

Noise

Reason	Noise-induced hearing loss is a common occupational health hazard. There is no satisfactory treatment for noise-induced hearing loss. When you're deaf, you stay deaf.
Outline	This talk covers the hazards, some ways to control noise, and types of hearing protection.



Tight-fitting head band



Excessive wear - loose-fitting head band



Damaged seal on ear defenders



Earplugs fitted correctly



Earplugs fitted incorrectly



Protect your hearing. Loss of hearing lasts forever.

Noise

Reason	Noise-induced hearing loss is a common occupational health hazard. There is no satisfactory treatment for noise-induced hearing loss. When you're deaf, you stay deaf.
Outline	This talk covers the hazards, some ways to control noise, and types of hearing protection.

Hazards

1. Compressors, breakers, circular saws, vibrating rollers, excavators, angle grinders and many other common pieces of equipment used in construction can generate potentially harmful levels of noise.
2. Even if you are not using the noisy piece of equipment, you could be affected by someone using it close by.
3. Exposure to high noise levels will cause hearing damage in a shorter time than lower noise levels.
4. Remember to protect your hearing after work as well (for example, in noisy clubs or when using personal music players).
5. Ringing in the ears or muffled hearing are clear signs of excessive exposure to high noise levels.

Controlling noise

1. Keep as far away from noise sources as possible – don't stand next to someone using a breaker unless you have to, and use hearing protection.
2. Use quieter equipment and work methods whenever you can (for example, noise-reducing saw blades will significantly reduce the noise from circular saws).
3. Don't leave machinery running unnecessarily, and avoid exposing others to the noise.
4. If possible, keep the noise source and work areas separate.
5. If possible, shield noisy processes; work behind sound-absorbing materials (such as spoil heaps).
6. Wear hearing protection when instructed to do so.

Hearing protection

1. Earplugs and ear defenders need to be selected carefully – if they are too effective, you may not be aware of things going on around you (such as plant movements) and that can be dangerous.
2. Ensure reusable earplugs are inserted correctly, per the instructions.
3. If you are using disposable earplugs make sure you insert them correctly. Insert them by rolling them up and inserting them into your ear while pulling the top of your ear upwards to open up the ear canal.
4. Always insert earplugs with clean hands, and dispose of used earplugs after each shift.
5. Ear defenders and reusable earplugs should be cleaned regularly.
6. If ear defenders are used with the headband around the neck, the fabric head-strap must be used.
7. Inspect your ear defenders regularly – when the seals become worn, get them replaced.
8. If you have problems wearing earplugs or ear defenders (such as significant discomfort), report this to your supervisor or manager.
9. Never wear earphones under ear defenders. (You should never wear earphones when working on site in any case.)



What significant sources of noise are you aware of on sites you have worked on before?

When should hearing protection be worn?

How can noise levels from plant and equipment be reduced?

What must you remember when handling earplugs?

How should you insert disposable earplugs?