

Safety

## Occupational Noise Exposure

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### Overview

Twenty-two million workers are exposed to potentially damaging noise at work each year. Last year, U.S. business paid more than \$1.5 million in penalties for not protecting workers from noise.

While it's impossible to put a number to the human toll of hearing loss, an estimated \$242 million is spent annually on workers' compensation for hearing loss disability.

Each of the elements below is critical to understand in order to ensure that workers are being protected where noise levels are unable to be reduced below the OSHA required levels.

### Health Effects

Noise-induced hearing loss limits your ability to hear high frequency sounds and understand speech, which seriously impairs your ability to communicate. Hearing aids may help, but they do not restore your hearing to normal.

Hearing loss is pervasive. It is also preventable.

## Hearing Conservation

Hearing conservation programs strive to prevent initial occupational hearing loss, preserve and protect remaining hearing, and equip workers with the knowledge and hearing protection devices necessary to safeguard themselves.

## Additional Resources

Sources that provide helpful information about occupational hearing loss and aid in addressing noise challenges in the workplace.

## Standards

Noise and hearing conservation is also addressed in specific OSHA standards for Recordkeeping and General Industry.

## Exposure & Controls

Exposure to loud noise kills the nerve endings in the inner ear. More exposure will result in more dead nerve endings. The result is permanent hearing loss that cannot be corrected by surgery or medicine.

## Construction

Noise and hearing conservation is addressed in specific standards for Construction. Provides information related to noise in construction including OSHA's noise construction regulations, national consensus standards and recommendations from other professional organizations, health effects and general resources.

*For more information from OSHA, please visit their site.*

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