

## Need further help?

At Stephenson's, we have an experienced team specialising in all kinds of workplace injuries and diseases. This includes asbestosis, vibration white finger, hearing losses, asthma, skin complaints and chronic diseases of the lung and respiratory systems.

In many cases, the complaints from which our clients suffer are the result of many years' working in a harmful environment. In order to pursue your claim successfully, we draw on our expertise in all areas of employment law, and health and safety issues. We also have access to the best medical experts in the country to review and assess your case.

If you think you might have a claim and want to find out more, please contact us on 01942 777777. We will be happy to talk to you and provide further information, including discussing your funding options, without obligation. All our funding arrangements are designed to ensure that you keep every penny you are awarded. There are no introductory fees, no loans and no deduction from your compensation.

We believe the information contained within this leaflet to be correct at the time of publication. While all possible care is taken in producing this leaflet, no responsibility for loss can be accepted by the firm, however caused.

## About Stephenson's

Stephenson's provides legal advice for all aspects of your personal or business life. By understanding your circumstances and keeping the red-tape to ourselves, we focus on efficiently delivering what you need, when you need it. Operating from a number of regional locations, we rank among the top 100 UK law firms and are one of the fastest growing practices in the north west. With over 300 staff, you can trust our specialists to take care of things on your behalf, always putting your best interests first. So, for legal advice and action the way you want it, just turn to Stephenson's.

# Stephenson's

legal services the way you want them

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T: 01942 777777



## Deafness and other medical complaints from noise

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legal services the way you want them

## Workplace noise

**Noise is one of the greatest but least understood risks at work. Manufacturing, construction and call centre workers are particularly at risk from noise. But almost all workplace environments can pose a health threat.**

According to the HSE, around 170,000 people suffer from deafness, tinnitus or other ear problems as a result of exposure to excessive noise at work. In addition, it's estimated that more than a million employees in the UK are regularly exposed to potentially damaging noise levels in the workplace.

Your employer has a duty to provide a safe working environment. However, until recently, many employers have failed to fully appreciate the medical problems associated with noise. Nor have they taken sufficient steps to prevent workers from being exposed to it.

As a result, many employees have suffered problems of deafness and tinnitus. This leaflet explains the steps you can take if you find yourself in this situation.

## Deafness and Tinnitus

The medical problems caused by noise accumulate over time and are not always immediately obvious. It is not just the level of noise you are exposed to at work that puts your hearing at risk but also how long you are exposed to that noise on a daily basis and over how many years.

The loss of hearing that results from workplace noise can have a profound effect on the quality of your work, social and family life. Not being able to hear someone properly when there is background noise or even being able to hear the television. Not being able to enjoy conversations for fear of having to ask people to repeat themselves again and again. Some sufferers even find themselves avoiding social events for the same reasons.

Deafness is made even worse for some people by tinnitus. The continuous ringing and buzzing they hear in the ears or at odd times, can be very disturbing especially if it affects their sleep. In summary, deafness deprives many sufferers from enjoying a normal and healthy life.

## Are you at risk from noise?

Your risk of hearing loss will depend on how loud the noise is and how long you are exposed to it. If you answer 'yes' to some or all of the following, workplace noise could be affecting your health:

- Are you conscious of the noise in your workplace?
- Do you have to raise your voice to be heard by colleagues?
- Are heavy machines used in your workplace?
- Is sudden, but loud, noise a feature of your work – such as hammering or explosions?

## Prevention is better than cure

Once it has occurred, hearing loss is unfortunately permanent. If anything, it is likely to deteriorate further over time. However, there are many steps you can take to protect yourself from noise in the workplace. These include wearing ear protection, asking your employer to move you away from noisy machinery or at least give you breaks from it, and ensuring you undertake regular hearing tests.

If you think work is to blame for your hearing problems, you should seek legal advice. You may be able to claim the costs of a hearing aid from a former employer, for example, and you may be entitled to compensation for your deafness.