

Loud Tools: Protect Your Hearing

COMPANY

PROJECT

DATE

PRESENTED BY

Saws, jackhammers, and compressors can expose operators and nearby workers to harmful noise. Hearing protection takes planning before the equipment starts, not just handing out earplugs after the work gets loud. Everyone on a general construction crew needs to know the controls, the protection, and when to stop and ask for help.

Plan Before Starting

- Identify the noisy tasks and everyone who may be exposed. Include workers cutting material, breaking concrete, running equipment, or working nearby.
- Ask the foreman how noise exposure has been checked. Noise measurements and exposure time matter; guessing from how loud a tool sounds is not enough.
- Consider the whole day's work. Time around a saw, then a jackhammer, then a compressor contributes to combined exposure. Changing tasks does not erase earlier noise exposure.
- Before starting, confirm which controls and hearing protection apply to the work area. If that is unclear, pause the noisy task and ask the foreman.

Reduce Noise Exposure First

- When exposure exceeds OSHA's noise limits, the employer must use feasible controls. That means workable changes to equipment, the setup, or work scheduling that reduce exposure.
- Discuss practical options before work begins. These may include quieter equipment, separating noisy equipment from other work, or limiting time spent in the noisy area.
- Report damaged equipment or changes in its noise. Do not remove noise-reducing parts or change the agreed setup without checking with the foreman.
- If controls cannot bring exposure within the limits, hearing protection must be provided and used. Where noise exceeds the listed limits, the employer must also maintain an ongoing, effective hearing conservation program.

Fit, Wear, and Report

- Use the hearing protection selected for the exposure. Put it on before entering the noisy work area, and keep it on while protection is needed.
- Earplugs must be fitted or selected individually by a competent person. Ask for help with fit; do not assume another worker's choice will protect you.
- Check protection before use. Report damage, poor fit, or discomfort that makes you remove it. Plain cotton is not acceptable hearing protection.
- Agree on how to communicate around loud equipment. If you cannot hear instructions, move to a quieter place to talk rather than removing protection beside running tools.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You finish saw work and move beside a running compressor to help with concrete breaking. Your earplugs feel loose, and you cannot understand a coworker. What would you do before continuing?

Questions for the crew

1. Who nearby also needs their noise exposure considered?
2. What changes could reduce exposure before relying on hearing protection?
3. Who should help determine your earplug fit?

Reduce noise exposure, wear properly fitted protection, and stop to resolve problems before continuing noisy work.

Sources: 29 CFR 1926.101, Hearing protection; 29 CFR 1926.52, Occupational noise exposure

Drafted with AI for review by a competent person. Clever Rook writes from the official regulation text it cites, but it doesn't know your site. Check it against your conditions and your company's safety program before use. Not legal advice.

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REVIEWED BY (COMPETENT PERSON)

REVIEW DATE

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