

Noise-induced hearing loss is the most common work-related disease. Though it typically happens gradually, damage is permanent. Being exposed to a noise louder than 85 decibels (dBA) during an average eight-hour day can permanently damage hearing. Higher levels of noise can cause permanent damage in shorter periods of time.

# Noise-induced Hearing Loss

Date Discussed:

Signature:

## Noise, often defined as unwanted sound, it can have different effects:

- Interference with communication, job performance and your safety.
- Disrupts concentration, and can startle, annoy, and have other effects.
- Pain, ringing in the ears, and even nausea if exposure level is severe.
- Long-term effects such as hearing loss.



## What can workers do to prevent work-related hearing loss?

Find out if the noise in your workspace is hazardous:

- If you have to raise your voice to speak with someone at arms length, then the noise is likely to loud.
- Ask your manager or supervisor to check the noise levels in your workplace. When noise can not be reduced to a safe level, employers must provide workers with the appropriate hearing protection.

Reduce your noise exposure:

- Reduce your time in noisy areas.
- Take a break from the noisy activity.
- Increase the distance between you and the source of the noise.
- Use quiet equipment and keep equipment well maintained and lubricated.
- Enclose the source of the noise or place a barrier between you and the source.
- If you are listening to music, keep the volume at a safe level.
- Always wear hearing protection in noisy areas, and if using foam plugs, make sure you insert them properly.

## Noise-Induced Hearing Loss Signs and Symptoms:

When you lose your hearing, in most cases it is not something that just abruptly stops. It is a process that gradually becomes worse and worse overtime. That is why it is so important to always protect your hearing because it is not something that you usually notice is being damaged until it is too late. Some symptoms include:

- Tinnitus is when you hear a constant ringing in one or both of your ears. In some cases, this is a temporary problem that will subside over time, then there are times that it never goes away. Long term damage to the ears can be a problem that you face when you have sudden onset hearing loss or tinnitus.
- Hypersensitivity to certain sounds.
- Normal conversation may sound muffled or unclear.
- Asking others to speak more slowly and clearly.

### Noise Levels Onboard:

Wheelhouse = 80-90 dBA  
 Deck = 88-100 dBA  
 Compressor = 90-105 dBA  
 Engine Room = 90-114 dBA  
 Vessel repairs = 70-100 dBA  
 Sleeping quarters = 50-80 dBA

These symptoms may go away minutes, hours, or days after the exposure to noise ends. People assume that if the symptoms go away, their ears have went back to normal. This is not really true. Even if there are no more symptoms, some of the cells in the inner ear may have been destroyed by the noise. Your hearing returns to normal if enough healthy cells are left in your inner ear. But you will develop a lasting hearing loss if the noise exposure is repeated, and more cells are destroyed. Once you damage your hearing, you cannot get it back. While hearing aids have advanced greatly, they still cannot replace your hearing to peak levels that it was at before the damage occurred.

**Want more info on noise levels? Visit: [https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/phys\\_agents/exposure\\_can.html](https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/phys_agents/exposure_can.html)**



## Discussion:

- What are some noises here at work or at home that we are exposed to that can cause damage to our hearing?