

LOGGING/FORESTRY SAFETY SERIES

HEARING LOSS: PREVENTABLE & PERMANENT

Photo credit: Cornelis F. de Hoop, PhD

Incident Summary:

George has been logging for 35 years. He has been in the woods since he was a young boy. George learned to work a chainsaw and run every piece of machinery you can find on a logging site. He wore his hard hat and safety goggles. However, George did not wear ear plugs or muffs because he thought they might keep him from hearing a warning call. After years of exposure to loud sounds, George now has ringing in his ears and struggles to hear normal conversation.

The ringing in George's ears started last fall. It was almost constant and very irritating. When George went to the doctor, he was diagnosed with tinnitus and hearing loss. Tinnitus is noise or ringing in the ears commonly caused by noise-induced hearing loss or ear injury. More recently, George noticed that he can't understand normal conversation well. People have to raise their voices for George to understand them. The doctor offered some treatment options for tinnitus; although, there is no cure for this condition. He also told George that his hearing loss was unfortunately permanent.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think caused George's tinnitus?
2. How can hearing loss and tinnitus be prevented?
3. Do you wear hearing protection? Why or why not?
4. How often do you say, "What did you say?"

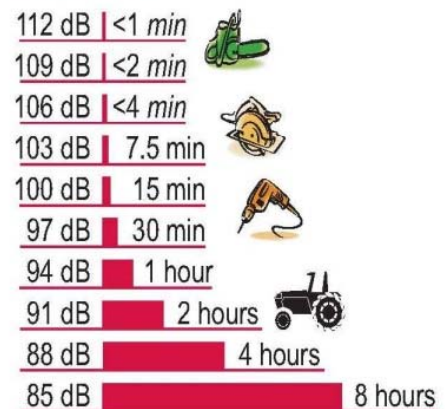
Take Home Message:

Hearing loss is preventable. Hearing loss is permanent.

How Long Is Too Long?

The red bar below shows how long it takes for a particular sound level to become dangerous to the human ear. For example, a chain saw has a sound intensity of about 109 dB. Without proper hearing protection, running a chain saw for only 2 minutes can cause hearing loss!

It only takes...



<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2007-175/pdfs/2007-175.pdf>

