

PLAYING IT SAFE



Workplace Noise Hazards

Protect yourself from noise-induced hearing loss

Are you one of the over 20 million Americans regularly exposed to dangerous noise levels? If your first response was no, think again. Many people don't realize that their everyday activities are putting them at risk for irreversible noise-induced hearing loss.

Is Your Hearing at Risk?

To protect yourself in the workplace, it is important to be aware of the noise levels that can promote hearing loss and take steps to either avoid or reduce them.

- According to NIOSH, workplace noise is likely to be hazardous if you have to raise your voice to talk to someone who is an arm's length away, if your ears are ringing or sounds seem dull after leaving a noisy place.
- Experts recommend wearing ear protection when regularly exposed to 85 decibels of noise. To put that number in perspective, this is less than the noise output from average traffic, most power tools, a shotgun blast or rock concerts.
- Be sure to consistently wear hearing loss protective equipment. From earmuffs to simple plugs, there are a variety of options.

Be Aware of the Symptoms

Hearing loss usually happens gradually and often goes unnoticed. Here are some clues that indicate hearing loss:

- Straining to understand conversations
- Thinking people are mumbling or not speaking clearly
- Needing to have things repeated frequently
- Watching people's faces intently when listening
- Increasing television or radio volumes to the point where others complain
- Ringing in your ears or feeling dizzy

If you have any of these symptoms, ask your doctor for a hearing test and start wearing protective ear equipment.

Tinnitus and the Workplace

Also known as "ringing in the ears," tinnitus typically occurs in the workplace when you are repeatedly exposed to excessive noise without wearing adequate ear protection. Tinnitus and hearing loss can be debilitating and irreversible, so remember: taking precautions in the workplace now will help to protect against hearing loss later.

Be safe and healthy on the job with these helpful tips provided by **The Reschini Group**.

"Adults who are regularly exposed to high levels of noise should have a hearing test annually."

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