



STATE OF WISCONSIN

Department of Safety and Professional Services
1400 E Washington Ave.
Madison WI 53703

Mail to:
PO Box 8935
Madison WI 53708-8935

Email: dsps@wisconsin.gov
Web: <http://dsps.wi.gov>
Phone: 608-266-2112

Governor Scott Walker Secretary Dave Ross

Positions Statements Related to Audiology Issued by the Hearing and Speech Examining Board

Licensees must meet a new CE requirement prior to their next license renewal in January 2013. The overall number of required CE hours has **not** changed. The new requirement simply states that two (2) of the 20 hours of CE must be in Ethics. The remaining CE hours may be obtained from any other course approved by the Hearing and Speech Examining Board.

A list of Board approved CE courses for the current biennium which runs from 2/1/2011 through 1/31/2013 can be found on the DSPS website at www.dsps.wi.gov

WHAT IS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF FEDERAL LAW THAT GOVERNS THE REGULATION OF AUDIOLOGISTS?

The rules of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), relating to hearing aid devices, labeling and conditions for sale. Refer to [21 CFR 801.420](#) and [21 CFR 801.421](#).

WHAT CONSTITUTES THE PRACTICE OF AUDIOLOGY?

The practice of audiology means all of the following as defined by [Wis Stat. 459.20\(2\)](#):

(1) Applying principles, methods or procedures of prevention, identification, evaluation, consultation, intervention, instruction or research related to hearing, vestibular function, or any abnormal condition related to tinnitus, auditory sensitivity, acuity, function or processing, speech, language or other aberrant behavior resulting from hearing loss.

(2) Engaging in the practice of fitting and dealing in hearing aids.

WHAT CONSTITUTES THE PRACTICE OF FITTING AND DEALING IN HEARING AIDS?

As defined by [Wis Stat. 459.01\(5\)](#), the practice of fitting and dealing in hearing aids is defined to mean the measurement of human hearing by means of an audiometer or by any other means accepted by the examining board for the purpose of making selections, adaptations or sales of hearing instruments intended to compensate for impaired hearing, and includes making impressions for ear molds.

HOW OFTEN ARE AUDIOLOGISTS REQUIRED TO CALIBRATE AUDIOMETRIC EQUIPMENT?

Audiometric equipment used in the evaluation of hearing sensitivity for the fitting and sale of hearing instruments shall be calibrated not less than once every 12 months. Refer to [Ch. HAS 6.18 \(3\) \(d\)](#), Wis. Adm. Code.

HOW LONG ARE AUDIOLOGISTS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN CERTIFICATIONS OF CALIBRATIONS OF AUDIOMETRIC EQUIPMENT?

For a period of at least 5 years. Refer to [Ch HAS 6.18 \(3\) \(e\)](#), Wis. Adm. Code.

HOW LONG ARE AUDIOLOGISTS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN RECORDS OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES RENDERED AND PRODUCTS DISPENSED?

Audiologists are required to maintain records of professional services rendered and products dispensed for a period of 5 years. Refer to [Ch HAS 6.18 \(2\) \(n\)](#), Wis. Adm. Code.

WHAT ARE THE APPROPRIATE PROCEDURES FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF HUMAN HEARING?

The appropriate procedures for the measurement of human hearing are outlined in [Ch HAS 4.01, Wisc Admin Code](#).

WHAT IS THE APPROPRIATE TIME FRAME FOR PERFORMING HEARING TESTS PRIOR TO FITTING HEARING INSTRUMENTS?

The appropriate procedures for the measurement of human hearing as described in [Ch HAS 4.01, Wis. Adm. Code](#) shall be performed and documented within 6 months prior to the selling and fitting of a hearing instrument

IS CERUMEN MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF AUDIOLOGISTS?

Yes, cerumen management, as defined in [Ch HAS 6.175 \(1\)](#), Wis Admin Code, is permissible within the scope of practice of audiology. However, the incompetent performance of cerumen management can result in disciplinary action, see [Ch HAS 6.18 \(3\)\(g\)](#).

This is not within the scope of practice of a hearing instrument specialist.

WHAT GUARANTEE, IF ANY, MUST BE PROVIDED TO A PURCHASER OF A HEARING INSTRUMENT?

Audiologists are required to give the purchaser of a hearing aid a personal guarantee that is at least identical in its terms to the guarantee of the manufacturer of the hearing aid. See [Wis Stat. 459.04 and 459.24 \(3m\)](#).

IS THE FAILURE OF AN AUDIOLOGIST TO CONDUCT A DIRECT OBSERVATION OF THE EAR CANAL OF A PERSON FOR WHOM A HEARING INSTRUMENT IS PURCHASED GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE?

Yes, see [Ch HAS 6.18 \(3\)\(b\)](#), Wisc Admin Code

ARE OTHER GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE STIPULATED?

Yes. Actions that could be considered grounds for discipline are discussed in Chs [HAS 5](#) and [HAS 6.18](#), Wisc Admin Code and [Wis Stats. 459.10 and 459.34](#).

DOES THE EXAMINING BOARD HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO ASSESS FORFEITURE IN DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS?

Yes. In addition to or in lieu of a reprimand or denial, limitation, suspension or revocation of a license or permit, the examining board may assess against an applicant, licensee or permittee a forfeiture of not less than \$100 nor more than \$2,500 for each violation enumerated under [s. 459.34 \(3\)](#), Wis. Stats.

DOES AN AUDIOLOGIST NEED TO OBTAIN A HEARING INSTRUMENT SPECIALIST LICENSE TO FIT HEARING AIDS?

No, this is within the scope of practice of an audiologist as defined in [Wis Stat. 459.20 \(2\)](#). However, a speech-language pathologist that wishes to distribute hearing aids would need to obtain a hearing specialist license ([459.22 \(2\)\(b\)](#)).

HEARING AIDS PURCHASED THROUGH MAIL ORDER OR ON THE INTERNET APPEAR TO BE LESS EXPENSIVE THAN THOSE AVAILABLE FROM LOCAL AUDIOLOGISTS OR HEARING INSTRUMENT SPECIALISTS. IS IT ADVISABLE TO PURCHASE HEARING AIDS THROUGH MAIL ORDER OR ON THE INTERNET?

It is highly recommended that you purchase hearing aids in person rather than through mail order or on the internet. It is critical that you first have your hearing evaluated by a licensed hearing health care professional - either an audiologist or hearing instrument specialist – to determine your hearing health care needs. If it is determined that your hearing loss is due to an underlying medical condition, you will be referred to a physician for medical evaluation and treatment. If it is determined that your hearing loss can be treated with hearing aids, the hearing health care professional will select and fit you with the most appropriate hearing aids for your hearing loss, and then provide you with essential follow-up services. A professional relationship between you and a licensed hearing health care professional is important to insure

successful use of, and satisfaction with, hearing aids. For more information about hearing aids, visit the consumer web sites of the American Academy of Audiology (<http://www.howsyourhearing.org/>) and the International Hearing Society (http://ihsinfo.org/IhsV2/Hearing_Health_Info/Index.cfm)