



# DID YOU KNOW?

Approximately *22 million* U.S. workers are exposed to potentially dangerous noise levels at work.

**Occupationally-caused hearing loss is the most common work-related illness in the U.S.**

## Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL)

- Is the only type of hearing loss that is completely preventable.
- Can happen at any age and is potentially permanent.
- Is caused by damage to the inner ear's hair cells which normally convert sound into signals the brain understands.
- In the workplace, most frequently affects those in the manufacturing, construction, transportation and agriculture sectors.



Normal Conversation  
60 dB



Farm Equipment  
85-95 dB



Chainsaw  
110 dB



Fire Engine Siren  
120 dB



Jet Engine  
140 dB

### What is a decibel?

A decibel (dB) is a unit of sound measurement. The scale goes from the faintest sound a human ear can detect (0 dB) to the noise at a rocket pad during launch (over 180 dB).

### How can noise damage my ears?

- 110 dB** Regular exposure longer than 1 minute risks permanent hearing loss.
- 85 dB** Prolonged exposure to any noise at or above can cause gradual hearing loss.

### What are other risk factors for NIHL?

- Smoking
- Gender (Male)
- Diet
- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Genetic Factors

## Healthy Hearing Checklist

- ✓ Educate yourself and colleagues on the importance of preventing NIHL.
- ✓ Know which noises can cause damage (those at or above 85 dB).
- ✓ Set a positive example with, and promote, effective noise control measures.
- ✓ Have an expert hearing screening on a consistent or as-needed basis.
- ✓ Wear earplugs or other protective devices and encourage coworkers to do so as well.



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