



Press Release

World Hearing Day on 3 March PORR starts initiative against noise-induced hearing loss in construction

Vienna, 28.02.2023 - Noise-induced hearing loss is by far the most common occupational disease. It is particularly crucial for the construction industry to protect its staff from this. To mark World Hearing Day on 3 March, PORR is launching an initiative on its construction sites: It centres around equipping workers with hearing protection that is both customised and much more effective.

Noise-induced hearing loss accounts for almost half of the occupational illnesses recorded by AUVA (Allgemeine Unfallversicherungsanstalt - the Austrian Workers' Compensation Board) every year. Noise is a huge potential burden, especially for construction workers. A circular saw, for example, can reach a noise level of more than 100 dB(A). Permanent hearing damage can occur from as low as 80 dB(A) with prolonged exposure if the ears are not protected. The effects are often only noticeable after years have passed and are then irreversible.

“The legally mandated hearing protection, which is of course used everywhere on our construction sites, is not enough in my opinion”, says PORR CEO Karl-Heinz Strauss. This is because although conventional hearing protection dampens the general noise level, it also prevents communication on the construction site. This not only makes coordination more difficult, but also comes with its own potential danger if essential information is “muffled”.

PORR turns to a special solution

In time for World Hearing Day on 3 March, PORR is therefore teaming up with Neuroth to start the rollout of customised hearing protection solutions for its staff on construction sites in Austria. In particularly noise-intensive areas (such as civil engineering, tunnelling, railway construction), everyone will be equipped with these earmoulds. In building construction, they will get them upon request. A minimal deductible is planned.

“One great advantage of this type of hearing protection is that only the harmful sounds are attenuated, while speech and signal sounds can still be heard. This means that communication and sufficient safety are still possible”, explains Strauss. Since the parts are moulded to each ear, the wearing comfort and acceptance are also higher than with other solutions once users get used to them.

Hearing loss becomes endemic

The world is getting louder and louder, and gradual hearing loss is already considered a common disease. Constant exposure to noise causes secondary symptoms such as stress and rage; studies also link it to cardiovascular and vascular diseases, dementia, depression and reduced life expectancy.

“PORR takes responsibility for the health of its people”, says Strauss. “Construction is a people business. For the building industry, it is not enough to throw our hands up in horror and say that’s just construction. We have to be proactive as a company to make sure our staff are doing well”.

Examples of noise exposure:

Lathe:	75 - 85 dB(A)
Welding:	75 - 90 dB(A)
Circular saw:	95 - 100 dB(A)
Angle grinder:	95 - 105 dB(A)
Sheet metal straightening:	100 - 120 dB(A)

Source: Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy



From the left: Thomas Schinnerl, Managing Director Audio Lab Austria GmbH / Neuroth, PORR apprentice Dzenan Ahmetovic and PORR CEO Karl-Heinz Strauss.



“Excuse me?” - PORR starts initiative against noise-induced hearing loss in construction



From the left Thomas Schinnerl, Managing Director Audio Lab Austria GmbH / Neuroth, PORR apprentice Michael Marinkovic, PORR CEO Karl-Heinz Strauss, PORR apprentice Dzenan Ahmetovic and Gottfried Hatzenbichler, Chairman of the PORR Works Council

This press release including high-resolution images is available for download from the [PORR Newsroom](#).

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