



## **PPE – Ear Protection**

*Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions on the job site.*

Noise induced hearing loss is the most common occupational health hazard there is, and is incurable. However it is easy to prevent.

### **Main Points**

- ✓ You do not have to be using noisy equipment to be affected by it, just be in the vicinity
- ✓ Compressors, concrete mixers, circular saws, breakers, powder powered tools etc. can all damage your hearing
- ✓ If you have to shout to be heard then the noise level can be regarded as high enough to warrant the wearing of ear protection
- ✓ Regular noise assessments should be carried out in the workplace.
- ✓ Discussion points
- ✓ Wear ear protection at all times when exposed to a noise hazard (obey noise hazard warning signs)
- ✓ Wear ear protection and wear it properly
- ✓ If earplugs are used ensure they are a good fit and are kept clean
- ✓ Use disposable earplugs only once
- ✓ Keep reusable earplugs clean
- ✓ Earmuffs must be a good fit, particularly where the seal fits the head and must be worn correctly
- ✓ Ensure hands are clean when handling all types of ear protection and store ear protection in a clean environment
- ✓ Do not alter pressure of ear by bending the band
- ✓ Report any lost, damaged, or unserviceable ear protection immediately
- ✓ Consider options for reducing noise in the workplace i.e.: turn off unused machinery, keep cement mixer and compressor covers closed, ensure air lines do not leak, fit mufflers to tools where applicable, move noise source away, shield noise source etc.
- ✓ Undertake annual hearing tests (audiometry testing)
- ✓ Ear plugs or muffs? Both are suitable for all Class levels dB(A) Class levels (refer 'Noise' toolbox talk). Choose appropriate hearing protection device for the noise exposure and activity.

***SILENCE ISN'T GOLDEN WHEN IT'S FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE***

## Activities

Spend a few minutes discussing the specific tasks/activities on your site. What are the hazards? Which activities could harm hearing? What PPE is available? Who are the trained first aiders?

This is also a good time to go over the correct usage of hearing protection – ensuring PPE is not damaged in any way, is being worn correctly, fits properly etc.

## Questions and Answers

How do I know when I should be using hearing protection?

- ✓ If told to do so by my Employer or Main Contractor
- ✓ If signage says it's required
- ✓ If hazard board says hearing protection required
- ✓ If when talking to a person 1 metre away I have to shout to make myself heard then noise levels are over 85 dB(A).

# Toolbox Attendance

Questions? \_\_\_\_\_

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Concerns? \_\_\_\_\_

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Days since Last Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Meeting Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of attendees:


Manager review comments:

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