



S&W READY MIX CONCRETE COMPANY	PLANT #:
CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL / SAFETY PROGRAM	APRIL
HEARING PROTECTION - MONTHLY TRAINING TOPIC	

“DON’T PLAT IT BY EAR”

THE FACTS

There are some diseases that creep up on you — no symptoms or warnings of any kind. Suddenly, when it’s too late to do anything about a cure, they manifest themselves. Hearing loss from noise exposure can occur in a similar fashion. Its progress is so slow and sneaky that you hardly notice it, because you just simply adjust as sound reception becomes fainter.

HAZARDS

Temporary and permanent hearing loss, distraction, unable to communicate

“DON’T PLAY IT BY EAR”

Exposure to a large amount of sound will cause a person’s hearing to worsen temporarily. However, if that person rests and avoids loud noises, their hearing will return to its normal level. It is when a person is continually surrounded by loud noises that the damage becomes permanent. Also, exposure to noises at levels above 140 dB may cause permanent hearing loss from just one or two exposures. Prolonged exposure to loud noises can cause permanent hearing loss. But noise can be reduced before it ever reaches your ear drum by ear plugs or ear muffs. If ear protection is necessary in your job, get it and wear it! It is important to remember that once hearing protection is put on, it needs to be monitored. Hearing protection can be loosened or jostled out of position and needs to be readjusted from time to time to be most effective. Therefore, it’s best to follow safety rules and instructions carefully. Don’t play it by ear. When the job calls for ear protection, use it!

HEARING LOSS MYTHS

Here are five excuses people use for not wearing proper hearing protection:

1. **“I can’t hear other workers”**. At high noise levels, hearing becomes overloaded. Reducing overall sound levels allows the ear to operate more effectively in much the same way sunglasses provide improved vision in very bright, high-glare conditions.
2. **“My machine sounds different”**. True, but workers will become accustomed to the new sound and will be able to monitor the sound of their machines as well at the end of the day as at the start of the shift.
3. **“I’m used to the noise”**. Exposure to noise does not toughen ears. Ears do not become used to noise, they become deaf.
4. **“Protectors are uncomfortable”**. Like new shoes or glasses, new hearing protectors need a period of adjustment. If discomfort persists, the device should be exchanged for a different size, fit or type which will be more comfortable.
5. **“I’ve already lost some of my hearing, why should I wear hearing protection now?”** Just because you’ve lost some hearing doesn’t mean you’re protected from losing more or all of it. Initially, hearing is damaged in higher frequencies. However, as the unprotected exposures continue, this damage spreads to the lower frequencies, eventually affecting those essential to the understanding of speech. Although hearing protection devices cannot restore a noise-induced hearing loss, they should prevent additional losses from occurring.