

## Protect Workers' Hearing

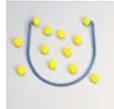
First, some facts (why hearing protection is important to you)

- Hearing loss is one of the major reasons why Industrial Insurance is so expensive for construction companies
  - In 2001, over 4,200 hearing loss claims were filed with L&I
  - About \$28,000,000 was paid out for those claims
- Most construction workers wear hearing protection far less than half the time it is needed ([click here to see statistics](#))
- When a construction worker files a claim for hearing loss, the liability is assigned to past employers that did not provide adequate hearing protection, or did not require it be worn.

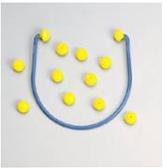


### What constitutes “adequate hearing protection”:

Note: Noise levels aren't just measured for workers operating an item of equipment. Workers in the vicinity – even if working on a totally different task – are also exposed!

If this is operating in the area	Then the average noise level (measured in Decibels) is	Therefore this type of hearing protection can be effective
Front-end loader	90.0	
Belt sander	93.0	
Welding, cutting equipment	94.9	
Circular saw	97.2	
Screw gun, drill motor	97.7	
Chop saw	98.4	
Powder actuated tool	103	
Chipping gun	103	
Table saw	105	
Chain saw	110	
Jackhammer	112	

👉 [Photos used by permission of Lab Safety Supply, Janesville, WI]

Types of hearing protection, for example	Reduces noise into ear by...*
<b>Ear caps</b> (don't go inside the ear canal) 	<b>10 decibels</b>
<b>Hearing bands</b> (protective part fits inside the ear canal) 	<b>13 – 20 decibels</b> (depending partly on how they're worn)
<b>Cap mounted ear muffs</b> 	<b>16 – 20 decibels</b>
 <b>Preformed ear plugs.</b> (Many with handles so they don't get dirty being put in or taken out.)	<b>10 – 17 decibels</b>
<b>Ear muffs</b> 	<b>15 – 24 decibels</b>
<b>Ear plugs</b> 	<b>22 – 26 decibels</b>
<b>Ear plugs that fit ear canal more closely</b> 	<b>26 – 27 decibels</b>
<b>Ear muffs with ear plugs underneath</b> 	<b>29 decibels</b>
<b>Engineering control</b> (get the noise away from the worker) 	<b>Depending on method &amp; distance, no practical limit</b>

- Every hearing protection product sold has an “NRR” listed – Noise Reduction Rating. That’s the amount of noise attenuation achieved in a laboratory setting. In the field the noise reduction tends to be about 7 decibels less. Therefore, ear caps with an NRR of 17 tend to have an effective noise reduction of 10 decibels in use.