

### What's the hazard?

If you are exposed to too much noise (even for short periods of time), you can lose your hearing over time. Noise damages the nerves in the inner ears. Those nerves cannot be repaired.

### How do I know if I am at risk?

Three factors may be used to determine the level of noise you are exposed to:

- 1) If it is necessary for you to speak in a very loud voice to be understood, it is likely that the exposure limit for noise is being exceeded.
- 2) If you have a ringing noise in your ears at the end of the work day, you are being exposed to too much noise.
- 3) If speech or music sounds muffled to you after leaving work, but sounds fairly clear in the morning, you are being exposed to noise levels that will cause permanent damage.

### What Precautions can be taken?

To help protect yourself from hearing loss, wear employer-supplied hearing protection that is appropriate to the task.

- Use comfortable hearing protection.
- Use clean hands when inserting or removing ear plugs.
- Take breaks from loud noises even when wearing hearing protection.
- Help identify equipment and work areas where signs need to be posted so that everyone in the workplace is aware of high noise areas.
- Follow manufacturer's instruction to ensure proper use.

### Types of Hearing Protection Devices:

#### Earplugs:

- Insert into the ear canal to seal out noise.
- You can purchase disposable or reusable.
- Adequate protection depends on a good seal between the skin and the ear plug.
- They may become loose as a result of talking, chewing, etc. and may need to be repositioned from time to time.



#### Earmuffs:

- They cover the entire ear, are easier to fit and to wear.
- They cost more but last longer if properly cared for.
- They may feel bulky or uncomfortable in hot weather.
- You can also purchase ear muffs that mount safely onto a hardhat.
- Wearing earmuffs over earbuds is not recommended. The combination may prevent you from hearing necessary warnings, such as back up alarms from powered mobile equipment, and can cause damage to your hearing.



**PEI Occupational Health and Safety Regulations Allowable Exposure Limits:**

Noise Level db(A)	Allowable Exposure Time
155 or greater	0
112	.94 minutes
109	1.88 minutes
106	3.75 minutes
103	7.50 minutes
100	15 minutes
97	30 minutes
94	1 hour
91	2 hours
88	4 hours
85	8 hours
82	16 hours
80	24 hours

Double protection recommended above 105 dB (A)

Hearing protection recommended above 85 dB(A)

Noise Level (dB)	Equipment
112	Pile driver
110	Air arcing gouging / Chainsaw
108	Impact wrench
107	Bulldozer – no muffle
102-104	Air grinder
102	Crane – uninsulated cab
101-103	Bulldozer – no cab
97	Chipping concrete
96	Circular saw and hammering
96	Jack hammer
96	Quick-cut/concrete saw
95	Masonry saw
94	Roller/compactor – no cab
90	Crane – insulated cab
87	Loader/backhoe – insulated cab
86	Grinder
85-90	Welding machine
85	Bulldozer – insulated cab
50-70	Speaking voice

**Discussion Topics:**

- What is the primary source of noise in your work area?
- What action can you take to reduce the level of noise in your work area?
- Where can you find hearing protection and what type is available for you?
- Does your hearing protection properly fit?