Potential Hazard

Occupational exposure to high noise levels can be found in different areas of the hospital (e.g., laundry, engineering, and heliport). Employee exposure to noisy machinery, or equipment, may induce hearing loss, hearing impairment, hypertension, elevated blood pressure levels and/or other health hazards.

Possible Solutions

A safety and health program that recognizes and addresses the hazards created by noise exposure.

- Some examples of engineering and work practice controls to help decrease occupational noise exposure levels include:
  - Reduce the amount of sound energy released by the noise source.
  - Divert the flow of sound energy away from the worker.
  - Protect the receiver from the sound energy reaching him/her.
  - Proper maintenance of equipment, equipment replacements.
  - Revised operating procedures, equipment redesign, enclosures.
  - Acoustical shields and barriers.
  - Personal protective equipment.
    - Use hearing protection (e.g., ear plugs, ear phones) to eliminate or decrease noise exposure.

- The Occupational Noise Exposure Standard [29 CFR 1910.95], where applicable requires an effective hearing conservation program [29 CFR 1910.95(c)(1)], which includes specific requirements for:
  - Monitoring noise exposure
  - Audiometric testing
  - Audigram evaluation
  - Hearing protection
  - Recordkeeping and training

Additional Information:

- Occupational Noise Exposure, OSHA Safety and Health Topics Page.
NIOSH policy and recommendations regarding hazardous noise and hearing loss prevention strategies.

- **Noise Meter**, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). An interactive graphic demonstrating noise levels.
- **Noise and Hearing Conservation**, OSHA eTool. A chapter of the [OTM](http://www.osha.gov) developed to assist OSHA staff in evaluating workplace hazards.

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