

About

Hearing loss in the industry

The definition of noise is unwanted sound. Construction is an industry plagued with unwanted sound from various sources such as the engine of a generator, the buzzing of a hand grinder, an industrial boiler, or a combination of all. Unwanted sound can cause irreversible damage to human ears. Noise that some people would consider to be relatively low or “normal” can even cause damage over time.

The good

When the right measures are taken, noise induced hearing loss becomes 100% preventable.

Our ability to hear is crucial for proper communication, don't take it for granted.



How loss occurs

When does hearing loss occur?

Permanent hearing loss can occur when a worker is exposed to noise levels as low as 85dB over a period of 8 hours.

Noise level examples:

To understand what 85 dB is, below is a breakdown of different settings, their noise levels, and the time necessary for hearing loss.

- Wooded forest: 15 dB
- Quiet bedroom: 25 dB
- Library: 35 dB
- Normal speaking: 65 dB
- General office area: 75 dB
- Average machine shop: 85 dB; 8 hours
- Vacuum cleaner: 85 dB; 8 hours
- Push Lawnmower: 95 dB; 4 Hours
- Table saw: 100 dB; 2 hours
- Wood chipper: 110 dB; 30 min.
- Aircraft engine 130 dB, 2 minutes

Hearing Safety

How can I prevent hearing loss?

Wear your PPE

Ear plugs have a noise reduction ration of up to 33 dB, that means that you can work in an area of up to 110 dB and still be able to protect your hearing.

When your earplugs are not enough, you can double up and wear ear muffs above your earplugs to give you some extra protection.

How do I know when I need protection?

If you're working in an area that has signs posted about hearing protection, you need hearing protection.

Your employer will let you know what kind of protection you need based on noise levels.

A good rule of thumb to be proactive when there are no signs is that if you need to raise your voice to speak to someone 1-2ft away from you, the noise is at 85 dB or above.