

WHEN NOISE BLOCKS WARNINGS: STAYING SAFE IN LOUD WORK AREAS

High noise levels on a worksite create two separate hazards: hearing damage and communication breakdowns. Excessive noise sources can come from saws, grinders, compressors, generators, pumps, vacuum trucks, jackhammers, blowers and other heavy equipment and operations.

Protecting your hearing starts with using the right hearing protection for the job. Depending on the noise level, this may include earplugs, earmuffs or a combination of both.

Excessive noise can also make it hard to hear alarms, horns, radio calls, equipment warnings sounds and verbal communication which can increase the risk of an incident.

KNOW THE RISKS OF EXCESSIVE NOISE:

- STEPS TO TAKE
- KEY HAZARDS
- SAFETY REMINDERS



BC Forest Safety

Safety is **good** business

STAYING SAFE IN LOUD WORK AREAS



KEY HAZARDS

- Hearing damage from prolonged exposure to loud tools, equipment or work processes
- Missed emergency and backup alarms, horns or verbal warnings
- Miscommunication between operators, supervisors and other workers
- Distraction or reduced situational awareness caused by high elevations of background noise
- Incorrect, damaged, inconsistent or improperly fitted hearing protection
- Workers entering high-noise areas without understanding the risks

STEPS TO TAKE

- Plan how you'll communicate before starting any high-noise work. Depending on the task, this may include hand signals, radios, visual contact, spotters or stop signals.
- Stay alert and aware when hearing is limited. Use visual cues and check your surroundings often.
- Wear the right hearing protection for the job and make sure it fits properly.
- Use radios, hand signals or other visual methods when verbal communication may not be effective.
- Stop work if communication breaks down or instructions are unclear.

SAFETY REMINDERS

- Identify high-noise tasks and areas before you begin work.
- Know which hearing protection will protect you and double up if necessary.
- Make sure your earplugs or earmuffs fit right and are in good condition. Test them out.
- Do not rely solely on verbal communication and warnings in noisy environments.
- Use radios, hand signals and/or visual clues when needed.
- Stay visually aware of equipment, vehicle and worker movement, especially when working near mobile equipment.
- Stop work if you can't clearly communicate or understand instructions.

REMEMBER

**In high-noise areas, protect your hearing and don't rely on sound alone.
Plan communication before the job starts and stay visually aware.**

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