

**Risk management tips brought to you by:
Proudfit Risk**

DID YOU KNOW?

Worker hearing loss is most prevalent in the Mining and Quarrying industry, but construction has the second highest rate, according to early results from NIOSH's Occupational Hearing Loss Surveillance Project. Audiograms from 1,122,722 workers were analyzed, and NIOSH found that 23 percent of those with material hearing damage were employed in construction.

Nearly \$250 million per year is spent on workers' compensation for hearing loss. What are you doing to address noise hazards for your workers?

Know the Noise Level of Your Power Tools to Prevent Hearing Loss

Exposure to dangerous levels of noise can cause permanent, often irreparable hearing loss for construction workers.

Using power tools around the job site can expose workers to harmful noise levels. The chart below lists the average decibel levels that common power tools emit when they're fully engaged by a worker, not just idling.

| Power Tool | Noise Level in Decibels |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Circular saw | 108 |
| Impact wrench | 107 |
| Miter saw | 107 |
| Reciprocating saw | 106 |
| Hammer drill | 104 |
| Grinder | 101 |
| Jig saw | 98 |
| Belt sander | 94 |
| Drill | 92 |
| Screw driver | 89 |
| Orbital sander | 85 |

According to NIOSH's guidelines on permissible levels and durations of noise exposure, the limit for continuous noise during an eight-hour workday should not surpass 85 decibels. If workers are using tools that produce 100 decibels of noise, their exposure should be less than 15 minutes during an eight-hour workday.

Relying on hearing protection, such as earmuffs and earplugs, is not enough to prevent hearing damage; other measures must be taken to limit exposure. Contact Proudfit Risk for assistance in implementing an effective hearing conservation program for your workplace.



New NEP to Reduce Isocyanates Exposure

In June, OSHA announced a new National Emphasis Program (NEP) to protect workers from adverse health effects caused by isocyanates exposure. The three-year program will focus on reducing occupational illnesses and death with increased inspection targeting, outreach to employers and compliance assistance.

Isocyanates are chemical compounds found in materials such as paints, varnishes and building insulation. Workers performing jobs such as painting, blowing foam insulation and manufacturing many polyurethane products have the most exposure, which can lead to occupational asthma, respiratory illnesses, cancer and, in some cases, death. For more information about the NEP, visit: www.osha.gov/SLTC/isocyanates/index.html.