



# What Are the Most Common Pitfalls Employers Make in Occupational Hearing Testing Programs?

A strong hearing testing program is essential for helping to prevent and minimize noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) and ensuring compliance with OSHA Noise Standard regulations. However, many employers unknowingly encounter obstacles that lead to low participation rates, inefficiencies, and potentially inaccurate results. Below are the most common pitfalls—and how to correct them.

## **PITFALL #1:** **Relying Only on Testing in Sound Booths**

Requiring employees to take hearing tests solely when a sound booth is available—whether at off-site clinics or mobile testing trucks—can be disruptive, uncomfortable, and logistically challenging.

Many employees skip scheduled tests due to potentially stuffy, claustrophobic conditions often encountered in mobile testing trucks. This aversion can lead to low participation rates and associated compliance risks. Scheduling testing with a limited number of sound booths also requires careful coordination, but shift work, scheduling conflicts, and absenteeism make it difficult to test everyone efficiently. Rescheduling missed tests increases costs and administrative burdens.

Expanding testing areas to include quiet, noise-monitored environments solves these issues by allowing employees to complete tests in familiar and open environments on a flexible schedule. This can lead to higher participation, improved compliance, and fewer disruptions.



## **PITFALL #2:**

### **Assuming that Room Scan Noise Measurements are Stable Throughout Testing**

For organizations testing in or outside of a booth, a major oversight is failing to monitor ambient noise continuously. Many companies measure background noise once at the start of the day, assuming conditions remain stable. However, environmental noise fluctuates significantly throughout the day – especially in a high-traffic area like a parking lot. Not using continuous noise monitoring can easily lead to inaccurate test results, which is problematic for all involved.

A boothless testing solution with integrated ongoing ambient noise monitoring helps ensure that test results are accurate, leading to better OSHA compliance, fewer retests, and a smoother overall process.



## **PITFALL #3:**

### **Rigid Testing Schedules That Disrupt Operations**

Traditional hearing testing models often require all employees to be tested within a short timeframe, whether at off-site clinics or during scheduled mobile visits. This rigid scheduling creates logistical challenges—if employees miss their test due to shift work or illness, employers must reschedule or send them off-site, increasing costs and administrative burdens.

An in-house, flexible approach allows employers to stagger testing over time instead of relying on a single scheduled event. This provides:

- More flexibility for shift workers
- Reduced downtime and fewer scheduling conflicts
- Higher participation rates and improved compliance

By removing the limitations of traditional mobile units, employers can test more employees while keeping operations running smoothly.

## **Building a Better Hearing Testing Program**

Transitioning to a boothless hearing testing program improves efficiency, accuracy, and compliance. Notably, partnering with a provider offering expert clinical review, supervision services, and ongoing support is essential.

## Key Considerations When Selecting a Hearing Testing Provider

- Access to CAOHC-certified Supervising Audiologists/Physicians for:
  - Shift determination and confirmation
  - Identification and review of problem audiograms
  - Baseline audiogram revisions
  - Test follow-up recommendations
- Additional support services, including:
  - Historical data migration for accurate, OSHA-compliant records
  - Mobile device setup and testing environment compliance
  - Deployment and logistical support for a smooth transition
  - Ongoing program support and professional oversight

By implementing an in-house, boothless hearing testing program with the right professional oversight, employers can increase participation, improve accuracy, and reduce costs—all while ensuring compliance and protecting workers' hearing.

## Final Thoughts

Outdated hearing testing methods and environments create unnecessary barriers to compliance and worker safety. Employers can establish a more efficient and employee-friendly testing program by eliminating the need to rely solely on booths, monitoring ambient noise, and offering flexible scheduling.

When combined with expert clinical support and secure data management tools, in-house/boothless testing becomes a highly effective solution, enhancing participation, accuracy, and long-term hearing conservation outcomes.

SHOEBOX can support you with everything you need to avoid each pitfall and maximize the success of your hearing testing program. Contact our team at [salesoccupationalhealth@shoebox.md](mailto:salesoccupationalhealth@shoebox.md) to learn more about how we can help.

