### For Job Health and Safety on Noise

**What to do today to protect worker health and prevent health hazards**

#### What is the hazard?
- Hearing loss and other physical effects due to high noise level exposure over time (high noise dose)

#### How do I know there is a hazard?
- If noise in an area hurts your ears, it is hazardous
- If you are in an environment where you and another person standing close by have to shout to understand each other, the noise level may be hazardous
- If you notice that you cannot hear as well after a noise exposure, or things sound muffled or indistinct, the noise level may be hazardous
- Noise levels are measured with a sound level meter. Refer to the noise meter example at [http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise)

#### Why should I care?
- A high noise dose can cause permanent hearing loss
- High noise levels can cause ringing in the ears
- High noise levels interfere with employee communication and the ability to hear warning signals
- Overexposing employees to noise creates liability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noise Surveys</th>
<th>Controls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inventory possibly noisy processes and the duration of each</td>
<td>Replace machines or tools with quieter models</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do a sound level survey</td>
<td>Find a way to lower the noise output of old equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calculate the representative noise dose for your employees</td>
<td>Use barriers or enclosures to protect employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>If the dose is too high, the following may be needed:</td>
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#### What do I need to do?

**Hearing Protection & Testing**
- Make sure employees wear ear plugs or ear muffs properly
- Do hearing tests on employees to make sure they are not losing hearing

**Training**
- Teach that hearing loss is permanent, gradual, and may not be noticeable until too late
- Show employees how to fit and use hearing protection
- Convince employees that hearing loss is totally preventable if they wear their hearing protection

#### When do I need more help?
- If I can’t figure out what the noise dose is
- If I can’t tell what requirements the noise dose triggers
- If I can’t figure out how to meet those requirements

#### Where can I get help?
- Search the web under industrial hygienist, noise consultant, noise meter, hearing protector, audiometric testing, and noise training
- My trade association or insurance company
- A hearing conservation website [www.nhca.org](http://www.nhca.org)
- The OSHA web site [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

Look for additional information on this topic at [www.aiha.org](http://www.aiha.org).