Toolbox Talk
Hearing Protection

What?

- Plant and equipment generate noise which is measured in decibels (dB)
- Normal background noise is around 82dB whereas noisy equipment such as high speed grinders can generate noise levels around 102dB
- Every increase of 3dB doubles the noise level so there is a substantial difference between 82dB and 102dB
- Employers have a legal obligation to assess noise levels to identify those which may affect hearing and to take steps to reduce noise to a lower level where reasonably practicable

Why?

- If the noise level reaches 85dB it can affect hearing and over prolonged periods may result in noise induced hearing loss because noise is time weighted
- A time weighted exposure (during 8 hours) the more time spent in the noisy environment the greater the damage
- Above 85dB puts you at risk from hearing loss
- Noisy areas should be clearly identified; if you have difficulty holding a conversation due to background noise it could mean the noise is excessive and you should take steps to wear hearing protection

Do

- ☑ Select the most suitable hearing protection which will reduce noise to the right level
- ☑ Make sure you wear the protection
- ☑ Check it fits properly
- ☑ Visually inspect it prior to use
- ☑ Keep it in good condition
- ☑ Report any loss or damage
- ☑ Find out if there are noisy areas
- ☑ Identify the equipment in use which produces the noise

Don't

- ☒ Go into noisy areas without wearing suitable hearing protection
- ☒ Ignore signs of hearing loss or ringing in the ear
- ☒ Use noisy tools or equipment without first putting on hearing protection
- ☒ Wear dirty or damaged hearing protection