

Noise: protect hearing while staying connected

Talk 19 of 52 | Week 19 | Health

Leader: adapt this talk to today's electrical work and site procedures. See the educational-use and liability notice on page 2.

START THE CONVERSATION

An electrical crew is drilling anchors beside another trade's cutting station. Noise exposure comes from the whole work area, not only the tool in your own hands.

KEY TALKING POINTS

1. Have the employer evaluate noise exposure and select the required controls and hearing protection. A worker's impression that a task is not very loud does not replace assessment. Duration and the combination of nearby activities matter as well as the sound from one tool.
2. Use the selected protection correctly and ask for help with fit. Keep it in good condition and follow the training provided. Do not assume music earbuds or ordinary headphones provide suitable occupational hearing protection.
3. Electrical job example: a crew drills several hundred anchors in a concrete room. Discuss whether the method, equipment, work location, or coordination with other trades can reduce exposure before relying only on personal protection.
4. Plan communication before noisy work begins. Agree how workers will receive stop instructions, warnings, and emergency signals while wearing protection. Removing protection repeatedly to hear a shouted message indicates that the communication arrangement needs attention.
5. Consider workers passing through or working nearby. Identify how the noisy area is communicated and who coordinates simultaneous tasks. The person operating the drill may be prepared while an apprentice sorting material nearby has not been included in the briefing.
6. Ask how noise-related concerns, ringing in the ears, or problems with the selected protection are reported. Encourage prompt reporting through the employer's process. Do not wait until a worker can no longer perform a task comfortably before raising the concern.
7. End by choosing one task scheduled today and describing the control and communication plan. Revisit that plan if the crew moves indoors, changes tools, or works alongside a new noise source. A routine task can have different exposure in another setting.

ASK THE CREW

1. Which other activities add noise to our work area?
2. How will we communicate a stop signal?

BEFORE WORK STARTS

Confirm the exposure controls, hearing protection, and communication method with the supervisor before noisy work.

OSHA SOURCES / FURTHER READING

OSHA: Hearing loss in construction

Attendance & action record

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Date: _____ Leader: _____

Company / jobsite: _____

Site hazards and controls discussed:

Follow-up action / responsible person / due date:

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Participant name	Signature / acknowledgment

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