

Safety meeting blueprint

✓ **Meeting Topic:** Hearing protection

✓ **Today's Date:** _____

✓ **Attendee Signatures:**

Has anyone here ever experienced any of the following problems:

- At the end of a long workday, you hear ringing in your ears.
- On the way home from work, you need to turn up the volume on the car radio to its maximum level in order to hear it.
- When you get home, you have trouble hearing what your family members are saying, and you find yourself reading lips.

If you've experienced any of these problems, you could be suffering from noise-induced hearing loss.

You're not alone

If so, you're not alone. According to one study, approximately 30 million U.S. workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels every year, and about 25% of exposed employees will eventually experience permanent hearing loss.

And that's bad news, because once your hearing is gone, it's gone for good. While you might be able to use hearing aids to reduce

the effects of hearing loss, the condition is irreversible.

That's why you need to do everything you can to preserve the hearing you now have.

The most important step you can take is to wear hearing protection when you could be exposed to excessive noise levels.

Two types of gear

You have two types of gear from which to choose.

Earplugs are typically made from foam or PVC. They are either rolled or pinched and then placed into the ear, where they expand to block out most sound waves.

One advantage of earplugs is that they can be used in a variety of situations; they're also inexpensive enough to be discarded after just one use. If you know you'll be exposed to continuously high noise levels, you should select earplugs.

If the noise levels are intermittent, earmuffs are the better choice, because they can be taken off and put back on as needed.

Earmuffs fit over the entire ear, and they're held in place by an adjustable headband. They can be bulky and awkward to use, but they're more likely to stay in place than earplugs are.

Sound frequencies

While both earplugs and earmuffs are effective in lowering sound levels, earplugs do a better job of reducing low-frequency sounds while earmuffs provide better protection from high-frequency noises.

(Can anyone provide an example of a work area here that would require the use of hearing protection, and the type of gear that should be used there?)

Keep in mind that both types of hearing protection work only when they're used properly. If earplugs designed to provide 25 dB of protection are removed for just one minute, for example, the level of protection drops to 17 dB.

Thanks for your attention. And remember, let's stay safe out there!

(See next page for test)

Safety meeting blueprint: Test your knowledge

Meeting Topic: Hearing protection

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| <p>1. Earplugs are typically made from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Foam b. Plastic c. Metal d. None of the above | <p>b. You need to turn up the volume on the car radio in order to hear it</p> <p>c. You have trouble hearing what your family members are saying</p> <p>d. All of the above</p> | <p>put back on as needed</p> <p>d. All of the above</p> | <p>experience permanent hearing loss?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. None b. 25% c. 50% d. 75% |
| <p>2. If earplugs designed to provide 25 dB of protection are removed for just one minute, the level of protection drops to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 0 dB b. 7 dB c. 17 dB d. 27 dB | <p>4. Earplugs do a better job of reducing low-frequency sounds while earmuffs provide better protection from high-frequency noises. True or False?</p> | <p>6. Approximately how many U.S. workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels every year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 30,000 b. 300,000 c. 3 million d. 30 million | <p>9. The most important step you can take to reduce your exposure to dangerous noise levels is to take frequent breaks while working in areas with noisy machines. True or False?</p> |
| <p>3. Which of the following is a sign that you could be experiencing noise-induced hearing loss?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. At the end of a long workday, you hear ringing in your ears | <p>5. You should select earmuffs when you're exposed to intermittent noise levels because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Your coworkers will be jealous of your gear b. You can leave them on all the time c. They can be taken off and | <p>7. If you know you'll be exposed to continuously high noise levels, you should wear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Earplugs b. A hard hat c. Earmuffs d. Safety goggles | <p>10. One advantage earmuffs have over earplugs is that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. They can be bulky and awkward to use b. They're more likely to stay in place c. They look better d. None of the above |
| | | <p>8. What percentage of U.S. workers exposed to hazardous noise levels will eventually</p> | |

Test your knowledge: The answers

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| <p>1. a
sure you're using the right type of gear for the noise hazards you could face.</p> <p>5. c
hearing protection on for the entire time you're working in a noisy environment.</p> <p>6. d</p> <p>7. a</p> <p>8. b</p> <p>9. False. The most important step you can take is to use hearing protection.</p> <p>10. b</p> | <p>2. c. That's why it's critically important that you keep your hearing protection on for the entire time you're working in a noisy environment.</p> <p>3. d. If you're experiencing any of these problems, you should have your hearing checked.</p> <p>4. True. Work with your supervisor to make</p> <p>6. d</p> <p>7. a</p> <p>8. b</p> <p>9. False. The most important step you can take is to use hearing protection.</p> <p>10. b</p> |
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