

## How loud is it? — Forestry

As a worker in the forest industry, you may be exposed to hazardous levels of noise on the job. Regular exposure to sounds louder than **85 decibels (dBA)** can cause permanent hearing loss. The risk of permanent hearing loss is still present even if you don't work regular 8-hour shifts or you aren't exposed to noise continuously. That's because the risk of hearing loss depends on the noise level and how long you're exposed to it. For example, working in higher noise levels for a short time or in lower noise levels for a long time can cause the same harm.

The table to the right shows how long you can be exposed to certain noise levels before you may be at risk for permanent hearing loss. It also lists examples of typical noise exposures for several forestry occupations.

For example, if you work as a manual faller and you are exposed to noise at 106 dBA, you can only work unprotected in this environment for up to 3 minutes and 45 seconds before you are at risk for permanent hearing loss.

Noise exposure in forestry has changed in recent years. For example, better soundproofing of cabs in new harvesting equipment has reduced operators' exposure to noise. However, noise exposure has increased for some forestry equipment and occupations over time. It's important to know how loud your equipment or work environment is to understand the risk you face.

If testing shows that your noise exposure is greater than 85 dBA (averaged over an 8-hour day), your employer must take steps to protect your hearing. These steps include reducing workplace noise, arranging annual hearing tests, and supplying you with adequate hearing protection.

Maximum daily unprotected exposure time by noise level in dBA		Examples of forestry occupations*
16 hours	82	Log truck driver
12 hours	83	Dozer or grapple yarder operator
8 hours	85	
4 hours	88	Tracked skidder operator
2 hours	91	
1 hour	94	Boom boat operator
30 minutes	97	
15 minutes	100	Landingman
7 min, 30 s	103	Bucker (log sort)
3 min, 45 s	106	Manual faller
1 min, 50 s	109	

\* Based on data collected by WorkSafeBC; may not reflect all types of equipment or operating conditions.

Your hearing protection must provide enough protection from noise. To do this, it must be the right size for you and be comfortable, and you must wear it properly. (For example, if you can easily see a foam earplug from the front, it is not inserted correctly and may not protect you.) Apply your hearing protection before exposure to hazardous noise, and remove it only after leaving the hazardous-noise area.

Your hearing protection must also allow you to communicate if you need to.

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA Group) recommends protection for 8 hours of exposure as follows:

Exposure: $L_{ex,8}$ (dBA)	Recommended CSA class
$\leq 90$	C
> 90 up to and including 95	B or BL
> 95 up to and including 105	A or AL
> 105	Dual*

\* Dual hearing protection is required. Use a minimum of a Class B earmuff and a Class A earplug.



### For more information

The WorkSafeBC publication *Hear for Good: Preventing Noise Exposure at Work* contains further information on this topic.

In addition, visit the following pages on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com):

- [Hearing protection](#)
- [Hearing loss prevention](#)