



## 6-minute safety talk for plumbing

### Instructor Guide

#### Noise exposure

**Topic Overview** (why the topic is important to the students)

Noise from power tools may reach harmful levels that can cause hearing loss. Exposure to sound over 85 decibels over an 8-hour period requires hearing protection, and employers are required to inform workers if sound levels are at 82 decibels or above. Noise-induced hearing loss is the most prevalent occupational disease. Approximately ¼ million BC workers are exposed to workplace noise sufficient to cause occupational hearing loss. Hearing loss can be very gradual, usually happening over a number of years.

#### Demonstration and Discussion Topics

- **Discuss** the hazards in the shop that may produce noise over 85 decibels and how hearing loss can occur if hearing protection is not used.
- **Discuss** the different types of hearing protection.
- **Tour the shop** with the students, pointing out the hazards, and which type of hearing protection would be required for each.
- **Distribute** the student handout.
- **Review** the safety tips.
- **Explain** what can be done in the workplace to minimize the risk of exposure to noise (e.g., sound barriers, tool selection, and signage).
- **Make it real.** Tell at least two stories of hearing loss from your experience or from the following examples:
  - A plumber, who chose not to use hearing protection, was denied compensation for his hearing loss experienced after 22 years of work.
  - After 25 years as a plumber, a worker had severe hearing loss, particularly for higher-pitched voices, making workplace communication difficult.
- **Discuss** the attitude that “it won’t happen to me”. Remind them that hearing loss can and will happen if they don’t protect their hearing.
- **Instruct** the students to identify and report any safety concerns about noise hazards.
- **Answer** any questions or concerns they might have.
- **Set a good example** by working safely at all times.

#### Resources

- Hear for Good – preventing exposure at work  
[http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health\\_and\\_safety/by\\_topic/assets/pdf/hear\\_for\\_good.pdf](http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/hear_for_good.pdf)
- Hearing loss prevention programs  
[http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health\\_and\\_safety/by\\_topic/assets/pdf/sound\\_advice.pdf](http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/sound_advice.pdf)