Talk No: 5	**Title: EAR PROTECTION**

Introduction: Noise induced hearing loss is the most common occupational health hazard there is, and it is incurable. Once you're deaf, you stay deaf.

Main points:

- Compressors, concrete mixers, circular saws, breakers, etc, can all damage your hearing.
- You do not have to be using noisy equipment to be affected by it, just be in the vicinity.
- If you have to shout to be heard then the noise level can be regarded as high enough to warrant the wearing of ear protection.

Discussion points:

- Wear ear protection at all times when exposed to a noise hazard (obey noise hazard warning signs).
- Wear proper ear protection and wear it properly (i.e. cotton wool is no good for ear protection and ear muffs are no good worn over a balaclava).
- If ear plugs are used ensure they are a good fit, are fitted properly, and are kept clean.
- Use disposable ear plugs only the once.
- Keep reusable ear plugs clean.
- Ear muffs must be a good fit, particularly where the seal fits the head, and must be worn the correct way around.
- Ensure hands are clean when handling all types of ear protection, and store ear protection in a clean environment.
- Do not alter pressure of ear defenders by bending the band.
- Report any damaged, lost or unserviceable ear protection immediately.
- Consider options for reducing noise in the workplace, i.e. turn off unused machinery, keep cement mixer and compressor covers closed, ensure air lines do not leak, fit mufflers to tools where applicable, move noise source away, shield noise source, etc.

YOU COULD PAY THE PRICE FOR GETTING IT WRONG FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!

Notes:

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