

### What?



- Machinery and equipment generate noise which is measured in decibels (dB). Normal background noise is around 82dB whereas noisy equipment such as high speed grinders can generate noise levels around 102dB. Every increase of 3dB doubles the noise level so there is a substantial difference between 82dB and 102dB.
- Employers have a legal obligation to assess noise levels to identify those which may affect hearing and to take steps to reduce noise to a lower level where reasonably practicable.

### Why?

- If the noise level reaches 85dB it can affect hearing and over prolonged periods may result in noise induced hearing loss because noise is time weighted (the more time spent in the noisy environment the greater the damage).
- A time weighted exposure (during 8 hours) above 85dB puts you at risk from hearing loss.
- Noisy areas should be clearly identified; if you have difficulty holding a conversation due to background noise it could mean the noise is excessive and you should take steps to wear hearing protection.



### Do ✓

- ✓ Make sure you wear suitable hearing protection when using machinery or noisy equipment or are working near to it
- ✓ Visually inspect the ear protection prior to use
- ✓ Check it fits properly
- ✓ Keep it in good condition
- ✓ Report any loss or damage



### Don't ✗

- ✗ Don't ignore signs of hearing loss or ringing in the ear
- ✗ Don't wear dirty or damaged hearing protection
- ✗ Don't provide protectors which cut out too much noise - this can cause isolation, or lead to an unwillingness to wear them
- ✗ Don't have a 'blanket' approach to hearing protection – it is better to target its use and only encourage people to wear it when they need to

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| <b>Related TBTs</b>   | BCS Auto-scythe; Brushcutter & Strimmer; Compaction Plate; Machinery; Noise; Power Tools; PPE | <b>Version No.</b>   | 1            |