



SAFETY ALERT

OF THE MONTH

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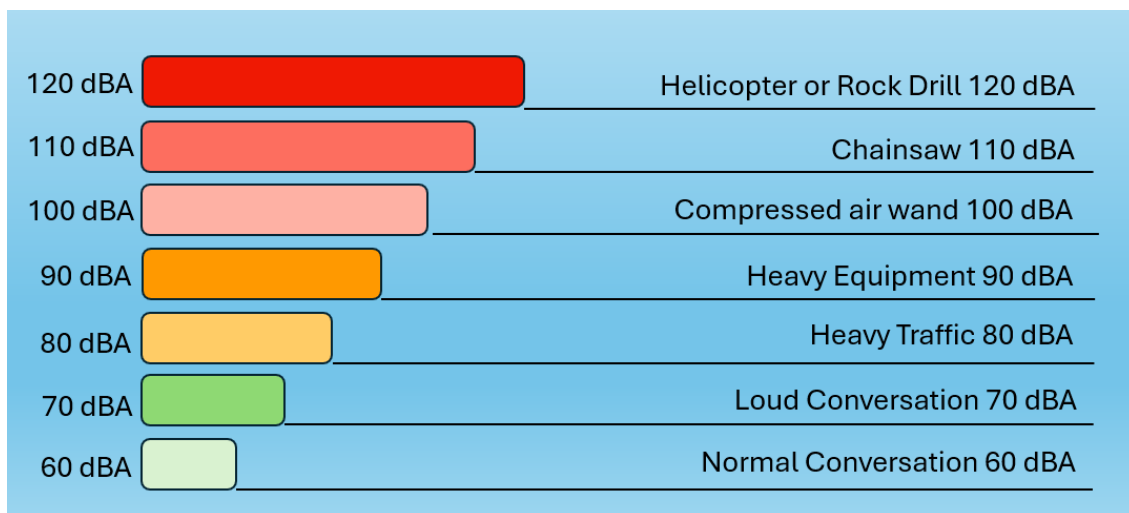
Hearing Protection

AOM: 2026-08-13

Hearing loss injuries are very common in the forest industry. They often occur gradually, over a long period of time, making them difficult to detect without a good hearing testing program. Hearing damage can happen from high noise levels over short periods and lower noise levels over extended periods. For example, operating heavy equipment for eight hours can cause similar harm as running a chainsaw for 10 minutes.

1. How Loud is Too Loud?

Routine exposure to **sounds louder than 85 decibels (dBA)** can cause permanent hearing loss. Here are some examples of noise and their approximate decibel level.



2. Hearing Protection Comparison

Fortunately, there is an easy way to minimize hearing loss by wearing appropriate hearing protection. Forestry workers typically use foam ear plugs or earmuffs. The table outlines some differences between them.

Comparison	Foam Ear Plugs	Earmuffs
Noise Reduction	22 to 33 dBA	20 to 31 dBA
Comfort	Better for long term wear or in hot conditions	Can be uncomfortable over long periods of time especially in hot conditions
Speed	Requires proper insertion and time for the foam to expand	Can quickly be put into place
Cost	Inexpensive if used infrequently	More expensive initially but reusable



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Cleaning	Disposable	Periodic cleaning and inspection required
PPE Interference	None	Can interfere with safety glasses or other head-mounted PPE



3. Listen Up!

- Wireless earbuds, such as airpods, don't provide enough protection from workplace noise. There are specially designed earmuffs and earbuds that have acceptable noise reduction ratings (NRR) and allow users to listen to music but use caution as music can mask sounds of hazards like mobile equipment or wildlife and also distract from the job at hand.
- Foam ear plugs get dirty easily and can increase the chances of an ear infection. When reused multiple times, they also lose elasticity which will reduce their effectiveness.
- Earmuffs don't last forever. They need to be cleaned, maintained and replaced regularly to provide maximum protection.
- It's not too late to start using hearing protection. Even if you've experienced some hearing loss already, it's still a good idea protect what you have left.
- Engineering is getting better all the time with better cab insulation and quieter machinery. This is good news, but employers still need to measure the noise levels and implement effective control measures.
- [Part 7 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation](#) (OHSR) covers noise and hearing protection requirements. OHSR Section 7.7 says that if employers cannot reduce the noise levels by other means, they must provide hearing protection that meets the requirements of CSA Standard Z94.2-02, *Hearing Protection Devices - Performance, Selection, Care, and Use*.

Resources:

- 1) [Video – How to Insert Foam Ear Plugs](#)
- 2) [Video - WorkSafeBC Ask an Expert – Hearing Protection](#)
- 3) [WorkSafeBC – Forestry Hearing Guide](#)



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BCFSC Latest News & Resources

Updated Course - Trainer - This free online course will help prepare you to deliver both on-the-job and classroom-based training for forest industry workers. It covers key topics such as developing effective lesson plans, applying best practices in training delivery, managing logistics, and addressing common challenges faced by trainers in the forestry sector.

Connection to Care Mental Health Program - The BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) is proud to announce the launch of Connection to Care, a free, confidential mental health support service designed to help forestry workers across British Columbia.

Forest Safety News – read the latest issue of the FSN

FIRS App – The full version of the BCFSC FIRS App is now available to download from your App store. Use the FIRS App manage forms and documents for safety-related paperwork related to SAFE Companies and COR audit forms management.

BCFSC Training:

Oct 5 - 8 | Falling Supervisor – Nelson

Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a falling supervisor and will become familiar with processes used by a falling supervisor to support their due diligence.

Oct 21 - 22 | Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Nelson

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

Oct 23 | Basics of Incident Investigation – Nelson

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

Oct 29 - 30 | Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Kamloops

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

Nov 3 - 6 | Falling Supervisor – Campbell River

Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a falling supervisor and will become familiar with processes used by a falling supervisor to support their due diligence.

Nov 5 - 6 | Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Prince George

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

Nov 16 - 17 | Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors - Nelson

This two-day classroom workshop provides participants with insights into their strengths and weaknesses, and how their personal style influences the workers they oversee.

Nov 18 - 19 | Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors – Prince George

This two-day classroom workshop provides participants with insights into their strengths and weaknesses, and how their personal style influences the workers they oversee.

Nov 20 | Basics of Incident Investigation – Prince George

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

Nov 25 - 26 | Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors – Kamloops

This two-day classroom workshop provides participants with insights into their strengths and weaknesses, and how their personal style influences the workers they oversee.

Nov 27 | Basics of Incident Investigation - Kamloops



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This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

Dec 2 - 3 | [Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors – Campbell River](#)

This two-day classroom workshop provides participants with insights into their strengths and weaknesses, and how their personal style influences the workers they oversee.

Dec 4 | [Basics of Incident Investigation – Campbell River](#)

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

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