



KCA TOOL BOX TALK: Noise & Hearing Loss Prevention

Noise-induced hearing loss is one of the most common work-related illnesses in the United States. Each year, millions of U.S. workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels at work. In addition to damaging workers' quality of life, occupational hearing loss carries a high economic price to society.

Some of the major noise sources include heavy equipment and power tools. Loudness is measured in what's called decibels (dB). Over time, *any sound that's 85 decibels or higher can cause hearing loss* or other hearing problems, like tinnitus (a ringing sound in your ears that won't go away). The louder a sound is, and the longer you listen to it, the more it can damage your hearing.

Most construction sites involve high levels of noise. Excessive noise at the job site can cause temporary or permanent hearing loss and create safety hazards as well. Prolonged exposure to high noise levels over a period of time will cause permanent hearing damage. OSHA's Occupational Noise Exposure Standard protects workers from hearing impairment through noise controls and a hearing conservation program.

Creating A Hearing Conservation Program:

- Monitoring of employee noise exposures (see [Table D-2](#) for exposure limits)
- The institution of controls for excessive noise such as modification of equipment or the work area; mufflers or other noise barriers/absorbers
- Supplying each overexposed employee with a fitted hearing protector that provides proper noise reduction rating
- Employee training and education on noise hazards and hearing protection
- Employee baseline and annual hearing test
- Procedures for preventing further occupational hearing loss by an employee
- Recording keeping

Additional Information:

[OSHA Pocket Guide to Noise Exposure](#)
[Visit here](#) for more on hearing conservation
[Noise Levels of Power Tools](#)

For more information visit OSHA REGULATIONS: 1926.52

Signatures

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