

How to Protect Your Hearing in the Workplace

“Certain job responsibilities that require power tools, heavy equipment, or machines may put individuals at risk for noise-induced damage to hearing. Making sure that appropriate hearing protection is used during activities with loud sounds is important because noise-induced hearing loss is the only type of hearing loss that can be prevented,” notes Dr. Sarah Delaney.

Why Does Noise-Induced Hearing Loss Matter?

- Almost all noise-induced hearing loss **is permanent.**
- Untreated hearing loss can negatively impact personal safety at home and on the job.
- Untreated hearing loss is also strongly associated with depression.
- Untreated hearing loss can adversely affect quality of life; communication can be difficult and activities such as listening to music less enjoyable.
- Ringing in the ears (tinnitus), which can develop from noise exposure, can disrupt sleep and concentration and is associated with both depression and anxiety.
- Income is typically lower among workers with untreated hearing loss.

“At GiveHear, we often treat patients with noise-induced hearing loss. **It is treatable, but not reversible once damage has occurred.** Our patients wish they had known sooner that noise-induced hearing loss could have been prevented,” said Dr. Charlotte Thompson.

While untreated hearing loss can have detrimental effects on many areas of life, there are some easy steps you can take to help protect your hearing.

3 Ways to Protect Your Hearing at Work:

1. Check Your Workplace — noises louder than 85 dBA are hazardous.

If you have to raise your voice to talk to someone standing close to you, your environment might be too loud. Ask your safety manager or direct supervisor to check the noise levels in your workplace.

2. Reduce Your Noise Exposure

Take breaks from the noisy activities or areas. Use quieter equipment and keep equipment well-maintained and lubricated. Enclose the source of the noise or place a barrier between you and the source. Increase the distance between you and the source of the noise.

3. Wear Proper Hearing Protection

Always wear hearing protection in noisy areas. If using foam plugs, insert them correctly. If you are regularly around loud noises, consider investing in quality muffs or more custom ear plugs.

Your hearing is important! If you suspect that you or someone in your family is experiencing hearing loss, GiveHear can help. We offer services on a sliding fee scale to make hearing tests and hearing aids affordable and accessible.