

# HEARING PROTECTION FACTS

## Noise in the workplace

How to protect worker's health

### Did you know?

Noise in the workplace is a potential hazard in many different occupations including for example construction, fish harvesting, manufacturing and forestry. Noise can be controlled in various ways to protect the health of workers; finding the best way for the individual work site is important.

Every year in this province workers are diagnosed with noise induced hearing loss that may have developed gradually over time, the result of loud impact or impulsive noise.

### What is a hearing conservation program?

A hearing conservation program is a written document that aims to protect workers from the negative health effects of noise exposure.

## Noise exposure quick facts

### What are the health effects associated with noise exposure?

- The main health effect of exposure to noise is loss of hearing. This is irreversible and will continue to worsen if the worker remains exposed.
- Non-auditory effects may include potential effects on the cardiovascular system.
- The social and emotional implications are numerous. With hearing loss there

are restrictions in social activities, increased frustration because of the hearing difficulties and potential increased risk of accidents in the workplace if the worker is unable to hear the warning devices or alarms.

- Noise may negatively affect pregnant workers, increasing stress on the mother and baby and potentially impair the unborn baby's hearing.

### Is noise a potential hazard at my workplace?

It is the employer's responsibility to recognize noise as a potential health hazard and determine which workers may be over-exposed. The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations specify the requirements for the permissible level for noise. In accordance with Section 68, the daily average exposure for an eight-hour work shift, 40-hour work week must not exceed 85 decibels (dB). If the work shift is longer than eight hours, the exposure limit must be adequately adjusted. No exposure above 140dB is permitted. Therefore, in order to determine if noise is a potential issue in the workplace, a noise assessment must be conducted. This can either be conducted in-house if there are trained personnel on site, or through the use of a private consultant.

As a general guideline, if you are not able to speak to another person an arm length away (approximately three metres) without raising your voice, noise may be an issue.

For more information on the development and implementation of this and other programs, contact Prevention Services at: **709.778.1552** or toll free **1.800.563.9000**

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