

Toolbox Talk

34. Hearing Protection



What?

- Plant and equipment generate noise which is measured in decibels (dB). Normal background noise is around 82dB whereas noisy equipment such as high speed grinders can generate noise levels around 102dB. Every increase of 3dB doubles the noise level so there is a substantial difference between 82dB and 102dB. Employers have a legal obligation to assess noise levels to identify those which may affect hearing and to take steps to reduce noise to a lower level where reasonably practicable



Why?

- If the noise level reaches 85dB it can affect hearing and over prolonged periods may result in noise induced hearing loss because noise is time weighted (the more time spent in the noisy environment the greater the damage). A time weighted exposure (during 8 hours) above 85dB puts you at risk from hearing loss. Noisy areas should be clearly identified; if you have difficulty holding a conversation due to background noise it could mean the noise is excessive and you should take steps to wear hearing protection

Do



- ✓ Select the most suitable hearing protection which will reduce noise to the right level
- ✓ Make sure you wear the protection
- ✓ Check it fits properly
- ✓ Visually inspect it prior to use
- ✓ Keep it in good condition
- ✓ Report any loss or damage
- ✓ Find out if there are noisy areas
- ✓ Identify the equipment in use which produces the noise



Don't



- ✗ Go into noisy areas without wearing suitable hearing protection
- ✗ Ignore signs of hearing loss or ringing in the ear
- ✗ Use noisy tools or equipment without first putting on hearing protection
- ✗ Wear dirty or damaged hearing protection



| | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Document Name | TBT 34 Hearing Protection | Document No | FM/HS/TBT/036 |
| Document Owner | Stuart Care | Date of Issue | 13/01/2017 |
| Classification | Internal Use | Version No | 01 |