



SAFETY PAGES

September 2020
Safety Pages:

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Remember if you have any safety suggestions, questions or concerns please let us know. In addition, if you have a safety topic that you would like covered in a Safety Page for training purposes let us know and we will develop one. Topics to our inventory of monthly Safety Pages are continually being added.



The OHBA/SAIF Safety Pages are an ongoing series of pages, designed to provide a selection of safety topics each month to OHBA members. Please use these pages to add to (or start) either a Safety Committee file or manual for your company. Some of the Safety Pages will be on general topics and others will be for Owner/Supervisors. The Owner/Supervisor Safety Pages will be on topics based more on compliance or suggested management safety practices.

IMPORTANT NOTICE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Oregon Home Builders Association Safety Committee's purpose is to provide safety guidelines, information and resources to help our members work more safely and reduce jobsite accidents. Full and active monthly participation in safety meetings using the OHBA Safety Committee's agendas, topics and checklists will only meet safety committee requirements. It remains your responsibility to comply with all aspects of safety rules and regulations.

Brad Nanke, Oregon Home Builders Association, Safety Consultant
2075 Madrona Ave. SE STE. 150, Salem, Oregon 97302 541.971.6669 cell 503.362.5120 fax www.oregonhba.com

OHBA Safety Pages: Noise & Hearing Loss

Our hearing is precious to us. Once we diminish or lose our hearing, we can never fully recover it. Both on the job and at home there are many sources of noise which can damage our hearing. These sounds can damage sensitive structures in the inner ear and cause noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). Approximately 26 million Americans have some type of noise-induced hearing loss. According to the CDC, over 22 million workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels at work each year. Occupational hearing loss is one of the most common workplace injuries today in the United States.



How the Ear is Damaged from Noise

Hearing depends on a series of events that change sound waves in the air into electrical signals. Our auditory nerve then carries these signals to the brain through a complex series of steps. To breakdown the process simply- the sound waves travel through the ear and eventually move hair cells up and down in the ear that cause channels to open. This allows chemicals to rush into a cell that creates an electrical signal that translates the sound into something we can understand.

Most noise-induced hearing loss is caused by the damage and eventual death of these hair cells. Unlike bird and amphibian hair cells, human hair cells don't grow back. They are gone for good.

Signs and Symptoms of Noise Induced Hearing Loss

Most damage due to noise is gradual and over time. Because of this, many people ignore or do not realize that their hearing is being damaged. It becomes noticeable to an individual when it is harder to understand someone talking or needing to turn the TV volume up.

Damage can also occur from a single loud impulse noise such as a gunshot or explosion. These types of noises can rupture the eardrum or damage the bones in the middle ear. This kind of NIHL can be immediate and permanent. Loud noise exposure can also cause tinnitus—a ringing, buzzing, or roaring in the ears or head. Tinnitus may subside over time but can sometimes continue constantly or occasionally throughout a person's life. Hearing loss and tinnitus can occur in one or both ears. Sometimes temporary hearing loss can subside, however the event that caused it can still cause long term damage to your hearing.

Hearing Damage Prevention

- The best way to protect yourself is to eliminate the exposure to the noise. That can be achieved by removing yourself from the area the noise is in or eliminating the excessive noise altogether.
- Engineering controls are the second-best choice in protection from noise. Sound barriers, enclosures, and noise dampening systems are examples of engineering controls that will bring down the level of noise in an area.
- Administrative controls such as training on using hearing protection, job rotation, breaks, and routine maintenance programs are some ways that protect workers from being exposed to hazardous noise.
- PPE is the last line of defense. It is important to know the levels of noise that remain after applying the other techniques mentioned above. For noises between 85 decibels and 100 decibels on an 8 hour TWA, ear plugs will be enough to protect you if worn correctly. Over 100 decibels requires double hearing protection, an example is earplugs and earmuffs.



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SAFETY PAGE MEETING GUIDE

Topic: Noise & Hearing Loss

Employer: _____ Project: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Shift: _____

Number in crew: _____ Number attending: _____

Safety or Health issues discussed. Include recent accident investigations and hazards involving tools, equipment, the work environment, work practices and any Safety or Health recommendations:

Follow up on recommendations from last safety meeting:

Record of those attending:

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Supervisor: _____ (Print) _____ (Signature)

OHBA Safety Pages: Emergency Preparedness

Are You Ready for a Disaster?



[National Preparedness Month](#), sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and held annually in September, is a good reminder that natural and man-made disasters can strike at any time. It's important to have a planned response when you're at work, on vacation or on the road.

In 2017, 59,985 weather-related events resulted in 592 deaths and 4,270 injuries. Flash floods, tropical storms and heat waves resulted in the most deaths that year, [according to Injury Facts](#).

The National Safety Council offers safety tips specific to each of the following emergencies:

- [Earthquake](#), [Flood](#), [Hurricane](#), and [Tornado](#)

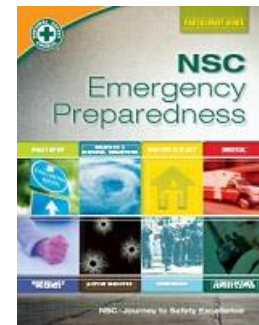
Federal agencies, like [Ready.gov](#), the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), also are valuable resources for emergency preparedness. When you face a natural or man-made emergency, try to stay informed through radio, TV or the Internet. In some cases, however, cable, electric and cell phone service will be disabled, making communication nearly impossible. The National Safety Council recommends the following general precautions that apply to many disaster situations:

- Make sure to have a [family/employee communication plan](#) in place; all members of the family or employees should review and practice the plan
- Have all family members', employees' and other important phone numbers written down or memorized
- Have an [emergency kit in your car](#) and at least [three days of food and water at home](#)
- Be sure to store all important documents – birth certificates, insurance policies, etc. – in a fire-proof safe or safety deposit box
- Assign at least one family member or employee (preferably many) the responsibility of learning first aid and CPR
- Know how to shut off utilities

Workplace Emergency Preparedness Training

From weather-related issues to active shooters, it's critical for employees to know what to do before, during and after an emergency.

Visit <https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/safety-topics/emergency-preparedness> for tips, plans, and training materials.



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OHBA Safety Pages: Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters

If you have power tools and/or extension cords on your job sites, you must take steps to ensure that these tools are properly grounded to prevent injury. This Safety Page topic covers the two options available to you to comply with this requirement.

OR-OSHA has written these rules dealing with ground fault circuit interrupter protection. This rule will provide increased safety for construction workers using electrical equipment and tools, and provides uniformity in what is required by Oregon Building Codes. The following is the OAR 437-003-0404 in Division 3/K.

437-003-0404 Branch circuits.

(1) General. Use ground fault circuit interrupters specified in (2) below **OR** an assured equipment grounding conductor program as in (3) below. These requirements are in addition to any other requirements for equipment grounding conductors.

(2) All 125-volt, single-phase, 15-, 20-, and 30-ampere receptacles on construction sites that are for temporary power and are available for use by employees must have approved ground-fault circuit interrupters.

(a) GFI protection must be at the outlet end of the circuit. Extension cords or other devices with listed ground-fault circuit interrupter protection for personnel identified for portable are acceptable.

(3) Assured equipment grounding conductor program: Receptacles more than 125-volt, single-phase, 30-amperes must have protection that complies with (2) above, or an assured equipment grounding conductor program that complies with the following:

(a) A written description of the program, including the employer's specific procedures. The program must be at the job site for inspection and copying by the Administrator and any affected employee.

(b) The employer must designate one or more competent persons (defined in §1926.32(f)) to implement the program.

(c) Before each day's use, visually inspect each extension cord, or other device, and any equipment connected by cord and plug, for external defects, such as deformed or missing pins or insulation damage, and for signs of possible internal damage. Extension cords, devices and receptacles not exposed to damage are exempt from this inspection. Do not use damaged or defective equipment.

(d) Do these tests on all extension cords, other devices and receptacles that are not part of the permanent wiring of the building or structure, and cord- and plug-connected equipment required to be grounded:

(A) Test all equipment grounding conductors for continuity.

(B) Test each receptacle or plug to assure the equipment grounding conductor is connected to its proper terminal.

(e) Do all required tests:

(A) Before first use;

(B) Before first use after repair;

(C) Before use after any incident that reasonably could cause damage (for example, when a cord set is run over); and

(D) At intervals not longer than 3 months. Inspect fixed extension cords, other devices and receptacles not exposed to damage at least every 6 months.

(f) Record all tests required in this paragraph. This test record must identify each receptacle, cord set, and cord- and plug-connected equipment that passed the test and indicate the last date of testing or the test interval. Keep this record by means of logs, color coding, or other effective means. Keep the record until replaced by a newer record. The record must be available on the job site for inspection by the Administrator and any affected employee.

Employers will have to provide GFCI equipment for the employees, unless the General Contractors supply GFCI-equipped temporary power for the job that will meet these requirements. It would be a good idea for Sub-Contractors to test the electrical supply to ensure it is GFCI equipped. This type of tester is readily available for only a few dollars. If, however, the General Contractor does not supply GFCI-equipped temporary power, then you must supply it for your employees. If you have any questions or need help with this rule call OR-OSHA technical resources at 503-378-3272 or 800-922-2689.



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OHBA Safety Pages: Portable Cement Mixer Safety

Construction machinery frequently has pinch and nip point hazards including gear, belts, chain drives, sprockets, and rotating parts. Portable cement mixers can be hazardous due to the rotating mixing drum or rotating paddles inside the drum. A body part can be caught between the rotating drum and a stationary part of the mixer. Electrical power can also be a potential hazard.



Recommended Safe Practices Prior to Use

- Observe work area conditions. Work areas should be clear of debris and obstructions which could cause the operator to slip, trip or fall into the mixer. The cement mixer should be on a flat and level surface to prevent tipping, rolling or falling. Do not use in wet locations.
- Dress properly. Do not wear loose clothing or jewelry as they can be caught in moving parts. Wear proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and wear restrictive hair covering to contain long hair.
- Check for wear and damaged parts. Before using, check to determine that the mixer will operate properly. Any broken or missing parts must be repaired or replaced before using. Check for proper machine guarding and assure the electrical power cord is in good condition. Have Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter protection when using an electric powered mixer outdoors or in damp locations to prevent a shock/fire hazard. Do not use cement mixer if it is not in proper working order.
- For gas powered mixers, always shut off engine before fueling. Be aware of hot exhaust and do not use gas powered mixer indoors as carbon monoxide may accumulate and cause a atmospheric breathing hazard.

Recommended Safe Practices During Use

- Make sure all tools and other equipment are removed from the cement mixer prior to turning it on.
- The cement mixer should be rotating when filling or emptying the mixer.
- Do not overload mixer. An overload could damage the mixer.
- Never leave the mixer running unattended.
- Do not move the cement mixer during operation. The mixer could tip over or the motor could be damaged.
- When transporting the mixer, disconnect the power cord or shut off the engine and make sure the drum is empty of all material.
- Keep guards in place during operation.
- Only use accessories that are recommend by the manufacturer.
- Disconnect the power or shut off the engine from the mixer and place the switch in the locked or off position before servicing, adjusting, installing accessories or attachments. Such preventive safety measures reduce the risk of starting the cement mixer accidentally.
- Practice environmental pollution control procedures by cleaning the mixer in a designated area where concrete and rinse water can be contained so they do not pollute storm drains or surface water.



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OHBA Safety Pages: Fire Prevention

Accidental fires are an unusual occurrence in most workplaces. It is easy to take for granted some of the everyday hazards that, if overlooked, can contribute to the occurrence of these fires. Here are some general tips to help prevent accidental fires at work, as well as at your home:



- Dispense flammable liquids only in areas free from sparks, flames, and other sources of ignition.
- Keep all containers of flammable liquids closed or covered when they are not in use. And return them to their designated storage area when you are done using them;
- When dispensing flammable liquid from one container into another, bond the two containers together and ground one. This helps prevent the build-up of static electricity, which can create a spark and ignite the vapors;
- Discard all rags and waste materials that are impregnated with flammable or combustible liquids, oil, or grease in covered, self-closing metal containers (should be colored red), and empty these containers into designated receptacles at the end of your shift;
- Keep all wastepaper, cardboard, and similar combustible materials cleaned up and placed in designated waste receptacles. Letting these items accumulate on the floor or other work areas creates an unnecessary fire hazard;
- Only use flame or spark-producing equipment, such as welders, torches, and grinders, in designated areas. Special approval of management must be obtained to use this type equipment in areas where it is not normally used (discuss your company's "hot-work permit", if you have one);



- Smoking is allowed only in designated areas. Always dispose of butts in designated receptacles (if you have implemented a smoking ban at your site, discuss that instead);
- Make certain to avoid stacking materials too close to fire sprinkler heads, as doing so can affect their ability to disperse water adequately when activated; usually we must maintain a minimum of 18 inches of clearance below the level of the sprinkler heads;
- Make sure portable fire extinguishers remain fully charged and accessible at all times.



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