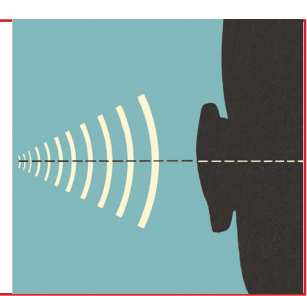


HAZARD ALERT

CPWR
THE CENTER FOR CONSTRUCTION
RESEARCH AND TRAINING

NOISE AND HEARING LOSS



What?

You can damage – even lose – your hearing from working:

- ▶ Around loud noises (85 decibels or higher); and/or
- ▶ With paints, degreasing, cleaning, and other construction products that contain solvents such as toluene.

If you have to ask others to repeat themselves, or if you need to turn your TV or radio up at the end of the workday, you may already be suffering from hearing loss.

NOISE LEVELS BY DECIBELS

Pneumatic Precision Drill	119
Hammer Drill	114
Chain Saw	110
Spray Painter	105
Hand Drill	98
NIOSH Recommended Exposure Limit	85
Normal Conversation	60
Whisper	30

What will you miss when you lose your hearing?

- ▶ On the job: Hearing your boss or co-worker alert you to a hazard
- ▶ At home: The ability to communicate with friends and family

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), approximately 1 out of 4 construction workers suffer from some level of hearing loss.

Once your hearing is gone, it's gone forever.

**If you think you are in danger:
Contact your supervisor. Contact your union.
Call OSHA 1-800-321-OSHA**

**Learn more about
NIOSH's Sound Level Meter App
and how to prevent hearing loss at
<http://bit.ly/CPWR-NOISE>**

Find out more about construction hazards.

To receive copies of this Hazard Alert and cards on other topics:

**call 301-578-8500 or
email CPWR-r2p@cpwr.com**

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When you work around noise...

1 Ask for controls

Noise is measured in decibels (dBs). Using equipment just 3 dBs lower can cut the noise energy reaching your ears by half.

Ask your employer to rent or buy low-noise equipment, or put a sound barrier around loud equipment like compressors.



2 Wear hearing protection

According to OSHA, your employer must provide you with hearing protection when you work around loud noise.* Types of hearing protection include earplugs and earmuffs.

Make sure your hearing protection fits and is comfortable. The louder the job, the more hearing protection you need.



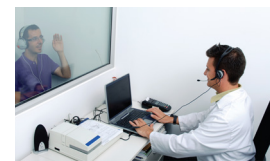
Worker using earplugs for hearing protection.

*SOURCE: THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (OSHA) – 29 CFR 1926.101

3 Get trained and tested

Your employer should train you on how to:

- ▶ Protect your hearing; and
- ▶ Use hearing protection.



Worker taking a hearing test.

An annual hearing test will let you know if your hearing is getting worse.*

*THE HEARING TEST IS CALLED AN AUDIOMETRIC TEST.

Noise is bad for your safety and health

- ▶ Noise can distract you.
- ▶ You may not hear warnings.
- ▶ Hearing loss increases your risk of falling.
- ▶ Years of noisy job sites can make you deaf.

Noise can cause "tinnitus", or ringing in the ears, which can interfere with your sleep. Noise can cause high blood pressure and stress.

If you have to raise your voice to be heard by someone an arm's length away, your hearing is in danger.