



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

Volume 1, Issue 7

February 16th, 2014

Protecting Your Hearing

Most of us take our senses for granted so we don't often give our hearing much thought. But most people suffer some degree of hearing loss and, once your hearing is gone, it doesn't come back. Farmers, construction workers, people exposed to constant loud noise on the job, whether at home or through their hobbies (even fans of loud music!), have at least one thing in common. They are at risk of permanent hearing loss. It's important to understand what causes hearing loss and how it can be prevented.

Noise and hearing protection:

Exposure to normal noise levels doesn't cause hearing loss -- overexposure to high noise levels does. Noise is measured in units called "decibels." The higher the decibel, the louder the noise. To help you see the difference in the decibel scale, look at these examples of various noise levels:

- 20 decibels - soft whisper
- 30 decibels - leaves rustling, very soft music
- 60 decibels - normal speech, background music
- 85 decibels - heavy machinery with a soundproof cab
- 90 decibels - lawnmower, shop tools
- 100 decibels - heavy machinery without a soundproof cab, motorcycles
- 115 decibels - loud music, sand blasting
- 140 decibels - jet engine, shotgun

In the workplace, hearing protection must be used to reduce noise exposure for anyone who is exposed to 90 decibels or more throughout the course of a workday. Hearing protection may be used at lower levels, particularly for people who are very close to the 90 decibel exposure level. Sounds above 120 decibels can cause hearing damage after only a brief exposure and should be avoided unless hearing protection is worn.

There are many types of hearing protection available, but keep in mind that not every type of hearing protection is good for every type of noise. Disposable foam earplugs may be fine for some noise exposure. Earmuff-type protection may be suitable for others.

It is the employer's responsibility to assess noise exposures and provide appropriate hearing protection as needed for everyone in the workplace. It is the worker's responsibility to use the protection consistently and correctly. Hearing protection is no use if it's not worn.

Keep in mind that equipment operators aren't the only ones who may need protection. Other people who work nearby may also be overexposed to noise. If you work in a noisy area -- even if you're not the one making the noise -- be aware of the hazard of hearing loss and use protection.



Another thing that might cause unnecessary noise exposure is poorly-maintained equipment. Keeping equipment properly lubricated and in good condition helps keep down the noise. If you become aware of noisy equipment that hasn't been noisy before, report the condition so proper hearing protection can be provided until necessary repairs are made.

Think of those sounds you take for granted and imagine life without them. Don't let unnecessary exposure to noise take them away. You can do something to help protect your hearing. Take the time to know what protection to use and use it faithfully. Your hearing can last a lifetime with a few common sense precautions.

Hearing protection is a sound investment.



Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests