



SAFETY SHARE

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Hearing Protection

Most of the job tasks in our industry intermittently expose workers to noise levels above the OSHA minimum hearing level of 85 decibels (db). Studies have shown that **constant** exposure to noise levels above 85db can lead to permanent hearing loss over a period of time. Those of you working on or near pavers have the potential to be exposed to noise levels above 95db. This is particularly true for the paver drivers. Those of you that operate the vibratory rollers, especially the large rollers, are also at risk for noise exposures above 95db. The same holds true for those operating blowers and the small hand operated vibratory compactors.

When operating such machines hearing protection should be worn. One of the primary reasons for workers not wearing hearing protection is that they say “it interferes with hearing instructions from co-workers”. This is a **myth**. The hearing protection available today will allow conversational sounds to come through, as it is designed to do this.

Hearing protection comes in many forms and costs. Most companies supply the type of hearing protection based on the noise type and level of exposure. The most common type of hearing protection is in the form of individual ear plugs or ear plugs on a string. The advantage of the ear plugs on a string is that when not in use they can be left hanging around the neck until they are needed again. This is especially convenient since most workers are only exposed to noise levels exceeding the standard on an intermittent basis. The ear plugs on a string can also be attached to your hard hat which has the advantage that the ear plugs will always be available.

Most ear plugs that are used are meant to be used once and then thrown away. Get new ones each day that they are needed. Do not share your hearing protection with others as this is not good hygiene.

Remember:

Hearing loss is progressive...it does not happen overnight. Any hearing loss is permanent...you can never get it back. PROTECT YOUR GIFT OF HEARING...wear hearing protection.