



Ear Protection

Effects of excessive noise:

It is common knowledge that your ears are highly exposed and vulnerable to damage when they are subjected to loud noise.

However, this damage is not only caused by excessive loud noise.

It may also be caused within the workplace through being exposed to higher noise levels over an eight hour period during the day.

The level at which noise will start to cause damage in a particular individual is not known since people respond differently to noise. Anything over normal environmental levels could cause a problem.

How does too much noise damage your inner ear?

Sound stimulates tiny hair-like cells in your inner ear which send messages to your brain.

Like wind blowing in a tree - a little is alright - between puffs of wind the tree springs back into an upright position.

However if the wind blows too hard or for too long the tree will become permanently bent and may break.

Similarly, the hair-like cells are damaged by too much noise for too long.

While at first, given enough quiet, the cells may recover, repeated noise will lead to permanent damage.

Often damage occurs gradually over a number of years and remains unnoticed until it is too late. The damaged cells can no longer send the messages to the brain and hearing is lost.



Hearing Protection:

The most common method of reducing the noise levels within your workplace is through wearing hearing protection.

This equipment may include Ear Plugs or Ear Muffs, which are classed as Personal Protective Equipment (P.P.E).

This equipment must be worn at all times.

In high noise levels, removing the hearing protection for very short periods as little as half a minute may drastically reduce the overall protection received.

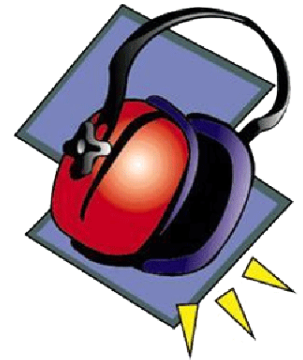
Are you at risk?

If the noise around you makes it necessary for you to raise your voice to make yourself heard to somebody one meter away, your hearing may be at risk.

Remember, although it may seem that your ears become "used to" noise, this is in fact due to temporary hearing loss.

Repeated exposure to excessive noise will eventually lead to permanent damage.

Noise does not have to be painful to be doing damage!



What is the exposure level in WA?

In Western Australia, the exposure standard is 85 dB(A), which is averaged over an eight hour period.

If this noise level is exceeded, all practicable measures should be taken to reduce the noise level to ensure your ears are not at risk of being damaged.