OCCUPATIONAL NOISE
THE INVISIBLE HAZARD AND KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL HEARING PROTECTION

PREVENTABLE · PERMANENT · PAINLESS · PROGRESSIVE

NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS (NIHL) IS THE MOST COMMON PERMANENT AND PREVENTABLE OCCUPATIONAL INJURY

22 mil.
U.S. workers are exposed to hazardous noise each year

24%
of hearing loss among workers is caused by occupational exposures

34%
of noise-exposed workers report not wearing hearing protection

jet engine takeoff **150** dB	hammer on nail **120** dB
generator **116** dB	ambulance siren **112** dB
impact wrench **102** dB	bulldozer **100** dB
table saw **93** dB	lawnmower **90** dB

Unlike most injuries, it's difficult to tell when you've been affected by NIHL because it's painless and progressive.

CAUSES

- Continuous, long-term exposure to sounds at or exceeding 85 decibels
- One-time impulsive exposure over 140 dB peak

TOP INDUSTRIES WITH NOISE HAZARDS

AGRICULTURE · CONSTRUCTION · FOOD PROCESSING · MANUFACTURING · MILITARY · MINING

OIL & GAS · PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES · TRANSPORTATION · UTILITIES

EXAMPLES OF NOISE HAZARDS

$1.5 million
employers pay/year in penalties for not protecting workers from noise

SOCIAL ISOLATION AND WITHDRAWAL

LIMITS ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND SPEECH

IMPAIRS ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE

REDUCES PRODUCTIVITY

RESULTS IN TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT HEARING LOSS

INCREASES RISK OF HYPERTENSION AND HIGH CHOLESTEROL

$242 million
annually spent on workers' compensation for hearing loss disability

EFFECTS OF NIHL ON WORKERS

Cost to employers — Cost to society

OSHA's role

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OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95 requires employers to use engineering and administrative controls to reduce excessive noise levels.	If controls fail to reduce noise to permissible levels, Hearing Protection Device must be provided and used.	When noise exposure levels equal or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average sound level (TWA) of 85 dBA, a hearing conservation program is required.	In some very loud environments, workers should wear double hearing protection (earplugs and earmuffs).	Refer to the OSHA standard for complete details.

KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL HEARING PROTECTION

Occupational NIHL can be reduced or eliminated when proper measures are implemented

3Cs

COMFORT · CONVENIENCE · COMPATIBILITY
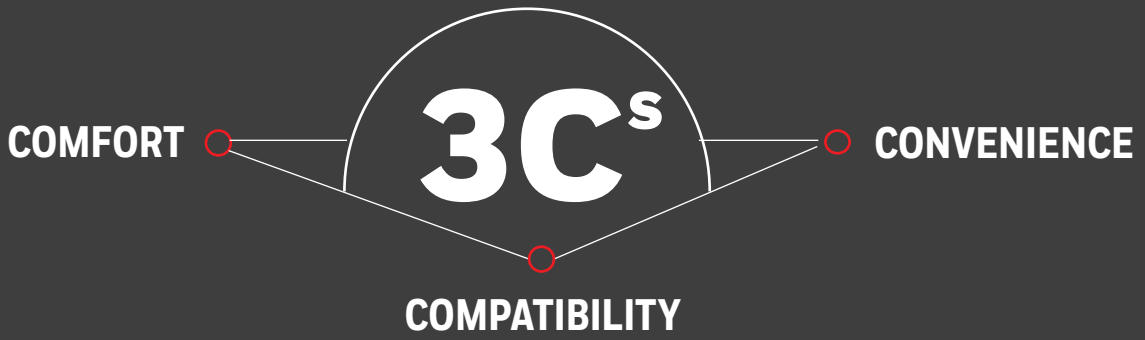
Wearers should:

- Be aware of jobsite noise risks
- Always use hearing protection where noise hazards exist
- Carefully follow fitting instructions to ensure protection
- Inspect, clean, and replace hearing protection devices (HPD) according to instructions

Employers should:

- Provide an assortment of hearing protection types and sizes to ensure workers achieve the 3 Cs
- Monitor noise levels and make necessary adjustments to reduce hazardous noise levels
- Educate workforce on the importance of using hearing protection devices and their proper use
- Avoid overprotection to ensure clear communication and the ability to hear warning signals
- Rely on Honeywell Howard Leight to help guide the selection process and ensure appropriate protection that meets the unique needs of your workforce