

NIOSH UPDATE

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NIOSH and NHCA present 2013 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 winners of the 2013 Safe-in-Sound Excellence in Hearing Loss Prevention Awards™. This year's winners come from the manufacturing sector and the educational field. Presented at the 38th Annual Hearing Conservation Conference on February 22nd, 2013 in St. Petersburg, Florida, the awards honor organizations that have shown dedication to excellence in hearing loss prevention practices in the work environment and beyond.

“This year's recipients confirm that the benefits of noise control go far beyond the prevention of hearing loss and make good business sense, as a safe and healthy workforce benefits workers, employers, and the U.S. economy,” said NIOSH Director John Howard, M.D. “We are pleased to have the opportunity to highlight the innovative work of companies who serve as leaders in this area.”

The recipient of the 2013 Safe-in-Sound Award for Excellence is the Vulcan Materials Company (VMC), a major producer of construction aggregates; primarily crushed stone, sand, and gravel. Recognized for their commitment and implementation of a quality data-driven hearing loss prevention program, VMC has embraced innovative and cost-effective noise measurement and control strategies. They provide extensive noise measurement and control training for select employees to function as industrial hygiene support staff. VMC is also leading the advancements in noise monitoring strategies for mobile workers by integrating sophisticated technologies such as GPS, and video into their noise measurement protocols. These novel approaches will benefit other industries in the future and contribute to the goal of eliminating work-related noise-induced hearing loss.

This year there are two innovation awardees. One is presented to Johns Manville (JM), a Berkshire Hathaway company and a leading manufacturer of premium-quality building insulation, commercial roofing, roof insulation, and specialty products for commercial, industrial and residential applications. They are recognized for their implementation of an innovative hearing loss prevention program that uses metrics to track noise exposure levels along with noise control engineering training. The model has been enthusiastically embraced by both plant managers and employees due to their ability to directly impact the noise exposure of workers. The JM “Hearing Conservation Pyramid” is readily adaptable to

other noise-exposed industries who wish to become proactive rather than reactive to the risk of noise-induced hearing loss among their workforce.

The second award for Innovation goes to Dangerous Decibels®, a multi-faceted, evidence-based intervention program dedicated to the prevention of noise-induced hearing loss and tinnitus. Built upon collaborative partnerships between the Oregon Health & Science University, the Portland State University, the University of Northern Colorado and the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, the program has received widespread funding and dissemination support by numerous organizations. It is being recognized for the development, widespread dissemination and cultural adaptation of innovative training strategies shown to positively change knowledge, attitudes and behaviors in youth and adults, including occupational settings (www.dangerousdecibels.org), and applying solid scientific and theoretical basis into all program aspects. The program includes science museum exhibits, virtual exhibits, K-12 classroom programs, educator training workshops, public outreach tools and research. Dangerous Decibels emphasizes the need to protect hearing for a “lifetime” and bridges the occupational and non-occupational noise risks.

To view the award recipient presentations visit <http://www.safeinsound.us/winners.html>. Nominations for the next awards will be accepted until September 6, 2013. 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 and illnesses. Mention of any company or product does not constitute endorsement by NIOSH. More information about NIOSH can be found at www.cdc.gov/niosh.

