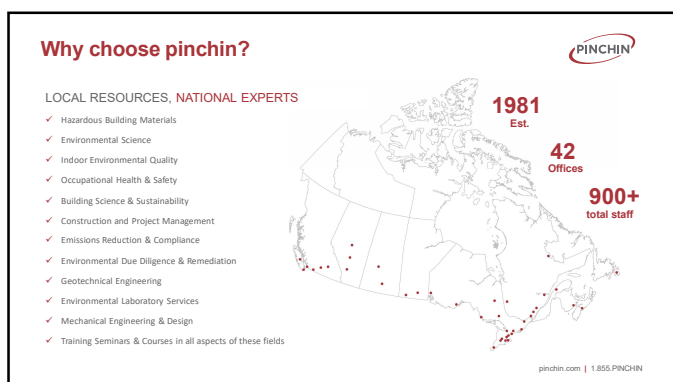




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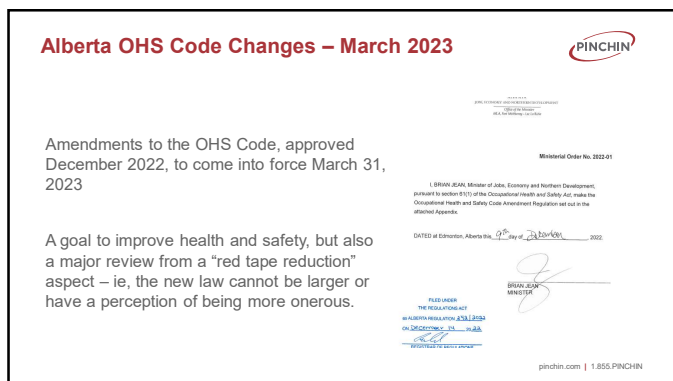
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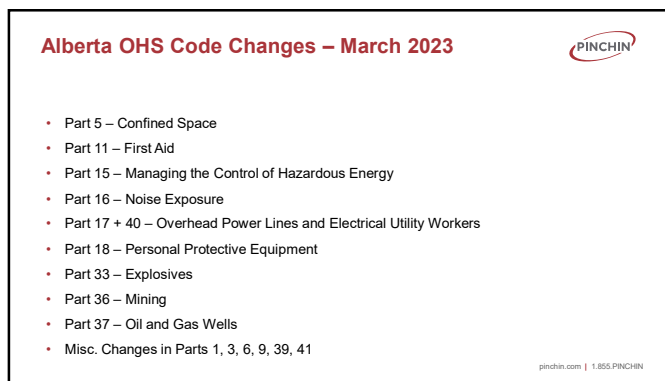
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### Key Changes to Part 16 - Noise

- Changes when you have to do a noise exposure assessment
- Changes on how results are to be recorded
- Changes how a noise management program is structured
- Adds fit testing of hearing protection
- Updates audiometric testing and service provider requirements
- Defines now what a "significant threshold shift" is


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### Noise Exposure Assessment

- Dropped the limit at which a noise exposure assessment is required by 50% from 85 to 82 dBA (*did you know, that's the Action Limit*)
- Updated the assessment standard from CSA Z107.56-06 to -18; a number of the changes relate to atypical workplace monitoring but have significant impacts if doing near-ear assessments. Some useful changes:
  - instrument selection and requirements for noise-measuring equipment including removal of non-integrating sound level meters for measuring noise exposure have been updated;
  - a new informative annex (Annex D) on walk-through surveys and noise level surveys has been included; and
  - the procedure for the use of  $L_{OEH4}$  has been removed and is no longer recommended
- Changed noise dosimeter requirements from a technical standard of performance and changed the threshold level from 80 dBA to 75 dBA (or off)

**IMPACT** – if you haven't done any exposure testing as you felt you were below the threshold, you might have to do so now – and how will the threshold change be enforced?




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### Noise Exposure Assessment

- New clarification on competency requirements for person doing the noise exposure assessment:
  - Trained in conducting noise exposure assessments
  - Trained in calibration, operation and maintenance of the equipment used in conducting the measurements
  - Can demonstrate an understanding of the method used for measurement
- Still need to update your assessment if any change in equipment, process or other thing affects the noise level or length of time a worker is exposed to noise.



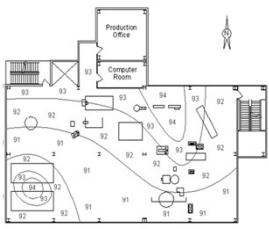
**IMPACT** – review your existing reports and ensure that they meet the new standards, otherwise a new assessment would be required.

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### Recording of Noise Records

- Revised wording clarifies that employers must ensure the noise exposure assessment includes a record of the tasks carried out by the worker whose noise exposure is being evaluated.
- Employers must also retain records for at least three years from the date of the assessment. This now aligns with chemical exposure assessment record retention timelines.
- Previously, employers were required to keep these records for as long as they operated in Alberta.




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### Noise Management Programs

- Noise management program requirements updated, but very similar. Additional clarification that it should include review of audiometric testing results in review of the adequacy of the program and requirements for annual update of the entire program.
- New wording requires that all parts of the program are to be updated annually.
- New wording more closely matches the wording in the CSA Z1007-16, Hearing Loss Prevention Program Management Standard.



Hearing loss prevention program (HLPP) management




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### Audiometric Testing and Service Providers

- Audiometric testing results needed for workers who are **may be** exposed to excess noise at a work site or area.
- Clarifying that consulting audiologists and physicians who receive test results where there is a significant threshold shift confirmed must provide aggregated test result data to the employer annually. Reporting needs to indicate that if in their opinion there are concerns related to noise management at the work site or area.
- Audiometric testing costs (including time) still need to be paid for by the employer.




**IMPACT** – your program may wish to be reviewed to ensure it addresses these changes and you may have more workers that need audiometric testing.

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### Audiometric Testing and Service Providers

- For the technicians themselves, former Alberta-specific requirements have been replaced with references to ANSI/ASA S3.6-2018, Specification for Audiometers for the testing equipment and for the audiometric testing to be done in accordance with CSA Standard Z107.6:16 (R2020), Audiometric testing for use in hearing loss prevention programs.
- Consulting audiologists and physicians who receive test results where a significant threshold shift has been confirmed must provide aggregated test result data to the employer at least once per year. They must also advise the employer of any concerns that, in their opinion, are related to noise management at a work site or area.



**IMPACT** – no visible impact to your operations – your service providers will have simply updated their requirements.

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### Fit Testing

- The language in the Code is as follows:
  - 222 An employer must ensure that hearing protection devices used and worn by workers at a work site or work area
  - (a) meet the requirements of CSA Standard Z94.2-14 (R2019), Hearing protection devices — Performance, selection, care, and use, and
  - (b) are fit tested in accordance with CSA Standard Z94.2-14 (R2019), Hearing protection devices — Performance, selection, care, and use.

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### Fit Testing

In an original bulletin provided to employers in March of 2023, the government provided the following guidance:

- Fit testing of hearing protection can be conducted either quantitatively or qualitatively. Quantitative methods are the preferred standard, but these require specialized equipment.
- Qualitative methods are simpler to perform and rely on the worker's sense of hearing.
- They then provided the guidance at the right ->

**TIPS TO CHECK THE FIT OF FOAM EAR PLUGS**

- Use your fingertips to feel if the ear plugs are fully inserted into the ear canal, use a mirror to check, or have a coworker visually confirm.
- Cup hands tightly over your ears. If sounds are much more muffled with your hands in place, the earplugs may not be seating properly.
- Talk out loud. Your voice should sound hollow, as if you are talking in a barrel.
- Listen for noises around you. Noises should not be as loud as they were before inserting the ear plugs.

**TIPS TO CHECK THE FIT OF EAR MUFFS**

- Read the manufacturer's instructions on how to don the ear muffs.
- Make sure the ear muffs cover the whole ear, and do not have anything in between that prevents a good seal between the ear muff and the ear (for example, prescription eyewear).
- Listen for noises around you. Noises should sound muffled and not be as loud as they were before putting on the ear muffs.

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### Fit Testing

Problem – the concept of qualitative and quantitative fit testing are not terms that appeared anywhere in the CSA Standard, were not generally known at the time in hygiene circles.

The same bulletin number without the "archived" watermark (dated December 2023) no longer references these concepts and simply states the fit test must be done in accordance with the CSA Standard.

The CSA Standard covers proper fit in Section 11 which also then references the concept of Field Attenuation Evaluation Systems in Section 13.

Starting point – whatever the manufacturer provides as a "must" must be done; otherwise, one can use whatever guidance the manufacturer provides.




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### Fit Testing - FAES

There are numerous systems out there, but none were easily available to rent as of the date of this presentation.

Features	Honeywell VeriPro	3M E-A-R®	Tremetrics INTEGRAR
Compatibility	Any brand	3M brand products	Any brand
Style of hearing protector	Earplugs	Earplugs and earmuffs	Earplugs
Frequencies	5 frequencies	7 frequencies	3 frequencies
Includes software	Yes	Yes	Yes



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### Fit Testing

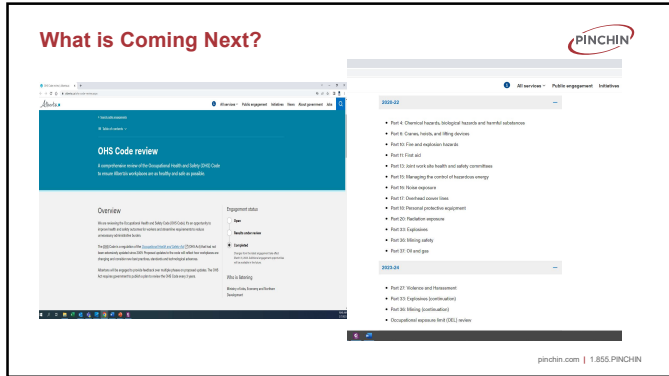
What does this all mean for you:

- The use of the "qualitative" fit testing methods originally promoted by the Government of Alberta now may not be accepted.
- Comment was asked from the Government on this prior to the presentation, but a formal response was not received.
- Your audiometric providers will most-likely be able to do this for you and therefore, will simply become an add-on test during audiometric testing.
- You likely want to conduct some form of evaluation in the meantime to demonstrate compliance, using the original guidance as your support.

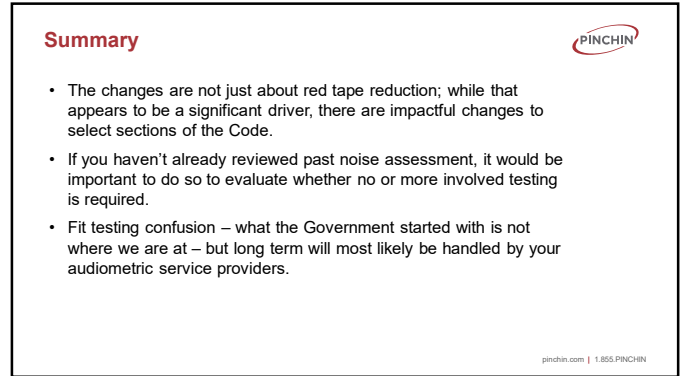
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