



## MARCH 2021 SAFETY TALK – HEARING LOSS PREVENTION



Workers in any industry who are exposed to high levels of noise can suffer permanent hearing loss. Understand the employer's responsibility and the employees' rights when it comes to hearing protection.

Workers who are exposed to high levels of noise can suffer permanent hearing loss where even surgery or hearing aids cannot help. In addition, even repeated exposures to loud noise for just short periods of time can lead to permanent damage to hearing.

### How Should Managers/Employees Evaluate Hearing Protection?

- Workers should be protected from hazardous levels of noise.
- Workplace noise is measured using special noise monitoring equipment and the levels are displayed in decibels.
- Normal speaking voice is usually around 70 decibels (dB) and operating equipment or power tools can be around 110 dB.
- 85 decibels (dB) is the action level where workers may need to use hearing protection.
- When choosing hearing protection, consider the employee's hearing needs on the job, convenience, ease of use, the work environment and the compatibility with any other PPE the worker may need to wear.
- The best hearing protection is a solution that is worn properly by the worker every single time they are exposed to loud noise on the job.
- Never improvise hearing protection by stuffing cotton, tissue, wax or other items into your ears.
- Improper items can get stuck in the ear canal and in severe cases puncture the ear drums