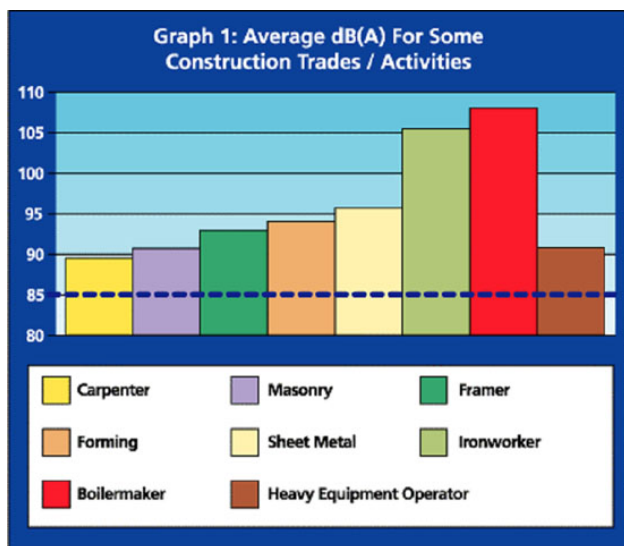


Right now you are either hearing or reading this information...

According to Statistics Canada “Of Canadians aged 16 to 79, 42% have worked or currently work in an environment where it is required to speak in a raised voice to communicate with someone standing an arm’s length away. Among these individuals, 24% always used hearing protection, while 41% never did. The remaining 35% used hearing protection often, sometimes, or rarely.”

What is your work environment and what sound hazards do you encounter?



Construction Safety Association of Ontario and <https://probuildermag.co.uk/>

With so many sources of potential exposure in the workplace what can we do?

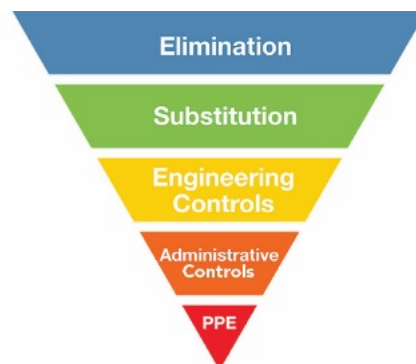
Part 8 of the Occupational Health & Safety Regulations, 2020 provides information and direction to employers and employees in the identification and control on noise in the workplace. This could include consultation with the OHC committee and further development of a hearing conservation plan as stated in regulation 8-6 (Hearing Conservation Plan)

Regulation 7-14, exposure to noise, requires the provision and use of approved

hearing protection that will reduce the noise levels to **less than 85dB(A)**. (Decibels)

So what can we do to Protect Workers?

The first step would be to assess the hazard. This can range from small hand tools to large pieces of equipment or machinery. Then look at it as you would with any other workplace hazard using the **Hierarchy of Controls**



- As with all workplace hazards our best option is to **eliminate** the hazard. This would include moving or enclosing a loud piece of equipment such as compressors or generators.
- Moving down the hierarchy you could utilize **substitution**. This would be replacing a loud tool or machine with a one designed to generate less noise.
- If elimination and substitution are not options, maybe **engineering controls** can be implemented. An example of this would be installing a better muffler on a running piece of equipment.
- Another effective method would be to restrict or prohibit access using **administrative controls** to certain areas where the noise hazard is present.
- And finally if you cannot do any of the above selecting proper hearing protection PPE such as foam ear plugs or ear muffs. As with all **PPE** the issue is that it needs to be worn properly to be effective and this requires worker training.
- When we implement controls we must always follow up and evaluate their effectiveness.

# Tool Box Talk

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When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks.

Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks](http://www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks)

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool\\_Box\\_Meeting.pdf](http://www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf)

## About the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.