

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH BRANCH

Occupational Health Watch: February 2017

Noise-induced hearing loss: Serious and preventable

Nearly one in four adults who reported excellent to good hearing actually have measurable hearing loss, and almost one third of adults who reported exposure to loud noise at work have hearing loss. These findings appear in a February report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The CDC analyzed data collected from questionnaires and hearing tests of adults between 20–69 years of age in the 2011–2012 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) to determine the presence of clinical signs of noise-induced hearing loss. Key findings show:

- Workers exposed to loud noises were twice as likely to have hearing loss.
- Men were more likely to suffer hearing loss for all types of noise exposure.
- The presence of noise-induced hearing loss increased with age.

Almost one quarter of noise-induced hearing loss in the U.S. has been attributed to workplace exposures. Hearing loss negatively impacts worker productivity, health, and economic well-being. Employers can take steps to reduce noise exposure in the workplace, including:

- Using a new smartphone app to measure sound levels.
- Using quieter products at work and replacing worn machine parts.
- Insulating the workplace against sound.
- Providing workers hearing protection to protect against noise exposure.

For more information, see the full report: Noise-Induced Hearing Loss Among Adults, 2011–2012.

Photo: Wearing noise protection at work prevents hearing loss.



Resources

CDC MMWR Article

NIOSH Sound Level Meter App

NIOSH Topic Page on Noise and Hearing Loss Prevention

Email Occupational Health Watch (OHW@cdph.ca.gov) with feedback or change of address.

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