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## The Importance of Hearing Protection

Let's talk safety — we wear gloves to protect our hands, we wear hard hats to protect our head, and we wear high-visibility vests to make sure our body is seen and protected. But, what about our ears? Specifically, the inner ear, providing us one of our most important senses — hearing!

According to the CDC, across U.S. industries, about 25 percent of all workers have been exposed to hazardous noise. Furthermore, the CDC claims that 53 percent of noise-exposed workers report not wearing hearing protection.

It is vital that we protect our hearing both at work and at home.

### Hearing Protection Tips:

- If hearing protection is recommended on a jobsite, or for a task, wear it 100 percent of the time to be effective.
- Make sure your type of hearing protection is comfortable. Choose ear plugs or earmuffs, or both, that fit well and don't bother you while wearing.
- Become familiar with the decibel levels of heavy construction equipment on the jobsite. Also be aware of levels while doing tasks, like mowing, or the equipment you're using, such as leaf blowers, chainsaws, etc. Choose appropriate protection.
- On a jobsite, use control strategies, such as building sound barriers, using quieter equipment, properly maintaining equipment and tools, and moving noisy equipment further away from most of the workforce.



"I remember when I was a young guy and my granddad used hearing aids because he couldn't hear. He would often be in a world of his own during family get togethers because he couldn't hear the conversations everyone was having, and he was embarrassed to ask people to repeat themselves over and over. There were also times he would nod and smile when you talked to him, but he had no idea what you said."

"My Granddad worked the farm his entire life and never used hearing protection and this was back when tractors didn't have cabs and barely had a muffler. Over the years he spent thousands of hours on tractors and equipment that was droning in his ears."

"I want to be able to hear my grandkids, nieces, nephews, in-laws, and other family; and I want all of you to do the same. If you don't use hearing protection for tasks at home that require it, think about your family and how you will want to hear what they have to say as your family grows and the get-togethers become more precious to you."

— Kurt Ives  
Safety Coordinator

- Take an assessment of how you listen to music.
  - Make sure you're able to be attentive to your surroundings, such as when driving or operating machinery.
  - Set your volume carefully— if you experience ringing in your ears or muffled speech, lower the volume levels.
  - Wear protection when attending large events with high volume, such as music concerts, athletic events, airshows, or fireworks displays.
- If you suspect hearing loss, have your hearing checked and monitor each year.

*For more information, visit:*

<https://www.hearingconservation.org/>

or

<https://www.hearinglink.org/your-hearing/protecting-your-hearing/>