

Jobsite: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Foreman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 G.C. \_\_\_\_\_

**8/OSMOHIT Safety Sense**

**Toolbox Talks for the Sheet Metal Industry**

**Hearing Protection**

- Sheet metal workers are constantly exposed to noise from power tools, machinery, construction equipment and other sources. Noise can be harmful if you don't take measures to protect yourself.
- Exposure to 90 decibels over an hour period is a recognized threshold for hearing damage. When you are exposed to this much noise for anywhere close to 8 hours make sure you protect your hearing. Noise levels below 90 decibels over an 8-hour period can still be damaging to some people so it's a good idea to always protect your hearing.
- One way to gauge the noise level is to do a "shout" test. Stand about 3 feet away from a co-worker and ask him or her to say something without shouting. If you cannot understand what was said, then the work environment is probably too noisy and hearing protection should be used.
- Workers resist wearing hearing protection more than any other type of personal protection because they don't think they really need it. However, hearing loss occurs so gradually that by the time you notice it, irreversible damage has already occurred. Another reason for not wearing hearing protection is that it can feel uncomfortable. There are many types of hearing protection available, from muffs to plugs.
- Initially, some slight discomfort may be experienced when a good seal between the surface of the skin and the ear protector is made. The seal is important and should be checked several times a day. Earplugs have a tendency of working loose as a result of talking or chewing.
- If earplugs are properly designed, fitted and cleaned, they should cause no more discomfort than a pair of safety glasses. Earplugs are made of neoprene and other soft materials in order to prevent injury to the ear canal. There is very little chance of injury or skin irritation as long as the earplugs are kept clean.

**Instructor Tips**

- **Explain that length of exposure is just as important as noise level.**
- **Demonstrate the proper method of fitting and use of ear plugs and ear muffs.**
- **Demonstrate the "shout" test.**
- **Encourage attendees to discuss several situations (equipment, tools, etc.) that typically create elevated noise levels.**

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