

KSU Facilities Safety Bulletin

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Hearing Conservation

Many work environments are noisy with an endless range and variety of potentially ear-splitting work being performed while on the clock. Simply being exposed to hazardous noise levels can result in hearing loss, by damaging the hair cells directly connected to nerve endings in the inner ear. However, the extent of this damage and severity of hearing loss depend on the amount of noise to which you are exposed and the duration of exposure time.

Depending on the amount, noise can cause hearing loss that is temporary or permanent.

Safety regulations establish a range of noise levels and exposure durations indicating acceptable occupational levels of exposure.

The maximum safe noise level or permissible exposure level (PEL) is 90 decibels, acceptable average exposure over an 8 hour work day. Levels above 90 decibels require employers to furnish hearing protectors.

Levels equal to or below 90 decibels are considered acceptable for industrial noise exposure without the use of hearing protection, unless an employee has suffered a previous hearing loss. For those employees with a previous hearing loss, employers must provide hearing protection at 85 decibels average exposure over an 8 hour work day.

For employees with no hearing loss, hearing protection is optional between 85 and 90 decibels. As an added factor of safety, OSHA established an action level of 85 decibels for instituting a Hearing Conservation Program affecting all those exposed to that noise level.

December HSI/Vivid Course

Hearing Conservation

***If in Hearing Conservation Program at KSU**

Login with your KSU eid and Password:
<https://otis.osmanager4.com/KSU>

Why is hearing conservation so important?

Unfortunately, there is no fix for permanent hearing loss caused by loud noises

In addition to hearing loss, exposure to high levels of noise can result in physical and psychological stress, reduced productivity, poor communication, and accidents and injuries caused by a worker's inability to hear warning signals.

Common indications of hazardous noise levels:

- Ringing or buzzing in your ears
- Having to shout to be heard by someone an arm's length away
- Experiencing temporary hearing loss after leaving a noisy location

The extent of inner ear damage and the severity of hearing loss depend on the amount of noise to which you are exposed and the duration of exposure time. The length of your exposure to noise is as critical as the noise level. In addition to developing gradually over months and years of exposure to less intense noises, hearing loss can occur from a single intense noise such as an explosion.

Source: [hsi.com](https://www.hsi.com)