



Risk Control BULLETIN

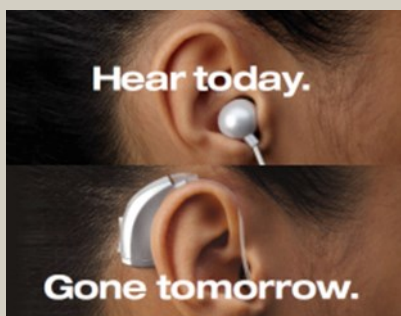
By: Robin Flint, Senior Risk Management Advisor

May 2017

Now Hear This!



The American Academy of Audiology estimates approximately 36 million Americans suffer from hearing loss and more than half of the people with hearing loss are under age 65. May is *Better Hearing Month* and throughout the month many organizations in the hearing care industry are leading activities or providing promotional awareness on hearing health.



Nearly everyone will experience some degree of hearing loss as we age. In fact, hearing loss is the third most common health problem in the United States. Aging, illness, and injury to the ears are the primary causes of hearing loss. Illness includes ear infections or disease such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes, which can put ears at risk by interfering with the ear's blood supply. Injury to an ear is often attributable to trauma, contact from a foreign object (cotton swabs, etc.), and exposure to excessive loud noise.

Hearing loss is often permanent; however, noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is preventable. NIHL limits one's ability to hear high frequency sounds and understand speech, which seriously impairs a person's ability to communicate. To protect one of your most valuable natural assets be mindful of surrounding noise levels. How loud is too loud? If you don't own a

piece of sound measuring equipment, a good rule of thumb is to wear ear protection around sounds louder than traffic noise.

In response to the increasing number of people suffering from NIHL particularly children, the American Academy of Audiology created *Turn It to the Left*. The campaign's goal is to raise public awareness about risks associated with NIHL, while also educating the public on methods to prevent it. It is important to understand the majority of hearing impairments are *preventable* by simply walking away from noise or turning down the volume when listening to the radio, TV, MP3 player, or anything through ear buds or headphones. Visit <http://www.turnittotheleft.org/> for additional information.



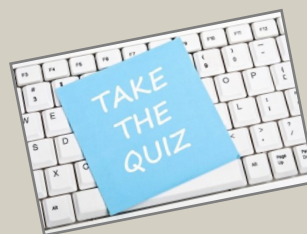
Noise in the Workplace

According to the American Academy of Audiology, approximately 30 million workers are exposed to hazardous levels of noise on the job. NIHL, caused by damaged hair cells in the inner ear, are small sensory cells converting sounds we hear into electrical signals sent to the brain. When working in an area with sound levels at 85 decibels (dBA) or greater as an eight hour time-weighted average, hearing protection is recommended.



Specific job tasks, assignments, or work areas within your water agency may require the use of hearing protection, and your Agency must maintain a written Hearing Conservation Plan. The goals of a hearing conservation program are to prevent initial occupational hearing loss, preserve remaining hearing, and equip workers with the knowledge and hearing protection devices necessary to safeguard themselves. Cal/OSHA standards on hearing conservation can be found in [8 CCR 5095-5100](#). You can also find a Customizable Hearing Conservation Plan template in the [JPIA's Risk Control Manual](#). The Manual is found on our website under the *Resources* tab then *Manuals*.

Selection of an appropriate hearing protector is an important part of the program. The Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) is a single-number rating required by law to be shown on the label of each hearing protector sold in the United States. The NRR was designed to function as a simplified descriptor of the amount of protection provided by a given hearing protection device. The current range of NRRs available in the U.S. market extends from 0 to 33 decibels.



The loudness of sound is measured in units called decibels (dB). In an occupational setting noise-induced hearing loss can be caused by prolonged exposure to any loud noise over 85 dBA. Take the quiz and match sound level decibels to the sound producing items.



- | | |
|--|-----------|
| ___ 1. Alarm clocks | A. 130 dB |
| ___ 2. Ambulances and fire engine sirens | B. 90 dB |
| ___ 3. Concerts, car racing, and sporting events | C. 100 dB |
| ___ 4. Gun shots, fireworks, and custom car stereos at full volume | D. 80 dB |
| ___ 5. Hair dryers, blenders, and lawnmowers | E. 110 dB |
| ___ 6. Jet planes at take off | F. 140 dB |
| ___ 7. MP3 players at full volume | G. 120 dB |
| ___ 8. Normal conversations or dishwashers in operation | H. 60 dB |

For additional information on understanding the Noise Reduction Rating formula, review Cal/OSHA's Appendix E on Control of Noise Exposure at this link: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/sb7q15a105ape.html>.

You can also review Hear Forever's website on Sound Source: Understand Ratings at <http://www.hearforever.org/tools-to-learn/sound-source-understanding-ratings>.

What's Wrong With This Picture?

Look at the photo below and identify what is wrong in the picture. You may want to review this picture during your next safety meeting.



Risk Management Staff

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Keith Forbes, Senior Risk Management Advisor
Peter Kuchinsky II, Lead Risk Management Advisor
Terry Lofing, Administrative Assistant II
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Better Hearing Resources

American Academy of Audiology:
<http://www.audiology.org/>

For more information on audiology
and hearing loss:
www.HowsYourHearing.org.

National Hearing Conserva-
tion\Association: [http://
www.hearingconservation.org/](http://www.hearingconservation.org/)

JPIA Risk Control Bulletin Preventing
Hearing Loss: <http://www.acwajpia.com/>

Answers to Quiz on Page 2:

1. Alarm clocks. **D**
2. Ambulances and fire engine
sirens. **A**
3. Concerts, car racing, and sporting
events. **E**
4. Gun shots, fireworks, and custom
car stereos at full volume. **F**
5. Hair dryers, blenders, and
lawnmowers. **B**
6. Jet planes at take-off. **G**
7. MP3 players at full volume. **C**
8. Normal conversations or dishwasher
ers in operation. **H**

Answer to (What's Wrong With This Picture)

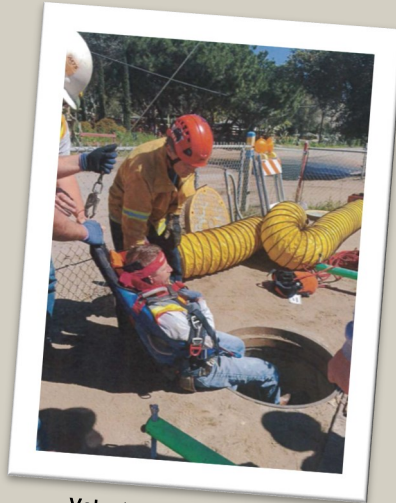
Always wear hearing protection devices
appropriately.
Ear muffs must be adjusted to cover the
ear without interference by hats or other
clothing.

H.R. LaBounty Safety Awards

Below are some highlights from the spring round of Safety Awards. For more information on the Safety Awards Program, visit our website at <http://www.acwajpia.com/SafetyAwards.aspx>.



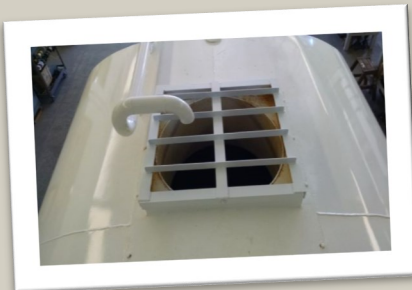
Bryan Jones, Crescenta Valley WD
Tool with magnets to move heavy road plates.



**Volunteer Confined Space
Rescue Team, Helix WD**



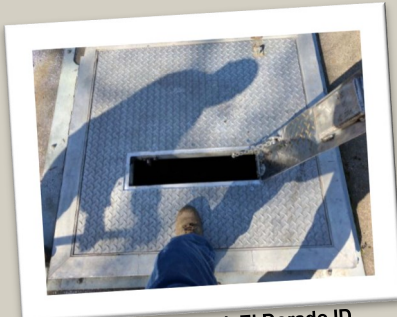
Mario Rodriguez, Cucamonga Valley WD
Industrial lifting magnets were attached to the arm of a vehicle mounted crane.



Steve Tester, Vista ID
Installed a grate in the tank of the water truck.



Tim Armond, San Luis & Delta-Mendota WA
"Grabber" to help install fence posts.



Jayzack Leonard, El Dorado ID
Jayzack designed a vault hatch to eliminate frequent confined space entries.



Maintenance Dept., Humboldt Bay MWD
A trailer was fabricated to hold trenching and shoring equipment.