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Hearing Conservation

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Supervising Safety Newsletter

Hearing Conservation Programs and You

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) claims that 22 million workers are exposed to potentially damaging noise annually. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) establishes that anyone exposed to workplace noise greater than 85dBA or a dose of 50% in an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA) regularly during a 40-hour workweek should be part of a Hearing Conservation Program. Due to the high noise levels at IPSC, most employees are currently enrolled in the Hearing Conservation Program.

Audiometric Testing

Employees are tested when they are hired at IPSC to establish a baseline audiogram. This initial audiogram is then compared to all other audiograms conducted throughout a his/her career to determine hearing loss and other hearing-related problems. Audiometric testing can be scheduled or requested in the following ways:

- Scheduled annually
- Requested at any time by the employee
- After exposure to high noise levels
- After accidental exposure to high noise levels
- Changes in the working area
- If a Standard Threshold Shift (STS) is experienced.

How to Protect Your Hearing

A recent study concluded that most individuals do not wear hearing protection when being exposed to occupational noise. One of the main reasons workers cite they do not wear their hearing protection is the lack of comfort. IPSC offers many different types and sizes of hearing protection such as:

- Moldable foam earplugs
- Push-in Foam earplugs
- Custom molded silicone earplugs
- Ear muffs

Selecting Hearing Protection

When selecting hearing protection the goal is to lower the high noise a worker is exposed to below 90 dBA, and still allow him/her to communicate with coworkers. The work area and assigned task should be evaluated to determine the proper hearing protection needed. Some factors to consider when selecting hearing protection include:

- Comfort and fit
- Noise reduction rating (NRR) (Printed on the packaging)
- OSHA Safety Factor of -7 dBA
- Protection that reduces high noise to the 70 to 85 dBA range.

You can contact the Safety Department or the company nurse for help selecting proper hearing protection. IPSC encourages workers to wear their hearing protection and will do everything possible to help protect your hearing. Be safe, and protect your hearing!

Hearing Protection

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Sound Investment

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