

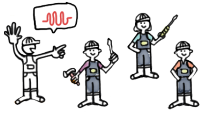


## INTRODUCTION

The health of your workers is just as important as the health of your business. As a business owner, you have a duty to prevent harm to your workers' health. One way that workers can be harmed at work is through exposure to noise.

Here are five reasons to make managing noise a priority at your work





### If we act together, we can manage the harmful effects of workplace noise on hearing

Creating an **environment** that promotes good auditory health in the workplace is more effective if workers are involved with developing and carrying out solutions. Workers can help to **identify risks** arising from noise related hazards, and suggest practical ways to **eliminate** or **reduce** these risks. This will encourage worker commitment to good hearing health.



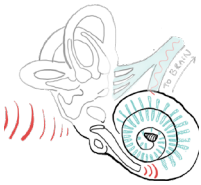
### Hearing loss is preventable

By adopting **noise control measures**, and **educating and training workers** on the importance of wearing hearing protection when exposed to loud noise, good hearing health will become a part of your workplace culture.



### Good hearing is part of good worker health

A workers health can affect their ability to work safely and productively. Hearing loss has health impacts including reduced productivity, feelings of isolation and exclusion, stress and fatigue. Workers with good health are likely to have higher levels of **productivity**, are more **engaged**, and are able to keep working for longer, contributing to the **success of your business**.



### Workplace noise can be harmful to hearing

If workers are exposed to hazardous noise over a long period of time, the hairs or nerve cells in the inner ear become damaged, and eventually stop responding to sound. This is called **noise induced hearing loss (NIHL)**. Hearing damage can also occur from a sudden loud noise, extended exposure to vibrations from noisy machinery or ototoxic chemicals (chemicals that damage your hearing) found in substances such as paints, thinners, and glues.



### Hearing loss is irreversible

Exposure to hazardous noise levels can cause temporary or permanent hearing loss, or **tinnitus** (a ringing in the ears). Damaged hearing reduces a person's ability to hear high frequency sounds, and some common consonant sounds such as t, k, s, sh and p. This type of damage can't ever be repaired.

## NOISE INDUCED HEARING LOSS (NIHL)

NIHL resulting from workplace noise affects as many as 100,000 New Zealanders. Noise-related injuries are most common in the manufacturing and construction sectors, and in male-dominated industries. Around 30% of all workers in New Zealand are exposed to hazardous noise at work at least a quarter of the time.<sup>1</sup>

Setting up a hearing protection programme in your workplace can help to manage noise related risks, and protect the health of your workers.

<sup>1</sup> Eng, A., 'T Mannetje, A., Cheng, S., Douwes, J. Ellison-Loschmann, L., Mclean, D., Gander, P., Laird, I., Legg, S. & Pearce, N. (2010). The New Zealand Workforce Survey I: Self-Reported Occupational Exposures. *Annals of Occupational Hygiene*, 54 (2), 144-153.