

NIOSH UPDATE

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NIOSH and NHCA present 2015 Safe-in-Sound Excellence in Hearing Loss Prevention Awards™

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), in partnership with the National Hearing Conservation Association (NHCA), is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2015 Safe-in-Sound Excellence in Hearing Loss Prevention Awards™, honoring companies that have shown dedication to the prevention of noise-induced hearing loss through excellent hearing loss prevention practices in the work environment. The awards will be presented at the 40th Annual Hearing Conservation Conference on February 20th, 2015 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

“We know that noise-induced hearing loss can affect workers in any sector of the economy and that it has a significant impact on the individual their family and our nation’s economy,” said NIOSH Director John Howard, M.D. “We are honored to once again we have this opportunity to recognize organizations that are leading the way in preventing work-related hearing loss and keeping workers safe and healthy.”

One of the 2015 recipients of the Safe-in-Sound Excellence Award is United Technologies Corporation (UTC), a global company with over 210,000 employees from 46 states and 186 countries. This is only the second time that a Safe-in-Sound Excellence Award™ is presented to an entire corporation and represents an example of excellence across multiple industries and geographical locations. UTC is recognized for including in its current sustainability goals “to reduce employee exposure to noise and chemicals to levels so safe that wearing personal protective equipment is no longer mandatory....” and for the subsequent multi-level strategies used to support the diverse companies within the corporation to fulfill that goal. Their comprehensive approach to hearing loss prevention and commitment to employee hearing health and noise control are exceptional. Their approach includes corporation-wide interventions such as: reduction of sound levels below an 85-dBA limit for 8-hour noise exposures; adoption of inclusive criteria in their comprehensive hearing loss prevention program; completion of multiple noise-control studies throughout each business unit to identify all noise sources affecting worker exposure; documentation of cost and noise reduction results; and the adoption of Buy-Quiet policies and practices. Employees at all levels of the corporation are engaged in the initiatives and each individually contributes to these noteworthy accomplishments.



Mahrt Mill Employees of Cotton Alabama, of the MeadWestvaco Corporation are our second recipients from the Manufacturing Sector. The intrinsic nature of the noise hazards at a paper mill approaching its 50th anniversary makes them difficult to control, which translates into challenges and elevates the importance for the other hearing loss prevention efforts. The subsequent reliance upon hearing protection and effective training becomes even more critical when hazardous noise levels exist. In addition, recognition of the importance of audibility and communication that is critical to employee safety is also a relevant consideration. The Mahrt Mill Hearing Conservation Team developed and implemented engaging educational programs, provided two alternative types of hearing protection fit-testing of all plant personnel, selected a diverse assortment of effective general and specialty hearing protection devices for both work and recreational application, conducted high quality audiometric testing with professional review and employee follow-up. There is evidence of strong support from plant management and individual workers and each recognizes their role in the success of the program. Their teamwork commitment to each individual at risk of noise-induced hearing loss and tinnitus is especially noteworthy. We commend the employees of Mahrt Mill for changing their course towards hearing health and their efforts to actively encourage the adoption of their strategies by other MWV sites.

The award recipient presentations can be seen at <http://www.safeinsound.us/winners.html>. Nominations for the next awards will be accepted until July 15, 2015. For further information please visit www.safeinsound.us.

NIOSH recommends removing hazardous noise from the workplace whenever possible and implementing an effective hearing loss prevention program in those situations where dangerous noise exposures have not yet been controlled or eliminated. For more information about noise and hearing loss prevention research at NIOSH please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/>.

NIOSH is the federal agency that conducts research and makes recommendations for preventing work-related injuries, illnesses, and deaths. For more information about NIOSH visit www.cdc.gov/niosh/.



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NIOSH and NHCA are honoring companies that have shown dedication to the prevention of noise-induced hearing loss through excellent hearing loss prevention. <http://is.gd/cluvFn>

