

Friday, September 05, 2008

Loud noise could lead to auditory, stress problems

Such problems can affect one's state of mind, having an adverse effect on

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Workers in factories who are exposed to loud noise for extended periods of time often face auditory and psychological problems. The auditory problems include temporary and permanent loss of hearing, while it is believed that psychological problems such as stress, irritability, headaches, migraines, disrupted sleep patterns etc are also caused. According to Dr SR Tripathi, a scientist at the National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), "A person working in a heavy motor or compressor factory, who is exposed to loud noise for a long time, will suffer from stress. Headaches and migraines lead to irritability and a short temper. Negative emotions enter the individual's mind and he or she experiences greater fatigue than others. These have an adverse effect on one's personal life."

Dr Tripathi said that a person exposed to high frequency noise of around 4,000 hertz for around five hours will suffer from temporary threshold shift (TTS), commonly known as temporary hearing loss. Continued exposure over a period of five to six years may lead to permanent threshold shift (PTS), or permanent hearing loss. "A worker in a factory exposed to noise of over 90 dBA for more than four hours may be affected by noise-initiated hearing loss (NIHL)," said Dr Tripathi. (In dBA, 'dB' refers to the unit of loudness, i.e. decibel; while 'A' refers to A-weighted sound level, which means that noise above and below the range of human hearing has been filtered out.) Regarding the ill effects of such noise, Dr Tripathi said: "Factories where noise of more than 90dBA is produced should take precautionary measures to reduce the negative effects of the noise. Such measures could involve the use of double walls, which would reduce the noise level by a considerable extent. Also, factory workers should wear earmuffs while working. If these measures are enforced, then the hazards of loud noise can be reduced by a great degree."