

Noise and Hearing Loss Prevention Month.



In the United States, hearing loss is the third most common chronic physical condition after high blood pressure and arthritis. Not surprisingly, hearing loss is among the most common work-related illnesses. Workers are faced with occupational noise hazards every day.

Why is prevention important?

Almost all work-related hearing loss is permanent, and it can have a profound impact on quality of life.

As hearing loss worsens, hearing and understanding others becomes increasingly difficult, which can lead to isolation.

Hearing loss is associated with cognitive (mental) decline and heart problems, such as high blood pressure and heart disease. **(continued on page 2)**

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Balloon Fiesta is Here!



Imagine over 500 colorful hot air balloons rising up at dawn over the New Mexico landscape... there's truly nothing like it. Spectators and balloon pilots from all over the world gather (some even camping in their RVs) to watch mass ascensions held in the mornings and night events like a 'glowdeo' held in the evening. Every year the Balloon Fiesta kicks off on the first Saturday of October and continues for nine days. Attendance is expected to double or even triple since this is the 50th anniversary of the Balloon Fiesta.

It's a sight to see – but not from your vehicles while driving down the road. Now is the time to remind you employees the hazards this event exposes our workers to:

1. Traffic is going to increase considerably.
2. Drivers on the road who are not familiar with our streets.
3. Driver distractions when the balloons are in the air.
4. Chase teams cutting through traffic trying to keep up with their balloon.
5. Traffic delays.
6. Road rage

Our drivers need to drive defensively:

- Be aware of what's going on around their vehicle at all times.
- Plan their trips so they can get to the job sites on time
- Be patient and control your temper.

Drive Carefully – Keep Safety First!

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Hearing loss is also strongly associated with depression.

Hearing loss can lead to loss of enjoyment, when all the sounds we want to hear (e.g., music, voice of loved one) become muted and lack quality.

ringing in the ears (tinnitus), which often occurs along with hearing loss, can disrupt sleep and concentration and is associated with both depression and anxiety.

Hearing loss can impact safety at home and on the job.

Income is typically lower among workers with hearing loss, than among workers with normal hearing.

Fortunately, with today's hearing loss prevention strategies and technologies, work-related hearing loss can be nearly always prevented.

What can workers do to prevent work-related hearing loss?

Find out if the noise in your workspace is hazardous.

- If you must raise your voice to speak with someone at arm's length, then the noise is likely at a hazardous level.
- You can also check the noise level using a sound level meter app on your phone, such as the NIOSH Sound Level Meter app.
- Ask your safety manager or direct supervisor to check the noise levels in your workplace, making sure they are below 85dBA.

Reduce your noise exposure:

- Take a break from the noisy activity.
- Reduce noise at the source of the noise. Use quieter equipment and keep equipment well maintained and lubricated.
- Enclose the source of the noise or place a barrier between you and the source.
- Increase the distance between you and the source of the noise.
- Reduce your time in noisy areas.
- Always wear hearing protection in noisy areas, and if using foam plugs, insert them correctly.
- If you are listening to music or something else, keep the volume at a safe level and only listen in areas that are not noisy.

Hearing Protection

There are three types of hearing protection commonly used in the construction industry:

Earmuffs

Earmuffs come in many models designed to fit most

people. They work to block out noise by completely covering the outer ear. Muffs can be "low profile" with small ear cups or large to hold extra materials for use in extreme noise. Some muffs also include electronic components to help users communicate or to block impulsive noises.

Expandable Foam Plugs

These plugs are made of a formable material designed to expand and conform to the shape of each person's ear canal. Roll the expandable plugs into a thin, crease-free cylinder. Whether you roll plugs with thumb and fingers or across your palm doesn't matter. What's critical is the final result—a smooth tube thin enough so that about half the length will fit easily into your ear canal.

Canal Caps

Canal caps often resemble earplugs on a flexible plastic or metal band. The earplug tips of a canal cap may be a formable or pre-molded material. Some have headbands that can be worn over the head, behind the neck or under the chin. Newer models have jointed bands increasing the ability to properly seal the earplug.

Reminder!!!!

Dress in Layers. Mornings are getting cooler, but afternoons are still warm and even hot. Remember, if the temperature is above 80 degrees stay hydrated.

Did You Know?

New workers account for 35% of injuries. More than a third of work-related injuries occur during people's first year on the job. Supervisors need to ensure new workers receive proper safety training and should pay extra attention to their job performance.

Safety Tip of the Month

Workers take their hands for granted until it's too late. Protect your hands from cuts, burns, abrasions and amputations by using proper protective equipment. Protection is only part of the cure – pay attention. Lack of attention is a significant factor in hand injuries. The Right Way is the Safe Way!

Notes From the Editor

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