

## **NIOSH and NHCA present 2012 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 recipients of the 2012 Safe-in-Sound Excellence in Hearing Loss Prevention Awards™, honoring companies that have shown dedication to the prevention of noise-induced hearing loss through excellent hearing loss prevention practices in the work environment. The awards are presented at the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Hearing Conservation Conference on February 24th, 2012 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

“Since noise is everywhere, preventing its negative effects requires the integration of occupational safety and health protection with health promotion” said NIOSH Director John Howard, M.D. “NIOSH supports this concept, also called Total Worker Health, as the most effective approach to promote health. To effectively maintain a healthy hearing, it is important for us to extend preventive initiatives outside the workplace, and this year’s recipients offer us compelling examples of this approach.”

One of the recipients of the Safe-in-Sound Award is Colgate-Palmolive (CP), a global company with 35,000 employees in over 200 countries. This is the first year that a Safe-in-Sound Award™ is presented to an entire corporation. CP is recognized for company-wide interventions including: adoption of the NIOSH recommended 85-dBA limit for 8-hour noise exposures; application of the 3-dB exchange rate for noise exposure assessments; adoption of inclusive criteria in their hearing loss prevention program; completion of multiple noise-control studies throughout each business unit to identify all noise sources affecting worker exposure; documentation of cost and noise reduction results; development of online, on-demand webcast training in noise control engineering; and the adoption of Buy-Quiet and Design-Quiet policies.

3M Hutchinson Plant in Minnesota, the largest 3M manufacturing plant in the U.S., is another recipient of the award. The hearing conservation program at 3M Hutchinson is recognized for its all-inclusive and strongly integrated approach to worker hearing health including statistically driven noise exposure assessments, implementation of a Buy-Quiet equipment program, and noise control for existing equipment. In addition, it was recognized for hearing protection fit-testing of all plant personnel, availability of both general and specialty hearing protection devices for off-the-job noise exposures (e.g. hunting and target shooting), high quality audiometric testing with professional supervision and evidence of strong support from corporate management, plant management and individual workers.

The recipient in the Construction Sector is Bechtel National Inc., BSII, Waste Treatment & Immobilization Plant Project (Richland, Washington). The construction site spans 65 acres and includes four major nuclear facilities. Bechtel Waste Treatment & Immobilization Plant Project is recognized for the comprehensive integration of their hearing loss prevention program components, for their innovative strategies to address industry specific challenges in the areas of noise monitoring, risk evaluation and risk communication, for adopting the NIOSH-recommended exposure limit of 85 dB with the 3 dB exchange rate, for promoting the active involvement of the workforce in their efforts, and for encouraging the adoption of their strategies by other Bechtel sites.

The award recipient presentations can be seen at <http://www.safeinsound.us/winners.html>. Nominations for the next awards will be accepted until September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012. For further information please visit [www.safeinsound.us](http://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](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh).