



Q3 Occupational Hearing Health News & Research Roundup

by Adam Dawson

When it comes to hearing health in the workplace, it's crucial to be in the know about the latest news and research. To help you cut through the clutter, we've compiled a short list of some of the biggest stories related to workplace hearing health over the past few months. Check them out below!

OSHA Limits on Workplace Noise Feed Complaints – May 17, 2018

Full article

<https://www.ehstoday.com/hearing-protection/osha-limits-workplace-noise-feed-complaints>

According to OSHA, at least 22 million workers are exposed to potentially damaging noise at work each year. The organization also reported that employers were required to pay \$1.5 million in penalties for not protecting workers from noise in 2017, and

an estimated \$242 million was spent on worker's compensation claims for hearing loss. Now more than ever, employers need to protect themselves against costly litigation. This article goes into detail on how it's crucial to have a professional noise reading completed and submitted to a doctor immediately after receiving a hearing loss claim. Doing so can possibly save you thousands of dollars.

Older Construction Workers at Increased Risk for Hearing Loss – June 12, 2018

Full article

<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/17134-older-construction-workers-at-an-increased-risk-for-hearing-loss-study>

A recent study by the Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) has uncovered that over half of

former construction workers have experienced hearing loss. The study also found that certain factors, such as cigarette smoking and solvent exposure, significantly contributed to loss of hearing. Researchers examined 19,000 workers and found that smokers were 18% more likely to experience hearing loss. Likewise, workers with a higher amount of solvent exposure were 15% more likely to suffer from hearing loss.

OSHA Seeks to Roll Back Major Parts of Electronic Recordkeeping Rule – July 30, 2018

Full article:

<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/17321-osha-seeks-to-roll-back-major-parts-of-electronic-recordkeeping-rule>

In a notice published in the July 30 Federal Register, OSHA announced that it is seeking to rescind two parts of its Improve Tracking of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses final rule. The proposed rule states that OSHA would require organizations in high-hazard industries with 250 or more employees, or those with 20 to 249 employees, to submit Form 300A data electronically. However, these organizations would no longer be required to submit Form 300 or 301 injury or illness data. OSHA states the reason behind this is to protect sensitive worker information from potential disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, and to remove the reporting burden from employers.

These Discreet Earplugs Protect Your Hearing Without Muffling Sound – August 4, 2018

Full article:

<https://interestingengineering.com/these-discreet-earplugs-protect-your-hearing-without-muffling-sound>

A new earplug by a company called Vibes has taken the hearing protection industry by storm. Initially designed for concert goers, these “Hi-Fidelity” earplugs effectively protect hearing without muffling noise. Unlike traditional foam earplugs or over-the-ear headphones, Vibes earplugs utilize custom-designed tubes that balance sound frequencies while boosting areas of the spectrum that are lacking. Although they were created for concert goers, these innovative earplugs can still be effective in noisy workplaces, especially those where situational awareness is of the utmost importance.

Effects of Occupational Metal Exposure on the Auditory System – August 1, 2018

Full article:

https://journals.lww.com/thehearingjournal/Fulltext/2018/08000/Effects_of_Occupational_Metal_Exposure_on_the.3.aspx

Prolonged co-exposure to heavy metals and noise increases chances of hearing loss, according to a recent study. The effect of manganese, copper, arsenic, cadmium, and lead combined with noisy environments was investigated using pure-tone audiometry from 500 to 8,000 Hz. Results found that lead levels greater than seven micrograms per deciliter were significantly associated with hearing loss. Specifically, a survey of workers in a lead acid battery facility revealed a statistically significant correlation between poor hearing and high blood lead levels. Personnel at a printing facility were also tested and found to have hearing damage that resulted from lead exposure.

Lead, however, wasn't the only culprit. Investigations of other workplaces revealed exposure to a combination of noise and high

concentrations of cadmium, arsenic, toluene, and xylene is highly detrimental to hearing. The report concludes that it is critical for audiologists to consider heavy metal exposure when recording a patient's clinical history. It also urges hearing professionals to note other auditory signs beyond sound detection when evaluating patients with a history of heavy metal exposure.

About the Author

Adam is the Digital Marketing Coordinator at e3 Diagnostics. His interest in hearing healthcare is driven by his passion for music because he feels everyone should be able to clearly listen to Pet Sounds at least once in their life. In his free time, he enjoys playing video games, digging through record stores for classic vinyl, shooting hoops, and writing stories.