Hearing Loss

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Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

Federal civil service employees who have worked in noise-hazardous areas for a number of years may have suffered hearing loss. Noise-induced hearing loss occurs gradually after years of exposure to hazardous noise while working in and around shipyards, shops, machinery, and other environments.

Most federal employees don't know that they can file a workers' comp claim for noise-induced hearing loss. They usually find out by word of mouth from co-workers who have already filed a claim or are in the process of filing a claim. If you or a loved one are or have been a federal employee who has experienced noise-induced hearing loss, the experienced **personal injury attorneys of Rosen Hagood** are here to serve you in filing a claim and demanding the compensation you deserve.

What Is Noise-Induced Hearing Loss?

The ability to hear is essential to proper communication, learning, and speech and language development. Yet, a significant portion of the adult population experiences noise-induced hearing loss.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes noise-induced hearing loss as damage to the inner ear's structures and/or nerve fibers that respond to sound. Notably, this type of damage cannot be medically or surgically corrected, and the consequences of such damage can be profound.

The damage may be caused by a single exposure to an exceptionally loud sound, but it is often the result of continuous exposure to such noise. Many of adults who experienced noise-induced hearing loss work. or have worked, in industries characterized by significant levels of sound that average workers will never encounter.

Noise-Induced Hearing Loss Symptoms

If you suspect that someone you love may be experiencing noise-induced hearing loss, it's a good idea to speak with your primary care physician. Symptoms of noise-induced hearing loss include:

- Pain in the ears following exposure to loud sounds
- Fullness or pressure in the ears

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- Tinnitus is a condition characterized by ringing, buzzing, or roaring sounds in the ears
- The victim talks loudly or even shouts
- Speech that sounds muffled, distorted, or distant
- An inability to hear high-pitched sounds
- Plays the television too loud

Noise-induced hearing loss symptoms may develop immediately or over time. Even if the victim's hearing returns to normal, the noise may permanently damage healthy cells in the inner ear. If too many of these cells are destroyed over time, the hearing loss could become permanent.

Work-Related Noise Induced Hearing Loss

Workers in specific industries are more susceptible than others to experiencing noise-induced hearing loss. The CDC lists the following jobs and industries as having the highest risk of noise-induced hearing loss:

- Shipyard repair
- Aircraft ground crew
- Railroad
- Construction
- Carpentry
- Mining

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services reports that federal employees may be at particular risk of noise-induced hearing loss. That's because federal civil service employees work in these and other professions that expose them to severe noise levels.

How Can Noise-Induced Hearing Loss Be Prevented?

Hearing loss caused by loud sounds and noise can be prevented. Adults and children should take the following steps:

- Identify sources of loud sounds, including those in the workplace or at home, and avoid exposure to them if possible
- If it's not possible to avoid the source of the noise, try to reduce the time spent in proximity to it
- Limit the volume of music, television, headphones, and other daily sources of noise that are within your control
- Use hearing protection devices, such as earplugs, which can significantly reduce exposure to loud sounds
- Have your hearing tested by an audiologist or other professional, especially if you've started to notice hearing loss symptoms

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Noise-Induced Hearing Loss Treatment

Although noise-induced hearing loss cannot be cured or reversed, it can be treated. These treatments can improve the victim's quality of hearing. Usually, treatment will involve hearing aids, but these may not be effective if the hearing loss continues to deteriorate with time. At some point, the hearing loss victim may require cochlear implants or other options. These and other noise-induced hearing loss treatments can be expensive, so exploring your legal options is crucial.

Filing A Workers' Compensation Claim for Noise-induced Hearing Loss

Federal work environments are required by law to comply with OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) rules that are designed to protect workers from the harmful effects of excessive noise exposure. OSHA has established what is known as the Hearing Conservation Standard, which requires noise monitoring and the development of a Hearing Conservation Program in the event occupational noise levels exceed specified limits. If a federal employer is found to be noncompliant with that standard, they may be liable for any hearing loss or other damages suffered by their former employees.

Filing a workers' compensation claim for hearing loss is not one size fits all. Each claim is different and is based on the individual's percentage of hearing loss from the time they enter federal employment until the time they retire or leave the noise as a federal employee.

In addition to that, there are other factors considered when calculating the employee's compensation including their pay rate. Clients can receive authorization for medical benefits and hearing aids, as well as compensation depending on the severity of their hearing loss.

Contact Our Charleston Noise Induced Hearing Loss Attorney

Rosen Hagood's personal injury attorneys can help you evaluate your legal options in the event you've developed noise-induced hearing loss. Our experienced hearing loss attorneys not only serve clients in the Charleston area, but we also work with clients who have experienced noise induced hearing loss in other states. Some of our past clients have been located in Fayetteville, North Carolina, Fort Bragg, Norfolk, Virginia, Hawaii, and other regions.

Just like most personal injury cases, the client does not pay anything to the lawyer unless the client receives compensation benefits from the federal government.

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