall be calibrated by an authorized audiometric supplier and installed for easy viewing by the IAT to indicate when testing must be interrupted. Noise monitor use is required for every test, and the IAT must complete a log to document its use. The monitor must be capable of ensuring that the maximum permissible ambient noise levels (MPANLs) inside the test booth, as set by *ANSI S3.1-1999 (R2013)*, are not exceeded during testing.

The MPANLs for industrial testing are as follows:

125	250	500	1000	2000	4000	8000	Hz
49.0	35.0	21.0	26.0	34.0	37.0	37.0	dB

3.2 The mobile testing facility must have adequate stability. Stabilizing jacks may be necessary during testing.

3.3 Access to the testing facility must meet general safety requirements. A handrail on the outside is usually required for mobile testing facilities.

3.4 WorkSafeBC will inspect all new testing facilities before they are used and before granting of authorization . Follow-up inspections may be required at the discretion of WorkSafeBC. IABs may be required to present their mobile testing facilities to an officer of WorkSafeBC for this inspection.

3.5 Testing in remote locations without a sound booth is allowed only with prior authorization from WorkSafeBC. An IAB may contact the occupational audiologist at WorkSafeBC to obtain this authorization. Testing in remote locations without a sound booth is allowed only if additional requirements are met and with prior authorization from WorkSafeBC. An IAB may contact the occupational audiologist to discuss authorization.

4.0 Authorization process for industrial audiometric facilities

4.1 The applicant must submit a [signed application form](#) with a detailed floor plan attached, including the brand and model of test booth(s) and audiometer(s) to be used. WorkSafeBC reserves the right to request further information from an applicant.

4.2 WorkSafeBC will conduct an inspection of the proposed testing facility. Any deficiencies noted by WorkSafeBC must be remediated before authorization will be granted.

4.3 The applicant must have IATs that are authorized to conduct hearing tests by WorkSafeBC (see [Industrial Audiometric Technician \(IAT\) Authorization Process](#)) to conduct the tests at the testing facility.

4.4 Each authorized IAB will be issued a unique industrial audiometric business number (IAB#) by WorkSafeBC.

5.0 Modification of authorized facility

If an IAB proposes to modify an authorized testing facility, the IAB must submit a plan of the modification to WorkSafeBC. Written authorization from WorkSafeBC must be obtained before commencing work.

6.0 Advertising by industrial audiometric businesses

Except as set out below, no IAB or testing facility may advertise or promote its relationship with WorkSafeBC, or use WorkSafeBC's name, official marks, trademarks, or the name or image of any worker for any purpose related to advertising, promotion, publications, or mailing lists, whether verbally or in written form.

An IAB may use the following statement in its advertising, provided that the statement is not the purpose or focus of the advertising and is in a smaller font than the IAB's (provider's) name:

Authorized to conduct industrial hearing tests under the British Columbia Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

7.0 Hearing test data

Maintenance of hearing test records

Authorized testers are required to submit the results of the hearing tests to WorkSafeBC in the manner prescribed by WorkSafeBC. WorkSafeBC maintains a database of hearing test results. Employers are able to access their results and reports through the online services for employers on worksafebc.com. The report includes a breakdown by type and category of each hearing test. It is expected that employers will use this report to determine the rate and extent of occupational hearing loss in their workers when reviewing their hearing conservation program on an annual basis.