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SAFETY SPOT

DO YOU WEAR YOUR PPE?

In this article we will continue with the subject of PPE, specifically, hearing protection.

Information for this article was borrowed from Laborers Health and Safety Fund of North America, OSHA.gov, Ohio BWC, and MSAsafety.com.

Have you ever had to turn the television or radio sound up when you were alone? If this was an isolated case, you are probably ok. Maybe you were tired, or possibly it was a favorite song you really enjoyed and you always turn the sound up for it. But what if it is something more? Perhaps, you may not have noticed it, but you may be slowly losing your hearing.

A person’s ability to hear is one of the most abused human senses. Mowing the grass, working in your shop, going to concerts and automotive races, do you wear some form of hearing protection? Most people don’t, likely because they don’t realize that their hearing is damaged. There are 3 things that influence hearing loss. The Frequency, or how often people are exposed to NOISE. The Intensity, or how loud is the NOISE. The Duration, or how long workers are exposed to NOISE. What is noise? Noise is unwanted or undesirable sound.

Let’s look at three types of hearing loss:

- **Conductive** occurs in the ear canal, ear drum, and ossicles.
- **Central** hearing loss is damage to the auditory nerve.
- **Sensorineural** is NERVE damage that occurs in the cochlea.

Most sensorineural hearing loss occurs very gradually and is painless.
Hearing loss can be frustrating for yourself as well as others, as well as potentially dangerous. However, that is not the only concern a person should have about their hearing loss, there can be some serious health effects as well. Noise induced hearing loss can cause the health issues that are shown in this picture, thus necessitating the need for protecting our hearing.

We may start out the day without the need for hearing protection, but as the day goes by, we don’t always recognize the need for some form of hearing protection, and if we do recognize the need, we typically will decide that what we are doing will only take a few minutes, so we don’t bother with hearing protection.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE FROM NIOSH’s WEBSITE:
Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

On this page:

What is noise-induced hearing loss?
Who is affected by NIHL?
What causes NIHL?
How can noise damage our hearing?
What are the effects and signs of NIHL?
Can NIHL be prevented?
What research is being done on NIHL?
Where can I find additional information about NIHL?

What is noise-induced hearing loss?

Every day, we experience sound in our environment, such as the sounds from television and radio, household appliances, and traffic. Normally, these sounds are at safe levels that don’t damage our hearing. But sounds can be harmful when they are too loud, even for a brief time, or when they are both loud and long-lasting. These sounds can damage sensitive structures in the inner ear and cause noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL).

NIHL can be immediate or it can take a long time to be noticeable. It can be temporary or permanent, and it can affect one ear or both ears. Even if you can’t tell that you are damaging your hearing, you could have trouble hearing in the future, such as not being able to understand other people when they talk, especially on the phone or in a noisy room. Regardless of how it might affect you, one thing is certain: noise-induced hearing loss is something you can prevent.

Who is affected by NIHL?

Exposure to harmful noise can happen at any age. People of all ages, including children, teens, young adults, and older people, can develop NIHL. Approximately 15 percent of Americans between the ages of 20 and 69—or 26 million Americans—have hearing loss that may have been caused by exposure to noise at work or in leisure activities. As many as 16 percent of teens (ages 12 to 19) have reported some hearing loss that could have been caused by loud noise, according to a 2010 report based on a survey from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

What causes NIHL?

NIHL can be caused by a one-time exposure to an intense “impulse” sound, such as an explosion, or by continuous exposure to loud sounds over an extended period of time, such as noise generated in a woodworking shop.

Recreational activities that can put you at risk for NIHL include target shooting and hunting, snowmobile riding, listening to MP3 players at high volume through earbuds or headphones, playing in a band, and attending loud concerts. Harmful noises at home may come from sources including lawnmowers, leaf blowers, and woodworking tools.

Sound is measured in units called decibels. Sounds of less than 75 decibels, even after long exposure, are unlikely to cause hearing loss. However, long or repeated exposure to sounds at or above 85 decibels can cause hearing loss. The louder the sound, the shorter the amount of time it takes for NIHL to happen.
Here are the average decibel ratings of some familiar sounds:

- The humming of a refrigerator: 45 decibels
- Normal conversation: 60 decibels
- Noise from heavy city traffic: 85 decibels
- Motorcycles: 95 decibels
- An MP3 player at maximum volume: 105 decibels
- Sirens: 120 decibels
- Firecrackers and firearms: 150 decibels

Your distance from the source of the sound and the length of time you are exposed to the sound are also important factors in protecting your hearing. A good rule of thumb is to avoid noises that are too loud, too close, or last too long.
How can noise damage our hearing?

To understand how loud noises can damage our hearing, we have to understand how we hear. Hearing depends on a series of events that change sound waves in the air into electrical signals. Our auditory nerve then carries these signals to the brain through a complex series of steps.

1. Sound waves enter the outer ear and travel through a narrow passageway called the ear canal, which leads to the eardrum.

2. The eardrum vibrates from the incoming sound waves and sends these vibrations to three tiny bones in the middle ear. These bones are called the malleus, incus, and stapes.

3. The bones in the middle ear couple the sound vibrations from the air to fluid vibrations in the cochlea of the inner ear, which is shaped like a snail and filled with fluid. An elastic partition runs from the beginning to the end of the cochlea, splitting it into an upper and lower part. This partition is called the basilar membrane because it serves as the base, or ground floor, on which key hearing structures sit.

4. Once the vibrations cause the fluid inside the cochlea to ripple, a traveling wave forms along the basilar membrane. Hair cells—sensory cells sitting on top of the basilar membrane—ride the wave.

5. As the hair cells move up and down, microscopic hair-like projections (known as stereocilia) that perch on top of the hair cells bump against an overlying structure and bend. Bending causes pore-like channels, which are at the tips of the stereocilia, to open up. When that happens, chemicals rush into the cell, creating an electrical signal.

6. The auditory nerve carries this electrical signal to the brain, which translates it into a sound that we recognize and understand.

Most NIHL is caused by the damage and eventual death of these hair cells. Unlike bird and amphibian hair cells, human hair cells don’t grow back. They are gone for good.
What are the effects and signs of NIHL?

When you are exposed to loud noise over a long period of time, you may slowly start to lose your hearing. Because the damage from noise exposure is usually gradual, you might not notice it, or you might ignore the signs of hearing loss until they become more pronounced. Over time, sounds may become distorted or muffled, and you might find it difficult to understand other people when they talk or have to turn up the volume on the television. The damage from NIHL, combined with aging, can lead to hearing loss severe enough that you need hearing aids to magnify the sounds around you to help you hear, communicate, and participate more fully in daily activities.

NIHL can also be caused by extremely loud bursts of sound, such as gunshots or explosions, which can rupture the eardrum or damage the bones in the middle ear. This kind of NIHL can be immediate and permanent.

Loud noise exposure can also cause tinnitus—a ringing, buzzing, or roaring in the ears or head. Tinnitus may subside over time, but can sometimes continue constantly or occasionally throughout a person’s life. Hearing loss and tinnitus can occur in one or both ears. Sometimes exposure to impulse or continuous loud noise causes a temporary hearing loss that disappears 16 to 48 hours later. Recent research suggests, however, that although the loss of hearing seems to disappear, there may be residual long-term damage to your hearing.

Can NIHL be prevented?

NIHL is the only type of hearing loss that is completely preventable. If you understand the hazards of noise and how to practice good hearing health, you can protect your hearing for life. Here’s how:

- Know which noises can cause damage (those at or above 85 decibels).
- Wear earplugs or other protective devices when involved in a loud activity (activity-specific earplugs and earmuffs are available at hardware and sporting goods stores).
- If you can’t reduce the noise or protect yourself from it, move away from it.
- Be alert to hazardous noises in the environment.
- Protect the ears of children who are too young to protect their own.
- Make family, friends, and colleagues aware of the hazards of noise.
- Have your hearing tested if you think you might have hearing loss.
What research is being done on NIHL?

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) supports research on the causes, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of hearing loss. NIDCD-supported researchers have helped to identify some of the many genes important for hair-cell development and function and are using this knowledge to explore new treatments for hearing loss.

Researchers are also looking at the protective properties of supporting cells in the inner ear, which appear to be capable of lessening the damage to sensory hair cells upon exposure to noise.

The NIDCD sponsors It's a Noisy Planet. Protect Their Hearing®, a national public education campaign to increase awareness among parents of preteens about the causes and prevention of NIHL. Armed with this information, parents, teachers, school nurses, and other adults can encourage children to adopt healthy hearing habits.

Where can I find additional information about NIHL?

The NIDCD maintains a directory of organizations that provide information on the normal and disordered processes of hearing, balance, taste, smell, voice, speech, and language. Use the following keywords to help you find organizations that can answer questions and provide information on NIHL:

- Noise-induced hearing loss
- Hard of hearing
- Tinnitus

For more information, additional addresses and phone numbers, or a printed list of organizations, contact the:

**NIDCD Information Clearinghouse**
1 Communication Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20892-3456
Toll-free Voice: (800) 241-1044
Toll-free TTY: (800) 241-1055
Fax: (301) 770-8977
E-mail: nidcdinfo@nidcd.nih.gov

NIH Publication No. 14-4233
Updated March 2014
INTRODUCTION TO TRANSITS (A-2) Students learning to properly lay out a project by use of an instrument to turn the appropriate angle and to get alignment and using chaining techniques to get the proper measurement to insure adequate placement of hubs and tacks. (ABOVE)

ASBESTOS ABATEMENT WORKER (Environmental) Students learning what it is like to wear decon equipment for doing abatement projects while inside a contained work area.
For many years, approximately 20, the Instructors at the Ohio Laborers’ Training Center along with Instructors from the other Laborers’ Training Centers across the United States and Canada, have attended and participated in a week of specialized training designed to develop the Instructors skill in presenting information to a classroom full of Laborers. LIUNA Training, which is the training arm of the Laborers’ International Union, puts this program together.

Up until 4 years ago, the 1 week long class would be a training session in some construction skill such as Rigging, Rough Terrain Forklift, GPS, and so forth. However, 4 years ago John LaConche, who is the Executive Director for LIUNA Training, made the decision to arrange for a Third Party accreditation for the Training Centers. IAS (International Accrediting Service) is an International accrediting agency for schools, colleges, and various types of training centers around the WORLD.

Each of the Instructors went through an evaluation of their Math, Reading, Spelling, Grammar, Computer, and presentation skills. These evaluations were viewed and graded by 3 or more Evaluators, who gave their own grade based on the set criteria for the individual subjects. The Instructors were then placed in a certain tier or level of Certification.

The following year after the initial evaluation, LIUNA Training approached an ANSI board of professionals about the requirements for ANSI accreditation of the training centers as well as the Instructors. LIUNA Training made the adjustments to their program and so began the journey for each Instructor to achieve the ANSI certification. LIUNA Training and the various Laborer Training centers are the only trade schools which have pursued and successfully achieved the ANSI certification.

The Ohio Laborers’ Training Center currently has 2 ANSI certified Instructors, and another 4 which are awaiting the results of their test. The following 2 segments are based on Matt Flynn and Alvin Murray, and their individual journey to becoming 2 of 98 current ANSI certified Instructors.

“There is not much worse than being intimidated by knowing nothing about what you’ve been asked to accomplish that day. Understanding the procedures of a given task spawns confidence and productivity.”

(Read more of what Al has to say on page 11)

“ ‘Pay It Forward’ as a Journeyman, sharing your experience and know how is a wonderful way for you to mentor and help shape the minds of the Apprentices who will be leading our union into the future.”

(Read more of what Matt has to say on page 12)
Instructor Interview
with Alvin Murray

How long have you been in the union?
I started in the union in 2004, when I was 36 years old.

Did you come up through the apprenticeship program?
I did not have the advantage of coming through the apprenticeship program. When I joined the union, the apprenticeship program was fairly new and was not prevalent as it is now.

How long were you in the union before you started taking classes at the training center?
I had only been in the union 10 months when I started taking classes at the OLTC.

How did you learn/ hear about the training center?
I was very fortunate to have a boss, Howard McKay, who was a big proponent of education. Howard encouraged me to get to the OLTA as soon as I was laid off.

Did taking classes at the training center help you in your specific job?
Not only did it help me in my specific job, taking classes helped me in ALL areas of laboring. There is not much worse than being intimidated by knowing nothing about what you’ve been asked to accomplish that day. Understanding the procedures of a given task spawns confidence and productivity.

What does it mean to you to be an instructor at the training center?
Being an Instructor, to me, carries with it a burden of commitment to each and every Union Laborer in Ohio. I feel the need to do the very best that I can. Not just teaching someone about instruments, pipe laying, or OSHA, but telling Laborers how to go about getting a job, and more importantly, how to keep that job. While working and knowing all the ins and outs about being safe while on the job.

What would you tell an apprentice about taking classes at the training center?
I would encourage an apprentice to take advantage of the opportunity to take all of the classes at the OLTC. When I started in the union, I knew nothing about road construction or grade work. After taking the “A” series of classes, my career as a Laborer took off like nothing I had ever experienced.

What would you tell a journeyman about taking classes at the training center?
I tell journeymen that they need to take advantage of the training just to keep up with the apprentices. This industry is no longer a place where the laborer gets paid from the neck down. If a journeyman laborer wants to continue working with that mindset, that journeyman may be faced with getting replaced by an apprentice.

Now that you have obtained the ANSI certification as an instructor, what’s next for you?
The next step for me is to continue to move forward. Many years ago, a particular boss told me, “If you’re not moving forward, you’re moving backward.” As he explained to me, “You’re competitors are moving forward and if you are not keeping up with their movements, then you’re moving backwards.”

Do you still take training classes?
Yes, I still take training. Several times a year, I attend Train-the-Trainer courses. I will never quit taking classes. That is what keeps us on the cutting edge.
Instructor Interview
with Matthew Flynn

How long have you been in the union?
I have been a member of Laborers’ Local 530 in Zanesville, Ohio, since my initiation in September of 1993. I proudly serve as a fourth generation member of Local 530.

Did you come up through the apprenticeship program?
No I did not. At the time of my initiation our local Union had not implemented an apprenticeship program.

How long were you in the union before you started taking classes at the training center?
A reasonably short period of time. I attended my first class at the OLTC within a few short months of my initiation date.

How did you learn/ hear about the training center?
The leadership at Local 530 strongly encouraged all of our members to attend classes during regular meetings. It was impressed upon the membership that the training provided would not only benefit the individual, but the Union as a whole.

Did taking classes at the training center help you in your specific job?
Yes, no doubt about it! I found that the instruction that I received at the OLTC on several occasions prepare me to work more efficiently and safely on the job.

What does it mean to you to be an instructor at the training center?
It means more to me than I think I can put into words, but I will give it a shot. As a child and as a young man I was surrounded by family and friends that cared deeply about what it is we stand for and believe in as a Union. I was lucky enough to see the results of their hard work and how it benefited our members. They took a lot of pride in doing what needed to be done to improve all of our lives. So when I was presented with the opportunity to have a positive impact on our membership as an instructor at the OLTC I saw it not only as a job, but an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of those men and women for whom I have always admired and respected.

What would you tell an apprentice about taking classes at the training center?
Take full advantage of this extraordinary benefit, because that’s exactly what it is! It’s a chance to share experiences, knowledge and know how. The classroom and laboratory activities will help to prepare you for your career as a member of LIUNA. That’s right, it’s not just a job, it is a career!

What would you tell a journeyman about taking classes at the training center?
Please come and share what you know! Our journeyman members have a wealth of knowledge that needs to be shared with not only apprentices but also instructors. “Pay It Forward” as a journeyman, sharing your experience and know how is a wonderful way for you to mentor and help shape the minds of the apprentices who will be leading our Union into the future. Oh by the way, you just might learn something yourself!

Now that you have obtained the ANSI certification as an instructor, what’s next for you?
That’s pretty simple, don’t become complacent. I haven’t yet in almost 9 years as an instructor taught the perfect lesson or class.

(continued on the next page)
I will continue to improve upon the skills and techniques needed to provide the best possible experience for our members because they deserve nothing but the best.

**Do you still take training classes?**

Absolutely! Our Executive Director, Bob Chatterson, and Training Director, Dennis Underwood, make available many opportunities for improving not only our instructional skills but also skill and knowledge based trainings. The construction industry is constantly evolving. New technologies, processes, and regulations seem to be popping up each day and the only way to make sure the latest information gets into the hands of our membership is if we, as instructors, are willing to be open to new experiences ourselves.
TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE!!!!

What do you know about EXCAVATIONS??

SUBPART P
OSHA 1926 rules and regulations pertaining to EXCAVATIONS

1) _____ Max. allowable slope for type "A" soil.
2) _____ Max. allowable slope for short term type "A" soil.
3) _____ Height of a ladder extension above the excavation.
4) _____ Maximum lateral travel in trench for worker to reach egress point.
5) _____ Depth of trench that requires a form of access and egress.
6) _____ Maximum depth of excavation below shoring or shielding.
7) _____ Spoil pile placement from edge of excavation.
8) _____ Fall protection.
9) _____ Depth of trench which requires a registered engineer to design the worker protection system.
10) _____ Max. allowable slope for type "B" soil.
11) _____ Max. allowable slope for type "C" soil.
12) _____ Maximum width of a trench as measured at the bottom of the trench.
13) _____ Maximum depth for short term type "A" soil.
14) _____ Required height of a trench box above a slope.
15) _____ Depth of excavation at which atmospheric testing may be needed.
16) _____ Depth of trench that requires worker protection.
17) _____ Sloped layered material in a type "C" excavation.

Here are your choices for answers:

A) 18”  B) 24”  C) 2.0’  D) 3.0’  E) 4:1
F) 48”  G) 5.0’  H) 6.0’  I) 12.0’  J) 15.0’
K) 20.0’  L) 25.0’  M) 1/2:1  N) 3/4:1  O) 1:1
P) 1-1/2:1  Q) 4.0’
APPRENTICESHIP CORNER
The Four 'Ifs'

There are four *ifs* in the area of growth and change that make a career as a union laborer worthwhile. First, our craft is worthwhile if you are willing to learn. There is nothing worse than being uneducated in the construction industry. Learn from your coordinators, instructors, and from your personal experiences. Learn from other people's experiences.

Second, a career as a union laborer is worthwhile if you *try*. You've got to take what you've learned in the classroom and on the job and try your hand at it. Somebody says, "You can't try, you have to succeed." No, you have to *try your best*. Appreciate yourself for all that you are capable of doing.

For example, a scaffolding plank is placed eight feet high and apprentices are asked; "Who can reach eight feet?" "I can," some say. "I can't," some say. "I don't know," some say. How are they going to know? They've got to *try*. What if they knock it down? Does that mean they can't succeed? No, with practice and perseverance, you can be successful. That's why apprenticeship is the right model to teach new members our craft. The apprentice needs to start lower and build their knowledge and skill-set up to a journey worker level.

Third, your career as union laborer is worthwhile if you *stay*; you've got to learn to commit. Construction technology is changing the way we've traditionally built our infrastructure, and we learn by example. For instance, a laborer builds a foundation. Then he wanders off and builds another foundation (or finds a new vocation). He's got these foundations scattered everywhere ... no walls, no roofs, just a bunch of foundations. That's not a solid reputation to build for ourselves or for our craft. *Stay* until your career is over.

Fourth, your career as a union laborer is worthwhile if you *care* about other members and our union. Caring collectively is a unique human experience that is vital, powerful, and far-reaching. If you care at all, you'll get some results. If you care enough, you can get *magnificent* results.

To lead a life worth living, you've got to *learn*. You've got to *try*. You've got to *stay*, and you've got to *care*. Remember the four *ifs*, and you'll be on your way to building a great career as a union laborer.

Fraternally,
Vincent Irvin
Statewide Apprenticeship Coordinator
PERSONNEL CHANGES AT THE OLTC

In January, Mike Lee Beaver turned in his resignation so that he could pursue other interests. We wish him the best.

On March 16th, Hughie Boggs came to work for the Training Center as the 10th Instructor. Hughie is a member of Local #83 in Portsmouth and has been since 1992.

To replace Mike Lee Beaver, the Training Center has hired Ron Bowling. Ron is a member of Local #265 in Cincinnati, and has been a member since 1988. His primary responsibilities at the present time will be the B-series of classes; however, because of his work diversity, Ron will eventually be qualified to teach the A-series, Grade Checking, GPS, as well as the various Gas Pipeline classes.

Those trainees completing 120 hours of training, at the training center or local union halls, will receive a $25 Speedway fuel card. We hope that you will take advantage of this offer to get the training you need, as well as some relief at the gas pump! *One card per trainee each season.

Successful completion of 60 hours in the current training season, at the training center or Local Union halls, will qualify you for our OLTC ball cap. *One cap per trainee each season.