



# Protecting hearing at work – guide for employers

Prolonged exposure to loud noise at work, or sudden exposure to an intensely loud sound, can cause hearing loss.

People who work in loud environments are at a higher risk of hearing loss, including musicians and sound technicians, farmers, miners, military personnel, hospitality and construction workers.

Noise-induced injuries and hearing loss are preventable. Through managing the risks of exposure to noise, employers can prevent damage to workers' hearing.

## Preventing noise-induced hearing loss in workers

Some things employers must do to reduce the risk of noise-induced injury include:

- identifying noise hazards
- undertaking noise assessments
- using suitable control measures
- providing personal protective equipment to workers
- testing noise levels.

Safe Work Australia's [model Code of Practice: Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work](#), guides employers on how to protect workers from the effects of noise at work. It also has a tool called a 'noise ready reckoner' to calculate workers' noise exposure.

Employers can find more information about their obligations at [safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://safeworkaustralia.gov.au).

## Noise risk at a glance

Sound is measured in units called decibels. Sounds of less than 75 decibels, even after long exposure, are unlikely to cause hearing loss. However, repeated or lengthy exposure to sounds at or above 85 decibels (approximately the level of a vacuum cleaner) can cause hearing loss.

| Noise source            | Decibel level | Length of time you can safely listen without protection |
|-------------------------|---------------|---|
| Jet taking off          | 130           | 0 minutes   |
| Ambulance siren         | 109           | Less than 2 minutes                                     |
| Riding a motorcycle     | 97            | 30 minutes  |
| Using an electric drill | 94            | 1 hour  |

## Encourage regular hearing checks

It is important that people who work in noisy environments have their hearing checked regularly.

Workers can talk to a GP about their hearing or book an appointment with a hearing clinic – you don't need a referral.

For more information on hearing, and how to book a hearing check, visit [health.gov.au/hearing](http://health.gov.au/hearing)