

Toolbox Talk

48. Noise



What?

- The level at which employers must assess the risk to someone's hearing and provide them with information and training is 80 decibels with an exposure limit value of 87 decibels, above which workers must not be exposed
- Noise can be found in most places inside and outside of work and is measured in decibels. The louder the noise the greater the decibels, however the measurement is done on a logarithmic scale which means that every 3dB increase represents a doubling of the noise level e.g. increasing from 83dB to 86dB means the noise level has actually doubled

Why?

- Noise induced hearing loss is irreversible and can lead to serious hearing problems resulting in a major social handicap during everyday life
- Loud noise can permanently damage your hearing over time but because it can take years to notice hearing loss many people working in noisy environments ignore the problem until it is too late. Signs of hearing loss may be when you need to turn up the volume on the TV or radio because you cannot make out the words or you have to ask people to repeat things when holding a conversation
- Some hearing loss occurs naturally due to ageing but in other cases may be due to exposure to noise which affects hearing at different frequencies

Do



- ✓ Look out for noise warning signs. Wear suitable hearing protection before entering noisy areas or using noisy plant
- ✓ Make sure you position the ear cup or insert the plug properly, in order to make an effective seal
- ✓ Replace faulty hearing protection
- ✓ Store equipment properly when not in use

Don't



- ✗ Ignore hearing warning signs
- ✗ Forget to wear hearing protection in noisy environments
- ✗ Remove acoustic covers or panels from noisy equipment, unless necessary, and always replace these covers or panels as soon as possible
- ✗ Use damaged or dirty hearing protection



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