



HEALTHIER WORKPLACES | A HEALTHIER WORLD

QuickTips

Developed by AIHA
in support of the OSHA Alliance



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>

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

What do I need to do?

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| Noise Surveys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory possibly noisy processes and the duration of each • Do a sound level survey • Calculate the representative noise dose for your employees • If the dose is too high, the following may be needed: |
| Controls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace machines or tools with quieter models • Find a way to lower the noise output of old equipment • Use barriers or enclosures to protect employees |

When do I need to do it?

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|------------------------------|---|
| Hearing Protection & Testing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure employees wear ear plugs or ear muffs properly • Do hearing tests on employees to make sure they are not losing hearing |
| Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
- The OSHA web site www.osha.gov