

PPE – Hearing Protection

According to OSHA, twenty-two million workers are exposed to potentially damaging noise at work each. U. S. Businesses pay more than \$1.5 million in penalties annually for not protecting workers from noise, and hearing loss directly impacts the quality of life not only for those workers but also their families.

Workers who are exposed to high levels of noise can suffer permanent hearing loss and then sometimes not even surgery or a hearing aid can help. In addition, even repeated exposures to loud noise for just short periods of time can add up to permanent damage to hearing.



OSHA Standard 1926.52(b) *When employees are subjected to sound levels exceeding those in Table D-2 of this section, feasible administrative or engineering controls shall be utilized. If such controls fail to reduce sound levels within the levels of the table, **personal protective equipment** as required in Subpart E, **shall be provided** and used to reduce sound levels within the levels of the table.*

- Workers must be protected from hazardous levels of noise.
- Workplace noise is measured using special noise monitoring equipment and the levels are displayed in decibels.
- Normal speaking voice is around 70 decibels (dB) and is operating a loud construction excavator is usually around 110 dB.
- OSHA regulations state that 85 decibels (dB) is the action level where workers may need to use hearing protection.
- When choosing hearing protection, consider employee's hearing needs on the job, current hearing ability, convenience, ease of use, the work environment and the compatibility with any other PPE they may need to wear.
- The best hearing protection is a solution that is worn properly by the work every single time they are exposed to loud noise on the job.

