



WHICH CHEMICALS MIGHT DAMAGE HEARING?

Some ototoxic chemicals include:

- **Solvents** in paints, thinners, glues and degreasers – e.g. toluene, xylene, n-hexane, ethyl benzene and trichloroethylene
- **Lead** in old paint, solder or batteries
- **Styrene** in resins
- **Carbon monoxide** in engine exhaust (may increase hearing loss for workers also exposed to noise).

CAN DAMAGE HEARING

What is the problem?

Some chemicals can damage your hearing. These are called ototoxic chemicals. Construction workers are also at risk of hearing damage from noise exposure.

About one-in-five construction workers report that they have some hearing problems.

For an ototoxic chemical to affect the hearing system, it first has to enter the bloodstream, either by being inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through skin. The chemical then circulates to the blood vessels supplying the inner ear and damages the cells.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Find out what is in the chemical products you use. Read the label and Safety Data Sheet.
- Choose water based products instead of solvent based products.
- Follow the safety directions for the chemical.
- Protect your hearing from noise as well. Talk to your boss about quieter tools, and use hearing protectors in noisy areas.
- Protect your hearing and minimise ototoxic chemical exposures when you're not working. Turn down music, and use earplugs when using noisy tools or at loud concerts.

www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

For more information call 1300 307 877