

Eyes and Ears



Not too many years ago, someone in construction coined the term PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT. In the construction industry, almost everyday a worker is exposed to dozens and dozens of work-site hazards. These hazards can be avoided, however, by using "personal protective equipment."

Your Precious Eyes

God gave each of us two eyes, which we use to gaze upon the countless beauties of nature, sunsets, brilliant red roses, sparkling gems, and newborn babies.

But in a careless instant, we can lose our sight, and never, never again be able to witness these scenes.

On your jobsites, if you're engaged in any type of activity that causes little bits of wood, metal, glass, plastic and a broad cross-section of other flying objects to go flying through the air, the only safeguard you have are those wrap-around safety glasses that many companies issue to their employees.

Far too many of us assume that only welders wear safety glasses. But what about the eye hazards that occur as the result of sanding, grinding, sawing, drilling, hoe-ramming, powder-actuated tools, chipping, drywall sanding, clearing and grubbing, and demolition? In a split second, or the blink of an eye, a minute piece of plastic or rock can pierce your eyeball, and take your sight away from you.

Put on those safety glasses (wrap-around safety glasses, please) when you walk on the jobsite tomorrow morning.

What other types of construction activity can damage your eyes?:

- Dusts, powders, fumes, and mists
- Glare such as from welding
- Splashing metals and fluids
- Radiation from lasers
- Mechanical irritants
- Careless co-workers



What's That You Said?

Unfortunately, many construction workers have hearing impairments because they were too stubborn to ask for a pair of ear plugs, or ear muffs, when they were working around generators, heavy construction equipment, air compressors, and moving vehicles, for years and years, never realizing that the noise these things were generating were damaging their hearing.

OSHA says that if there is more than 90 decibels near you on your worksite, you need hearing protection

(ear plugs) to protect your hearing.

Did you know that an idling truck produces about 110 decibels? Or a generator, from a distance of ten to fifteen feet, produces as much as 120 decibels? Or that jack-hammer you used last week to break up a piece of concrete produces nearly 136 decibels?

When the noise increases beyond that magic OSHA number of 90 decibels, get those ear plugs in your ears and keep them in.

But, once again, many workers say “Gee, I can’t hear the back-up alarm on that excavator if I’m wearing ear plugs!” That’s a bunch of baloney! A properly-operating back-up alarm can easily be heard by someone wearing ear plugs (or ear muffs).

Or there are those who say that they always wear ear plugs on the jobsite, and they already have a 10% hearing impairment. Guess what? This same person spent his high school and college years in noisy night clubs or dance halls, where the woofers and tweeters in those giant speakers were producing 175 decibels.

Your hearing, like your eyesight, is precious. But once either one is damaged or impaired, it’s for life. If you think you’re working around noise-producing equipment and vehicles, ask your supervisor for a pair of earplugs. They’ll save your hearing, trust me.

If your employer is not furnishing you required Personal Protective Equipment (such as wrap-around safety goggles/ear plugs/ear muffs), ask for them immediately. Did you hear what I said? Ask for them immediately. Do you “see” what I mean?