Noise in the Workplace

(Safety Brief)

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PACIF has developed Safety Briefs to help municipal highway supervisors maintain a high level of safety and hazard awareness among employees. We recommend using these short "tailgate trainings" on a regular basis – and **at least once a month**. If you need a particular safety topic, please contact us at losscontrol@vlct.org.

Information for Supervisors

Within public works operations, there are a wide range of noise sources – some of which are exceptionally loud. Employees may be exposed to tool and equipment noise, grinding, jack hammering, cutting, chainsawing, vehicle noise, and a number of other operations that generate significant noise. You may be required to monitor your noise levels. Contact us with questions.

Provide a variety of hearing protection for employees to choose from. As a minimum, you should provide muffs and insert type plugs as options for employees. Remember, the louder the noise is, the more effective the protection must be!

Talking Points for Training

You can improve the knowledge level of your employees and support their use of hearing protection by sharing the following information with them:

- Follow the requirements established by your PPE Assessment. If you've not completed this or are unaware of this requirement, contact your loss control consultant for assistance.
- As a general rule, if a task produces noise that is so loud that you have to raise your voice to be heard when you are 3' away, then hearing protection should be used.

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- Wear hearing protection properly. Insert plugs should be rolled and fully inserted into the ears. Never fold ear plugs and insert them. They are ineffective when used that way! When wearing muffs, attempt to clear hair from between the sealing pad and your ear. This improves the protection that the device offers.
- The noise reduction rating (NRR) can be used as a general guide of how effective a hearing protection device is when used properly. The higher values provide better protection, when the device is used properly.
- Think about some of the noise-generating tasks that we do at work. Here is a partial list (that you can add to): grinding, chainsawing, concrete cutting, mowing and weed trimming, using pneumatic tools, hammering on metal, etc. You must use hearing protection for all of these - regardless of how long the task will take.
- Keep your hearing protection clean. You may reuse roll-up plugs, but don't be afraid to replace them either!
- Apply a similar approach to protecting your hearing while at home. Use hearing protection to save your hearing!
- Hearing loss generally occurs over a long timeframe and unfortunately, once lost it cannot be brought back. Wearing the proper hearing protection and wearing it properly is your best defense against hearing loss.
- Consider ways to reduce noise in the workplace. Enclosure of noisy equipment (such as a compressor) or replacing loud tools with newer, quieter tools can be helpful. Does anyone have other ideas on how reduce noise in our shop?

Safety Training Attendance Roster

Trainer:	Training Date:
1.	9.
2.	10.
3.	11.

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4.	12.
5.	13.
6.	14.
7.	15.
8.	16.

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