



A-Z SEED - N



SOUND AND NOISE

Sound is what we hear. Noise is unwanted sound. The difference between sound and noise depends upon the listener and the circumstances. Rock music can be pleasurable sound to one person and an annoying noise to another. In either case, it can be hazardous to a person's hearing if the sound is loud and if he or she is exposed long and often enough.

cafeterias, permanent hearing loss is the main health concern. Annoyance, stress and interference with speech communication are the main concern in noisy offices, schools and computer rooms.



Sound is produced by vibrating objects and reaches the listener's ears as waves in the air or other media. When an object vibrates, it causes slight changes in air pressure. These air pressure changes travel as waves through the air and produce sound. To illustrate, imagine striking a drum surface with a stick. The drum surface vibrates back and forth. As it moves forward, it pushes the air in contact with the surface. This creates a positive (higher) pressure by compressing the air. When the surface moves in the opposite direction, it creates a negative (lower) pressure by decompressing the air. Thus, as the drum surface vibrates, it creates alternating regions of higher and lower air pressure.

To prevent adverse outcomes of noise exposure, noise levels should be reduced to acceptable levels. The best method of noise reduction is to use engineering modifications to the noise source itself, or to the workplace environment. Where technology cannot adequately control the problem, personal hearing protection (such as ear muffs or plugs) can be used. Personal protection, however, should be considered as an interim measure while other means of reducing workplace noise are being explored and implemented.

As a first step in dealing with noise, workplaces need to identify areas or operations where excessive exposure to noise occurs.

Noise is one of the most common occupational health hazards. In heavy industrial and manufacturing environments, as well as in farms,

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