

Workplace Hearing Loss Facts

Workers in the United States: Manufacturing

- There are **48 million** Americans who have a significant hearing loss. *(2011 National Health Interview Survey)*
- About **46%** of all workers in manufacturing have been exposed to hazardous noise. *(2018 American Journal of Industrial Medicine)*
- **24%** of noise-exposed manufacturing workers report not wearing hearing protection. *(2009 American Journal of Industrial Medicine)*
- About **20%** of noise-exposed tested manufacturing workers a hearing loss that impacts day-to-day activities. *(2015 American Journal of Industrial Medicine)*
- Approximately **18%** of all manufacturing workers have hearing difficulty. *(2018 American Journal of Industrial Medicine)*
- **14%** of noise-exposed tested manufacturing workers have hearing loss in both ears. *(2016 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report)*

In the United States...

- More than **22 million Americans** are exposed to damaging levels of noise. *(2016 National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety)*
- Hearing Loss ranks as the **third most common** health issue in the United States behind heart disease and arthritis. *(National Institutes of Health)*
- Loss of hearing is the **most common service-oriented disability** among American veterans. Half of all blast-related injuries sustained result in permanent hearing loss for veterans. *(Hearing Loss Association of America)*
- There is a **strong relationship between age and reported hearing loss**. The following groups show a hearing loss: 2% of adults 45-64 years old, 8.5% adults 55-64, 25% of adults 65-74 years old and 50% of adults 75 years old or older. *(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)*

In Kentucky:

- Nearly **700,000** deaf and hard of hearing residents. *(2011 American Community Survey Data, United States Census)*
- Kentucky ranks **third per capita** nationally in people identified as deaf or hard of hearing. *(2010 American Community Survey Data, United States Census)*

Steps to Preventing Workplace Hearing Loss

- Noise-induced hearing loss is one of the most common work-related illnesses in the United States. Each year, an estimated 22 million U.S. workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels at work. *(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018)*
- There are several types of hearing protection available, from low-cost, low-tech foam or wax to high-tech, high-end noise cancellation devices.
- Earplugs and earmuffs are two types of hearing protection available. Earplugs are generally made of acoustically impermeable materials and are a specific size, so they can provide appropriate protection when worn properly. Earmuffs and noise-cancellation earphones are other options for hearing protection.
- All hearing protection equipment has a “Noise Reduction Rating”, or “NRR”, usually between 15 and 30 decibels.

(Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, University of Iowa)

KCDHH—How We Can Help!

Do you have trouble hearing on the phone?

KCDHH provides specialized equipment such as TDDs, amplified, captioned and wireless phones and devices to eligible deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians at no charge.

Looking for Information, Referrals, or Assistance?

KCDHH:

- Maintains a library of books, periodicals, DVDs, videotapes, and CDs on deaf and hard of hearing issues that are available and loaned to the public.
- Produces resources and provides information, education, and outreach through web and social media, publications, presentations, and trainings and makes referrals to assist concerns.
- Provides assistance and advocacy or makes appropriate referrals to agencies that can offer the best assistance for you and your needs.