

Hearing Protection Devices Stats and Facts



FACTS

1. OHL can occur when workers are exposed to loud noise or ototoxic chemicals.
 2. Noise is considered loud (hazardous) when it reaches 85 decibels or higher, or if a person has to raise his/her voice to speak with someone 3 feet away (arm's length).
 3. The signs of a worker's exposure to dangerous, potentially permanently damaging noise levels:
 - Ringing in the ears (tinnitus)
 - Buzzing sound in ears
 - Roaring sound in head or ears
 - Difficulty hearing the words of a person close to you at normal volume
 - Indistinct sounds at higher ranges
1. Noise can be a problem in your workplace if you:
 - Hear ringing or humming in your ears when you leave work.
 - Have to shout to be heard by a coworker an arm's length away.

STATS

- Each year, 22 million workers are exposed to hazardous noise, according to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), making hearing loss the third most common chronic physical condition among adults.
- The CDC reports:
 - Hearing loss is the third-most common chronic physical condition among adults after hypertension and arthritis.
 - About 12% of the U.S. working population has hearing difficulty.
 - About 24% of the hearing difficulty among U.S. workers is caused by occupational exposures.
 - About 8% of the U.S. working population has tinnitus (ringing in the ears), and 4% of workers have both hearing difficulty and tinnitus.
- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends that workers are not exposed to noise at a level that amounts to more than 85 decibels (dBA) over 8 continuous hours.
- NIOSH estimates that 30 million U.S. workers are exposed to noise levels high enough to cause irreversible hearing loss.
- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 20,000 workplace hearing loss cases occur annually, many resulting in permanent hearing loss.
- Annually, there are 23,000 cases reported of occupational hearing loss great enough to cause hearing impairment because the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) wasn't used for hearing protection.