



Weekly Safety Meeting

Protect Your Hearing in the Workplace

Protecting your hearing is one of the most critical, yet frequently overlooked, aspects of workplace safety. Unlike many physical injuries, noise-induced hearing loss occurs gradually over time. By the time you notice a change in your hearing, the damage is already permanent, because hearing loss is irreversible.

The High Cost of Workplace Noise

Every year, thousands of workers suffer from preventable hearing loss due to hazardous occupational noise levels. Exposure to high noise levels can cause permanent hearing damage, increase stress, and contribute to workplace accidents by masking warning signals. If you have to raise your voice to speak to someone just an arm's length away, the noise level is likely hazardous and requires hearing protection.

Common Scenarios Leading to Hearing Loss

Hearing damage doesn't just happen in heavy industrial factories. Hazardous noise exists across many different environments. Here are typical situations where workers risk losing their hearing:

- Construction Sites: Operating heavy machinery such as jackhammers, concrete saws, or bulldozers without wearing earplugs or earmuffs;
- Manufacturing Facilities: Working near automated assembly lines, high-speed bottling plants, or metal stamping presses for long shifts;
- Grounds Maintenance: Using gas-powered lawnmowers, leaf blowers, and chainsaws daily without adequate protection;
- Warehouse Operations: Working in close proximity to constant forklift traffic, conveyor systems, and industrial packaging machinery;
- Fleet and Maintenance Garages: Using pneumatic impact wrenches, air compressors, and grinders in enclosed shop bays; and
- Armed Forces: Working or training around intense and ongoing noise from aircraft, gunfire, and machinery.

Your Action Plan for Hearing Safety

Preventing hearing loss is a shared responsibility. Take these immediate steps to safeguard your ears:

- Wear Your PPE: Always use provided earplugs or earmuffs when entering designated high-noise zones. Ensure earplugs are rolled and inserted correctly into the ear canal for a proper seal;

- Keep Your Distance: Whenever possible, increase your distance from loud, operating machinery;
- Maintain Equipment: Report poorly lubricated or malfunctioning machinery, as unbalanced parts and friction significantly increase noise output; and
- Rotate Tasks: Limit your continuous exposure to loud tasks by rotating duties with coworkers throughout the shift.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for hearing protection is essential in environments where noise exposure cannot be controlled at the source, serving as a critical defense against irreversible, noise-induced hearing loss. The most common types of hearing PPE include formable foam earplugs, which expand to seal the ear canal; pre-molded reusable plugs; canal caps on flexible bands; and earmuffs that entirely enclose the external ear. To be fully effective, these devices must create a proper acoustic seal, fit comfortably, and be compatible with other safety gear like hardhats or safety glasses. Because single-use options can easily absorb dirt and earplugs tend to loosen from talking or chewing, regular monitoring, proper training, and strict hygiene are vital to ensuring the equipment successfully reduces noise to safe decibel levels. For high-noise industries or environments, guidelines and tools are available through organizations like the OSHA to help select the correct equipment.

USE HEARING PROTECTION...BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY!

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

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

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