Reducing Noise in the Cab

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TOPIC: Reducing Noise in the Cab

For the average person, hearing loss begins in early adulthood. From this time forward, your hearing will continue to diminish as you grow older. It is extremely important to protect your hearing level.

The best way to reduce hearing loss is to protect your ears from extreme sound levels. What is considered to be extreme? Most regulatory agencies consider 85 dBA (decibels) for an 8 hour period to be an extreme sound. This noise level is equivalent to a vacuum cleaner. Interestingly, to most of us, this noise does not seem very loud. However, studies have shown that even moderate noise over long periods of time can wear down the sensitive components of the inner ear.

This can seem quite surprising to the average heavy equipment operator. After all, these operators are working around large diesel engines for long periods of time.

How to help protect against hearing loss:

- ☑ Engineered Controls: The concept here is to stop the sound from reaching the human ear. A muffler system is the perfect example. Also, by shrouding the engine compartment and shrouding the cab, noise from the engine and other mechanisms can be reduced significantly.
- ☑ Administrative Controls: These are work practice controls that help to protect employees. Examples are signs that read Hearing Protection Required. Training is another example.
- ☑ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): PPE is only employed when engineered and administrative controls have been applied and sound levels are still high. Earmuffs or earplugs are effective PPE.

When operating heavy equipment keep your ears in mind. Do you have to talk loudly to be heard? It is possible that you are working in an environment with excessive noise.

- ☑ If possible, make sure the cab is sealed well and the windows are shut.
- ☑ Keep a set of disposable ear plugs with you. Employers typically supply these to employees for free. They are great at cutting down moderate noise.
- ☑ Turn down the cab radio. Loud music is a big contributor to long term hearing loss.

Questions to Generate Discussion

- What is the condition of the engineered controls on your equipment (muffler, door seals, cab sound proofing foam, etc.)?
- If the condition is poor, what are some other ways to protect your hearing in the cab?

Discussion Date: _____

Employee Participants:

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