

Safety Short

Hearing Protection Facts vs Fiction

Hearing loss is painless, progressive, permanent, and preventable! Do you know when hearing protection is required? If you are overexposed to noise, do you know what is proper hearing protection and how to use it? What you don't know about hearing protection can hurt you!

It is possible to slow down or stop noise-induced hearing loss by taking precautions.

Fact. Hearing loss is preventable with the proper use of engineering controls and hearing protection.

You should wear your hearing protection at all times.

Fact. Taking protectors off even for short periods of time can cancel their protective effect. You need to wear protection all the time you are in loud noise.



Earplugs can cause you harm.

Fiction. If you always insert clean earplugs properly into ear canal it is virtually impossible to do any harm. Earplugs are not long enough to reach your ear canal. However, if you have an ear infection or ear surgery, check with a nurse or doctor before using earplugs.

Walkmans are considered hearing protection.

Fiction. "Walkmans" do not provide protection from noise. "Walkmans" can exceed 85 decibels alone.

Loud music can damage your hearing in less than 1 minute.

Fact. Turn down the music! It doesn't even take a minute to damage your hearing!

Hearing aids are considered hearing protection.

Fiction. Hearing aids do not block out enough sound for most workplace noise.

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It is harder to hear people when wearing hearing protection.

Fiction. If anything you will find it **easier** to understand what people are saying because your ears are no longer overloaded. However, if your hearing is already impaired then you could find it harder to understand speech. Ask people to speak up, use hand signals or a note pad to communicate to protect your remaining hearing. It takes two to three weeks to get use to wearing protectors, once you do you will feel less stressed, less tired at the end of the day and your hearing is safe.

Dangerous Noise Level Table

Equipment	Noise Level
Back Hoe	85-95 decibels
Chain Saw	110 decibels
Gunshot	140 decibels
Jackhammer	112 decibels
Lawn Mower Tractor	90 decibels
Circular Saw	90-100 decibels

Some Common Noise Levels in Construction

Source: Center to Protect Worker's Rights

