Noise Exposure on PEI Potato Farms

Safety Matters @ Work
Workers Compensation Board of PEI

Do you know what the noise levels are on your farm? Or when and where hearing protection is needed? Could you, your family, or your workers be at risk of hearing loss?

Studies find that adult farmers experience hearing loss at almost **double** the rate of non-farmers, due to exposure to loud noises from a variety of sources (*Canadian Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health*). The effects of exposure to loud sounds add up over a lifetime. You might not notice it until it's too late. The good news is that by recognizing workplace noise hazards and using proper hearing protection, **occupational hearing loss can be prevented.**

Recently, the WCB's Occupational Health and Safety Division measured noise levels during everyday tasks on several PEI potato farms.

The main finding: Everyday farming tasks can be loud enough to damage hearing over time.

Noise testing showed that **potato farm workers are sometimes exposed to noise levels above the noise exposure limits** identified in the PEI Farm Safety Code of Practice of 80 dB over a 24-hour exposure duration. Noise levels vary depending on the job, equipment, environment, and how close the work area is to noise sources. **See the flip side for details**.

What This Means for Your Farm:

Managing the risk of hearing loss is an important step you can take to protect and promote a healthy farm workplace. **This includes assessing the noise hazards, lowering noise levels if possible, using proper hearing protection, developing a hearing conservation program, and audiometric testing.**

Your hearing matters. Don't wait until it's too late.

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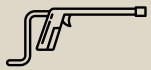
NOISE TRACKER

Highest Noise Exposure Measured - 8-hour workday

Note: PEI's workplace noise exposure limit for an 8-hour workday is 85 dBA.



97.7 dBA Impact wrench & air ratchet

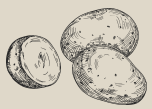


88.8 dBA Pressure washing potato bins

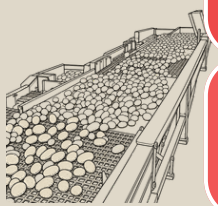


86.7 dBA Indoor grading at polisher and sampling (medium warehouse)

86.5 dBA Outdoor set cutting near seed treatment area



85.8 dBA Indoor set cutting near seed treatment mixer tent (small warehouse)



85.7 dBA Indoor grading at centre of grading line (medium warehouse)

85.6 dBA Indoor between the grading line and fixing equipment (large warehouse)



85.5 dBA Indoor set cutting at the centre of the set cutting line (small warehouse)

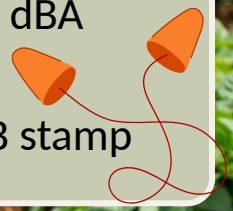


Wear Hearing Protection

- Noise Reduction Rating greater than 20 dBA

or

- CSA Class A or B stamp





Earbuds ARE NOT Hearing Protection

Distance Matters

The **closer** you are to the noise source, the **more protection** you need.

- Grading lines
- Set cutting operations
- Warehouse and maintenance equipment

Visit wcb.pe.ca for more resources

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