

Noise and Hearing Protection for the Construction Industry

Ref: OSHA Regulation: 1926.52

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 22 million workers are exposed to potentially damaging noise at work each year. Whether you work at a sports stadium, at an airport, or operate a jackhammer – hearing loss is preventable. Damage to your hearing can be prevented, but it usually occurs gradually, so you may not realize it is happening until it is too late.

What is noise?

Noise is unwanted sound and is measured on a decibel scale (dBA). A whisper is about 30 dBA, normal conversation is 60-70 dBA, and power tools are often between 90-110 dBA. If two people at arm's length must raise their voices to be heard, the noise level is above 85 dBA.

Remember This

- Pay attention to noise levels where you work. The best way to know if you need hearing protection is to measure the sound levels (in decibels). Free phone apps are available that can be used to estimate the noise level. You can also use the shout test. If you have to shout to be heard when standing 3 feet (at arm's length) away from someone, then it's probably over 85 decibels and hearing protection should be worn.
- Find the most comfortable hearing protectors (earplugs or earmuffs) and make sure you wear them every time you are around loud noise.
- "Earbuds" are not adequate hearing protection.
- Avoid inserting or removing earplugs if your hands are dirty, to avoid an ear infection. Change foam plugs frequently.
- Take breaks from loud noise.
- If possible, move your work away from noise sources or move the noise sources away from your work area.
- Have your hearing tested as soon as possible to have a baseline measurement of your hearing. Have it rechecked during regular doctor visits to make sure you haven't damaged your hearing.



Date of Safety Talk _____

Company _____

Talk given by _____

Signature _____

Attending Employees:

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Notes:

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