

Dangers in the Work Place

Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

Approximately 30 million workers are exposed to hazardous levels of noise on the job. Another 9 million are at risk for hearing loss from other agents such as solvents and metals.

- Noise-induced hearing loss is caused by damage to the hair cells found in the inner ear. Hair cells are small sensory cells that convert the sounds we hear (sound energy) into electrical signals sent to the brain.
- Once damaged our hair cells cannot grow back, causing permanent hearing loss.
- **The Cost of Losing Your Hearing**
When you lose your hearing there is a loss in quality of life. A hearing loss can also cost you financially.
 - Personal and Medical costs can include:
 - Approximately \$1,500/hearing aid (hearing aids are typically replaced every 5-6 years)
 - On average \$300/year on hearing aid batteries.
- **Preventing Hearing Loss**
Although hearing loss is a common effect of aging, the Americans are starting to lose their hearing earlier in life as a result of noise-induced hearing loss, a **hearing loss that is 100% preventable**. To ensure the safety of your hearing here are some steps you can take to protect yourself.
- **Wear hearing protection such as ear plugs and ear-muffs when being exposed to levels of noise over 85 decibels (dB) for extended periods of time.** (Look for the NRR rating to know the approximate dB reduction the ear protection provides)
- A quick reference for levels of noise and exposure time:
 - 60 dB—Normal conversations or dishwashers
 - 80 dB—Alarm clocks
 - 90 dB—Hair Dryers, blenders, and lawnmowers
 - 100 dB—MP3 players at full volume
 - 110 dB—Concerts, car racing, and sporting events
 - 120dB—Jet planes at take off
 - 130 dB—Ambulances
 - 140 dB—Gun shots, fireworks, and custom car stereos at full volume

For a full list visit www.HowsYourHearing.org to download the levels of noise chart.

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