

Multiple-Trade Noise: Coordinate Before the Tools Start

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v1.0 | October 12, 2026 | Discussion + field verification

Why this matters

Your crew may use quiet tools while another trade creates the exposure. Overlapping tasks, longer duration or a new enclosure can make yesterday's noise plan unrepresentative.

Objective: Coordinate nearby noisy work and verify the shared controls.

Key hazards or failure points

Unannounced noisy tasks; combined exposure; removed barriers; ineffective protection; warnings masked by noise.

Practical controls

- Identify nearby noise sources and coordinate timing, separation and quieter methods with affected crews. Preserve required access and emergency routes.
- Have the responsible assessor evaluate the actual work pattern, including nearby operations and duration. Use specified engineering controls and required hearing protection.
- Agree communication and warning methods that work with protection worn. Move to a safe quiet area to discuss an unresolved problem.

Verify It in the Field

Compare today's trades, tools, locations and work periods with the assessment. Flag a changed overlap before tools start rather than relying on yesterday's result.

From safety, compare barriers, enclosures and equipment setup with the control plan. The designated assessor verifies performance using the applicable measurement method.

Confirm the selected protectors are available and fitted under the program. Rehearse the warning response safely without removing protection or generating test noise.

Stop and reassess

Hold affected work for an unassessed overlap, failed control or unusable warning. Report ringing or muffled hearing promptly. Resolve the exposure and communication arrangement before work resumes.

Ask the crew

1. Whose work adds noise here?
2. What overlap changed today?
3. How will we hear or receive the warning?

Use this HOP tool — Pre-job briefing: Before noisy work begins, ask each affected trade to name its source, location and planned timing. Identify one overlap that changes another crew's exposure. Assign the coordination action and required assessment, then confirm the revised arrangement together before releasing the affected tasks.

Sources: OSHA 1926.52, 1926.101; DOE Vol. 2, pp. 34–37. HOP concepts adapted from DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2 (June 2009). No claim to original U.S. Government work; no government endorsement implied.

Free next step: JHA/JSA planning and field-verification worksheet

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/multiple-trade-noise-coordination