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INCREASED PROTECTION AGAINST HEARING LOSS FOR ONTARIO'S INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

Ontario Government Introduces Stronger Noise Regulations in the Industrial Workplace

TORONTO, ON – On January 2, 2007, The Canadian Hearing Society welcomed the announcement by Minister of Labour Steve Peters that the McGuinty government would be taking action to further protect industrial workers from noise-induced hearing loss.

New amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act represent the first update to the noise regulations in the industrial workplace since they were introduced more than 30 years ago. Effective July 1, 2007, Ontario's industrial sector noise exposure limit will be reduced from 90 decibels to 85 decibels, bringing it in line with most Canadian jurisdictions. A general duty clause is also included which will require industrial employers to take all reasonable measures necessary to protect workers from hazardous sound.

"CHS has been advocating for better protective measures throughout our 67 year history," says Gary Malkowski, CHS Special Advisor to the President, Public Affairs. "We feel very encouraged by the new amendments."

"This is a really positive step forward for hearing conservation in Ontario," agrees CHS Director of Hearing Healthcare and Chief Audiologist Rex Banks. "Although a change of five decibels seems small, in the world of sound, it's significant – it is cutting the loudness of the noise employees are being exposed to by at least half."

The Canadian Hearing Society has been dedicated to eradicating communication barriers faced by people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing and promoting hearing healthcare since 1940. It is the largest agency of its kind in Canada, employing approximately 440 people who deliver 17 programs, from audiology to interpreting services through 28 regional and area offices.

Backgrounder

Decibels:

Decibels (dB) is a logarithmic scale of loudness that is used to describe a ratio between the sound pressure of a sound source (e.g. a leaf blower) and a reference pressure (the quietest sound we hear measured at 0 dB(A). For example, every three decibels in change results in a doubling of intensity and hearing hazards and a change in ten decibels means ten times the intensity.

Common Sounds and Associated Noise Levels

| | | Noise Levels [in dB(A)] | Notes |
|--------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| | Rocket launching | 180 | |
| | Handgun | 166 | Impulse sounds |
| | Rifle | 163 | · |
| | Fireworks (at one | 162 | |
| | mile) | | |
| | Balloon pop | 157 | |
| | Cap gun | 156 | |
| 10 | Firecracker | 150 | |
| S | Noisy squeeze toys | Can reach 135 | |
| Ω | Night club | 120 | |
| 7 | Football game | 117 | |
| _ | (stadium) | | |
| N O | Power saw | 110 | Regular exposure of |
| | | | more than 1 minute |
| | | | on a daily basis risks |
| S | | | permanent hearing |
| | | | loss |
| 7 | Snowmobile | 105 | |
| COMMON | Garbage truck | 100 | Unprotected exposure |
| | | | for more than 15 |
| | | | minutes/day not |
| 2 | | | recommended |
| 5 | Farm tractor | 98 | |
| | Subway | 90 | |
| 0 | Electric razor | 85 | Level at which |
| | | | hearing damage |
| O | | | begins if exposed for |
| | | | 8 hours or more per |
| | | | day. Ear protection |
| | | 00 | recommended |
| | Average city traffic | 80 | |
| | Normal conversation | 60 | |
| | Refrigerator | 40 | Mamaaadat |
| | Whisper | 30 | Very quiet |
| | Normal breathing | 10 | Just audible |

Exposure Time Limits

85 dB(A) over an exposure time of eight hours per day is the level of sound that industry and government could agree upon for industrial noise exposure regulations. Please note, in no way should 85 db(A) be understood to be a "safe" level for unprotected exposure.

Significance of 3 db(A) Reduction in Noise as it Relates to Exposure Time

| Decibels [db(A)] | Exposure Time | |
|------------------|----------------------|--|
| 85 | 8 hours/day | |
| 88 | 4 hours/day | |
| 91 | 2 hours/day | |
| 94 | 1 hour/day | |
| 97 | 30 min/day | |
| 100 | 15 min/dav | |

*N.B. Small changes in decibel levels results in significant time change.

Related Links:

Ministry of Labour Press Release: "Ontario Government Moves to Protect Industrial Workers From Hearing Loss: Stronger Regulations Introduced For High-Noise Workplaces."

http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/January2007/02/c2578.html

Amendments to Occupational Health and Safety Act: Ontario Regulation 565/06 http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Source/Regs/English/2006/R06565 e.htm

CHS Hear to Stay: Workplace and Industrial Noise - http://www.chs.ca/info/noise/book2.html

CHS Hear to Stay: Noise Facts

http://www.chs.ca/info/noise/book1.html