



LOSS CONTROL BULLETIN

Hearing Safety

Fact: *More than 22 million U.S. workers are exposed to hazardous workplace noise.*

Hearing loss is one of the top ten work-related injuries, and agriculture workers are one of the most susceptible groups. Over time, exposure to loud noises created by machinery and equipment can have a detrimental effect on this invaluable sense. However, by following some simple precautions, you can protect yourself and those around you from this unfortunate and permanent injury.

ringing in the ears is the first sign of hearing loss, and it is usually an indication of tinnitus. Tinnitus is a condition that occurs due to prolonged exposure to loud noise. Over time, this typically leads to a constant ringing in your ears; however, it can also take the form of hissing, roaring, whistling, chirping or clicking. Unfortunately, when tinnitus or hearing loss becomes permanent, there is no way to correct the issue. Although hearing aids do provide assistance, they only help the person deal with the impairment, not overcome it.

Hearing loss due to loud noises can happen to all ages. The level of the noise and the amount of time you are exposed to it are significant factors in how detrimental the noise is to your hearing. Basically, if a noise hinders your conversation because it is so loud, then it is damaging your hearing.

Prevention

To help prevent hearing loss, recognize threats in your daily work that could be harmful to your hearing. This typically involves operating machinery or equipment, especially in enclosed areas where the sound is amplified. In an effort to reduce the amount of noise produced by these machines, and protect your hearing, you should consider the following:

- When operating or in close proximity to machinery or equipment, use adequate ear protection. Ear muffs provide the most effective protection. There are also several different types of earplugs that serve as good protection. These include formable earplugs, pre-molded earplugs and canal caps. If you choose to wear earplugs, make sure that they are worn properly. They should fit snugly in the ear canal, and there should be no space around them. Cotton should never be used as a substitute for ear muffs or ear plugs, as it will not give you the protection that you need from loud noise.
- Make sure that all equipment is well-maintained to help reduce the amount of noise that is made. This includes equipping all engine-powered equipment with good mufflers, replacing worn or loose parts and keeping equipment well lubricated.
- When working in an enclosed cab, keep the doors and windows closed to limit the noise level. Use the quietest equipment you have available. Remember, the best prevention is to stay away from harmful noises whenever possible.

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Other Effects

Loud noises do not just affect your hearing. They can lead to other physical and psychological problems. A prolonged encounter with loud noises can lead to fatigue, irritability and difficulty communicating. It can also cause constricting of small arteries in places like your fingers and toes. In addition, your heart pumps less blood in noisy environments. Prolonged exposure to loud noises can weaken your immune system, affect your nervous system and cause headaches.

Consider regular hearing checks for yourself, your family members and your employees - especially for those exposed to loud noises or those who suspect they have suffered hearing loss. Detecting hearing loss early will help reduce the damage by determining the source(s) and eliminating them immediately.

Hearing loss is a serious problem for those exposed to loud noises, including many in the agriculture industry. Take the time to review the noise exposure in your operation and provide necessary safeguards to protect yourself and others. By following these simple precautions and prevention measures, you can help protect your hearing.



Help in Your Time of Need

No one wants to think about suffering a loss. In the unfortunate event you do have a loss, our **ANPAC Five Star Claim Servicesm** is designed to provide assurance and confidence to our policyholders throughout the claims process.

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