



Noise Induced Hearing Loss: Claims and requirements

September 2026

A workers compensation and injury management scheme that works for all



Session Overview



Legislation



Claiming for hearing loss



Audiological tests



Compensation



Testing & Assessment
Procedures



Concluding comments

Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) Legislation

- The *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2023* (and Regulations) replaced the 1981 Act obligations, operational from 1 July 2024
- Two substantive changes under the 2023 Act -
 - Discontinuation of preliminary testing by approved audiometric officers and audiometrists
 - Discontinuation of mandatory hearing test for workers by employers in prescribed noisy workplaces - referred to now as noisy employment
 - Mandatory testing now required under WHS law



Key features

- Authorised Audiologist perform Audiological Test
- Workers entitled to request an audiological test every 2 years
- Audiological test results allow access to a NIHL Assessments by an ENT, which provides lump sum compensation to be paid
- WorkCover WA apportions claim cost between liable employers

Noisy Employment



Employment is noisy employment where exposure exceeds the daily noise dose (8hr day) of 85dB(A), or a peak noise exposure of 140dB(C).

- Noisy employment exists when a worker is frequently required to wear personal protective equipment to reduce the risk of hearing loss associated with noise exposure exceeding
 - a) an LAeq 8h of 85dB(A) or
 - b) an LC peak of 140dB(C)
- The noise exposure levels are consistent with WHS law.
- If a worker is in noisy employment, the employer is required to pay for audiological tests and NIHL assessments for workers compensation purposes
- Regulations give WCWA the power to make a determination that an employer is a noisy employer.
- Where the worker and employer fail to agree the worker is in noisy employment, the worker may apply in writing to WCWA for a determination on the issue. Determinations must be in writing and are final and binding.

Pre-claim hearing tests & NIHL assessments

Audiological Test

- A claim for NIHL compensation requires the worker to firstly undergo an Audiological Test performed by an authorised audiologist
- The test must show a hearing loss of at least 10% (5% for a subsequent claim) to be eligible to undergo an NIHL Assessment

NIHL Assessment

- A worker must undergo a NIHL assessment performed by an ENT specialist
- The ENT is required to determine occupational NIHL based on their assessment of the worker
- The NIHL assessment must show NIHL of at least 10% (5% for a subsequent claim) to be eligible to claim

Payment for Audiological Test and NIHL Assessment

- The employer who was required to pay for the audiological test leading to the NIHL assessment is required to pay for the NIHL assessment
- Where a worker paid for the audiological testing, the worker also pays for the NIHL assessment and the costs will be reimbursed if the claim is successful



Audiological Testing Procedure

- An authorised audiologists must ensure that hearing loss is measured according to the approved standard (use of the NAL Report available on the WorkCover WA website)
- The Standards are approved by the WorkCover WA CEO under regulation 45 of the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Regulations 2024* and apply to an authorised audiologist performing an audiological test.

Audiologists

Must have registration with the Audiology Australia

Register and apply for WorkCover WA Online

Audiological Test Report

Must be prepared on the approved form.

A copy must be given to the worker, employer who paid for the test and registered to WorkCover WA

Audiologist Role

Audiologists determine if the workers assessed percentage hearing loss meets a 10% requirement (5% for subsequent claims) and will inform them of the right to have an NIHL assessment conducted by an ENT specialist.

NIHL Assessment By ENT Specialist

- ENT specialist will determine the percentage of occupational NIHL for workers who meet 10% hearing loss (5% for subsequent claims)
- The worker must schedule an appointment with an ENT specialist and complete a Worker Noise Exposure and Employment History form
- The ENT completes a NIHL Assessment in the approved form to determine a workers % NIHL
- Where workers do not have 10% NIHL (or 5% for subsequent claims), the process ends.



The NIHL Register

WorkCover WA must keep a NIHL register containing (but not limited to):

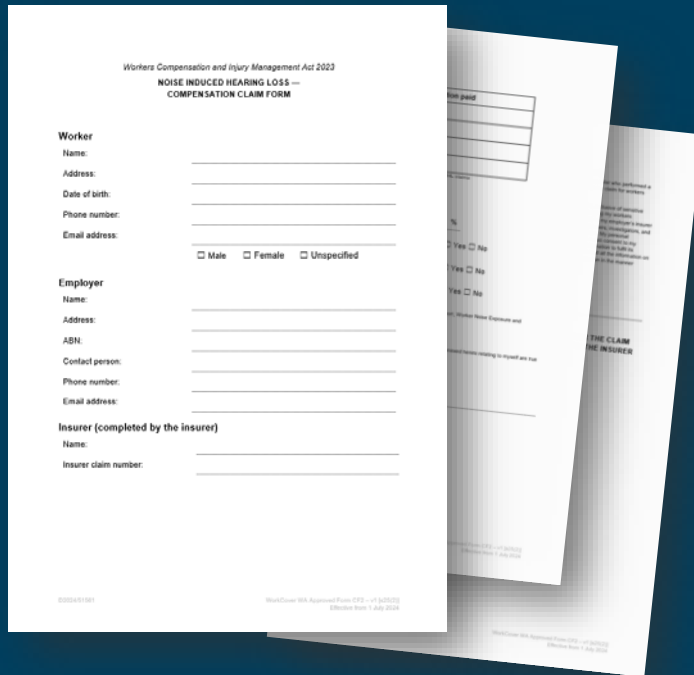
- Audiological test reports
- NIHL assessment reports
- NIHL claims and liability decision notices
- Audiometric test results from the 1981 Act

These documents may be requested by an authorised audiologist or ENT specialist to assist in an audiological test or NIHL assessment



Making a NIHL Claim

NIHL Compensation Claim Form

The image shows a 'Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2003 NOISE INDUCED HEARING LOSS - COMPENSATION CLAIM FORM'. It is a multi-page document. The first page has sections for 'Worker' (Name, Address, Date of birth, Phone number, Email address, Gender), 'Employer' (Name, Address, ABN, Contact person, Phone number, Email address), and 'Insurer (completed by the insurer)' (Name, Insurer claim number). The form is titled 'Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2003 NOISE INDUCED HEARING LOSS - COMPENSATION CLAIM FORM'. At the bottom, it says 'WorkCover WA Approved Form C23 - v1 2020/20 Effective from 1 July 2024'.

Requirements for Worker

Workers must lodge the NIHL Compensation Claim Form on the last noisy employer, and:

- Audiological Test report
- NIHL Assessment Report
- Worker Noise Exposure and Employment History on their last liable employer who must give it to their insurer

Liable Employer / Insurer

- Last Liable employer must give the claim to their insurer within 7 days
- Insurer must, within 14 days after receiving the claim, give a NIHL liability decision notice or NIHL deferred decision notice to the worker, employer and WorkCover WA

Compensation Payments



Compensation calculation:

For initial NIHL compensation, multiply the awarded NIHL percentage by 75% of the general maximum amount that applied on the date the assessment was taken (s.110 of the Act)*.

Example

- A. NIHL = 12%
- B. General Maximum Amount (GMA) = \$284,448.00
- C. 75% of PA = (\$284,448.00 x 75%)
= \$213,336.00

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Compensation} &= A \times C \\ &= 12\% \times \$213,336.00 \\ &= \mathbf{\$25,600.32}\end{aligned}$$

The last noisy employer is liable for the claim and pay the total compensable amount.

The last noisy employer or their insurer can apply to WCWA for an apportionment determination where liability is accepted and compensation has been paid.

This apportions the amount of liability to pay compensation between each employer, to recover some of the amount from other insurers of employers identified during the period when a worker has experienced a loss of hearing.

Determinations made by WorkCover WA are final and binding.

*For further NIHL, the amount is calculated by multiplying the worker's assessed NIHL percentage that is further NIHL by the maximum amount that applied on the date of assessment of further NIHL.

Dealing with Disputes

Hearing loss matter disputes:

- It is the insurer's obligation to make an application for dispute resolution in the Conciliation and Arbitration Services (CAS) if the claim is not accepted based on 'hearing loss matter'.

Other disputes:

- The worker may dispute 'hearing loss matters' in Conciliation and Arbitration Services and apply for determination of the dispute.
- If the insurer disputes for another reason, the worker can apply to CAS for determination of the dispute
- An arbitrator may make a determination on the dispute and make appropriate orders



NIHL Statistics

As of 30 June 2026, there were 223 noise practitioners operating in the scheme, up from 208 practitioners in 2024/25.

Claims data

2025/2026 financial year

- 816 Audiological tests reported to WorkCover WA
- 340 Workers identified with a potential NIHL claim (i.e. at least 10% or 5% hearing loss identified)
- 233 NIHL Assessments conducted
- **166 successful claims for NIHL:**
 - 154 First NIHL claims (10%)
 - 12 subsequent NIHL claims (5%)
- Total cost of claims: \$6,081,832
- Cost of claims average: **\$36,637**

Characteristics of NIHL

Top 3 Industries:



Mining



Manufacturing



Construction

Top 3 Occupations:



Technicians
and trades
workers



Machinery
operators
and drivers



Labourers

For enquiries or further assistance
related to Noise Induced Hearing Loss,
please contact us:



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Advice and Assistance
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