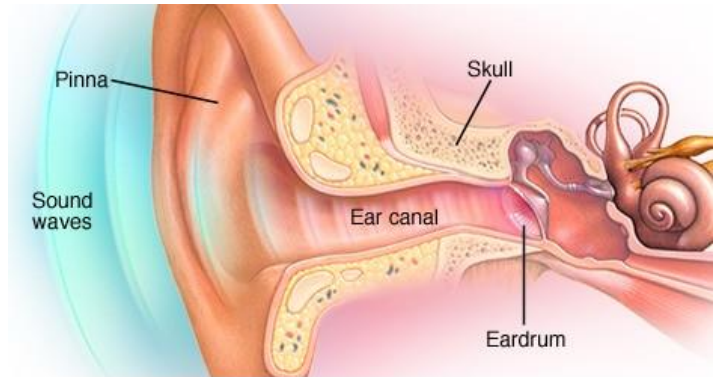


---

## ACCESSING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE (ASK) SHEET: Hearing Safety

---

Chronic exposure to noise has been associated with increased stress, anxiety, depression, blood pressure, heart disease incidence, distractibility, annoyance, tinnitus, hyperacusis, and other health problems. If you are not careful, you *can* lose your hearing. If you are exposed to very loud noise or moderately loud noise for an extended period, you must take some form of hearing protection precautions.



© MAYO FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Loud noises are noise levels at or above 85Decibels or dBA and often times associated with work place activities such as **Hammer Drilling, Demo Saws, Handheld and Bench Grinders, Jack Hammer, Hammering any metal object such as sheet metal or structural steel, Tampers, Skid-steers, Generators, or Compressors** just to name a few.

However, we must also recognize the impact our off work activities have on our hearing. Activates such as **Wearing Ear Buds and elevating the sounds within them, Use of Recreation equipment such as Hand Guns and Rifles, Riding a Motorcycle or any Off Road Vehicle, along with attending a concert and sitting right next to the speakers** just to name a few.

- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 20,000 workplace hearing loss cases occur annually, many resulting in permanent hearing loss.
- An estimated 24% of hearing loss in the United States has been attributed to workplace exposure, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- The National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health, NIOSH estimates that [30 million U.S. workers are exposed](#) to noise levels high enough to cause irreversible hearing loss.

### **How can noise exposure be reduced or eliminated through engineering and work-practice controls**

- Following equipment maintenance procedures to keep bearings and other moving parts lubricated.
- Periodic rotation of workers to less noisy areas.
- Adding or replacing mufflers on motorized or pneumatic equipment.
- Isolating loud equipment such as compressors and generators away from work areas.
- Replacing older, noisier equipment with newer, quieter models.
- Installing sound absorbing materials on walls and ceilings.

Remember to wear your hearing protection while enjoying some of the noisy recreational activities we all enjoy in the outdoors or indoors.