

Hearing Loss Prevention

Exposure to loud noises is one of the most common causes of hearing loss.

How loud is too loud? If you are regularly exposed, for a minute or longer, to bulldozers, chain saws, ambulance sirens or jet engine takeoffs, you're at risk. Power tools and machinery aren't the only causes of hearing loss. Be cautious with iPods and MP3 players, too.

Noise Induced Hearing Loss is serious. According to the Better Hearing Institute, approximately 30 million people are at risk in the workplace, in recreational settings, and at home. In fact, it is the most common work-related ailment.

Start with protecting your ears in the workplace. Specially designed earmuffs can protect your ears by bringing most loud sounds down to an acceptable level. Earplugs made of plastic or rubber can also effectively protect your ears from damaging noise.

Consider having regular hearing tests if you work in a noisy environment. Regular testing of your ears can provide early detection of hearing loss. Knowing you've lost some hearing means you're in a position to take steps to prevent further hearing loss.

Steps to Hearing Loss Prevention

Follow posted precautions -- If hearing protection is suggested for your jobsite, use it. You need to consistently protect yourself.

- Be aware of noise -- Whenever you can, turn down the volume on radios or televisions. If you can't hear or be heard by someone within three feet, the noise is too loud. Additionally, if you are attending a live music concert, wear earplugs.
- Be cautious with headphones -- If you're using headphones and the person next to you can hear what you're listening to, the volume is too loud.
- Give your ears a rest -- Alternate noisy and quieter activities. In addition to the intensity, how long you're exposed to a noise can affect hearing loss. In fact, noise that ranks lower on the decibel scale, but continues for a longer period of time, may actually be more harmful than a high-intensity noise that's intermittent.



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