Model Employer Policy

Sound, headset and balance concerns at work

Proposed template for employers to adapt with workers, occupational health and local advisers. This policy does not determine medical causation or replace applicable law or accommodation duties.

1. Report and respond

Workers may report ringing, ear pain, sound sensitivity, dizziness, unsteadiness or a sudden sound incident without first obtaining an ESVI diagnosis. Use [reporting contact/channel]. Supervisors arrange a prompt safety check and record the worker's account without deciding its medical cause.

2. Protect the person now

For sudden stroke-like signs, call emergency services. Sudden hearing loss needs immediate medical evaluation. Pause the triggering task when needed for safety; discuss temporary non-headset duties, written communication, recovery breaks or another effective arrangement while concerns are evaluated.

3. Examine the work

Safety staff document device, settings, task duration, sudden sound peaks and recovery opportunities. Inspect equipment and limiting features; use qualified assessment of sound reaching the ear when indicated. Do not use room noise alone to estimate headset exposure or declare a setting universally safe.

4. Review accommodations

HR and the worker discuss functional barriers and effective options promptly through the applicable accommodation process. Consider accessible equipment, predictable breaks, written instructions and available alternative duties or reassignment when appropriate. A clinician determines medical findings; managers do not diagnose.

5. Keep reports safe

Prohibit retaliation for raising safety concerns, requesting accommodation or participating in a review. Keep medical information confidential and separate from routine personnel records; share only what is needed with authorized staff. Give the worker a copy of their report.

6. Follow through

Name an accountable lead. Suggested internal targets: acknowledge within one working day; agree a next step within five working days; review whether controls and accommodations work. These are proposed service targets, not statutory deadlines. Train managers and review de-identified incident patterns with the safety committee.

Adopted by: _____ Policy lead: _____
Reporting contact: _____ Review date: _____

Source guidance (linked): OSHA headset exposure guidance | EEOC reasonable accommodation guidance | NIDCD sudden hearing loss

ESVI Group International | Model template | Updated 7 November 2026