

#ListenUp - 5 Things to Know About Noise



1. Negative impacts of noise

- a. Permanent hearing loss.
- b. Communication difficulties, making it challenging to maintain relationships.
- c. Concerns for personal safety and the safety of others.
- d. Other health problems, including tinnitus (ringing in the ears), heart problems, high blood pressure (hypertension), cardiovascular disease, cognitive decline, and poor mental health.

2. Recognition of loud environments

- a. Your hearing can be damaged by regular 8-hour exposures to 85 decibels (dBA).
- b. When noise is as loud as 100 dBA (like a jackhammer or stud welder), it can take repeated exposures of as little as 1 hour per day to damage your hearing.

3. Noise reduction techniques

- a. Eliminating noise.
- b. Replacing tools and equipment.
- c. Implementing engineering controls (e.g., distance, barriers, dampeners).
- d. Administrative controls (e.g., rotating workers between hazardous tasks).
- e. PPE (ear plugs, ear muffs, canal caps, etc.).

4. Hearing protection selection and fitting

- a. Aim for just enough noise reduction to bring exposure down to 75-85 dBA.
- b. Avoid overprotection.
- c. Too much sound reduction can make workers less aware of their surroundings.

5. Ensure your hearing protection works

- a. Fit tested and worn properly.
- b. Comfortable and compatible with the job.
- c. Check earplug fit is by counting out loud while slowly cupping and uncupping your hands over your ears; if you have a good fit, your voice should sound about the same as you cup and uncup your ears.