



Protecting your hearing at work

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

Many types of hearing loss can be prevented by limiting exposure to loud noise and using hearing protection. Getting your hearing checked regularly can help you keep on top of your hearing health.

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.

Preventing noise-induced hearing loss

Limit your exposure – avoid long periods of exposure to loud noise from heavy machinery and power tools. Take listening breaks to limit your exposure.

Protect your hearing – wear hearing protection equipment when loud noise is unavoidable, such as earplugs and earmuffs.

Be aware of the noise levels around you – use the noise risk calculator on the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL) website knowyournoise.nal.gov.au. Smart devices like phones and watches can also detect and warn you about exposure to noise.

For more information on hearing, and how to book a hearing check, visit health.gov.au/hearing

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

Employer obligations

- Safe Work Australia Noise Regulations provide information about suitable noise exposure for workers.
- Employers are required to assess noise levels in the workplace, monitor the hearing health of exposed workers, and provide personal protective equipment.

You can find more information about employer obligations at safeworkaustralia.gov.au.

Get your hearing checked regularly

If you work in a noisy environment it is important that you have your hearing checked regularly.

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