

## PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM LOUD NOISES

We have all heard the old saying, if a tree falls in the woods and no one is there to hear it, does it make any sound? Well, you decide. But we do know that **noise** is in the ear of the beholder. One person's noise is someone else's **music**. Exposure to high noise levels can cause hearing loss or impairment. It can create physical and psychological stress.

There is **no cure** for noise-induced hearing loss, so the prevention of excessive noise exposure is the **ONLY** way to avoid hearing damage. If noise levels cannot be reduced then they need to be protected against.

### How loud is too loud?

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard states that when you are working in sound levels of **85 TWA dBA**, 8 hours a day, you are required to have a hearing conservation plan in place. One area this plan focuses on is the type of hearing protection needed. So what type of noise constitutes 85 dBA? Here are a few examples:

Typical A-weighted Decibels (dBA)	
0	Threshold of Hearing
25	North Rim of the Grand Canyon
50	Urban Residence
70	Vacuum Cleaner (at 10 feet)
83	Heavy Truck (at 49 feet)
95	Jackhammer (at 49 feet)
110	Night Club Music
125	Jet Take-off (1/2 mile)
140	Threshold of Pain

**Noise Hazards include, but are not limited to:**

- Loud music
- Tool and/or equipment use
- Air compressors



**Types of hearing protection available:**

✓ **Ear Plugs**

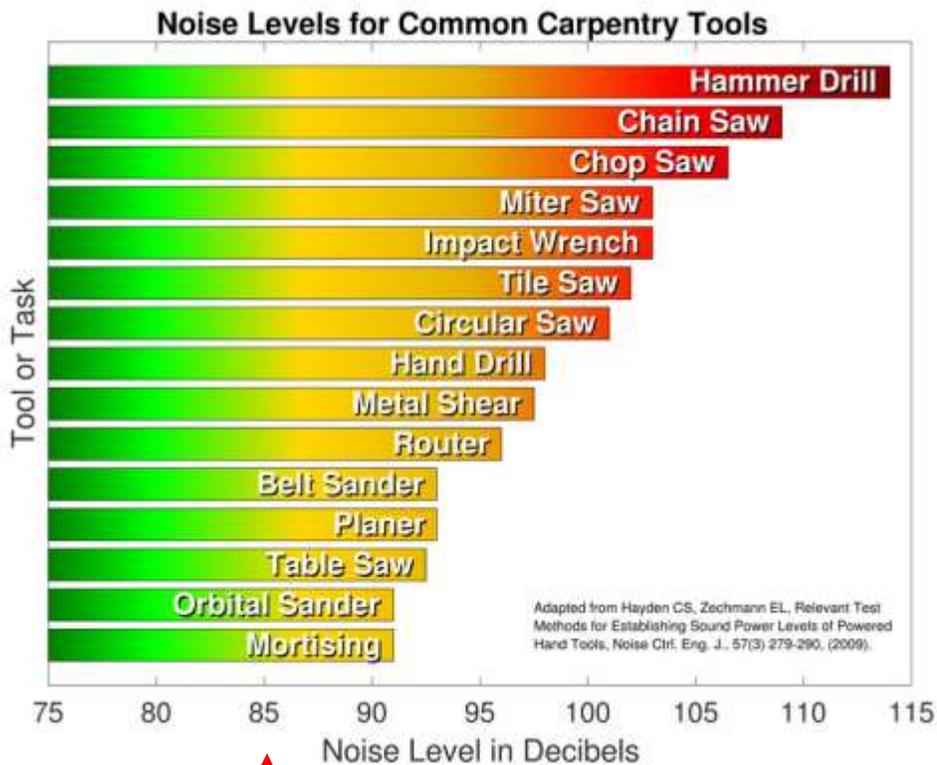
Some earplugs are disposable, to be used one time and then thrown away. The non-disposable type should be cleaned after each use for proper protection. Plain cotton is **ineffective** as protection against hazardous noise.

✓ **Earmuffs**

Earmuffs need to make a perfect seal around the ear to be effective. Glasses, long sideburns, long hair, and facial movements, such as chewing, can reduce protection.

**Remember:**

Care should be used to make sure you are not working in noise levels that will affect your ability to hear later in life. If you must work in noisy areas, use a high Noise Reduction Rated (NRR) hearing protector, and follow the instructions for its use.



Reference:  
OSHA 29 CFR  
1910.95