



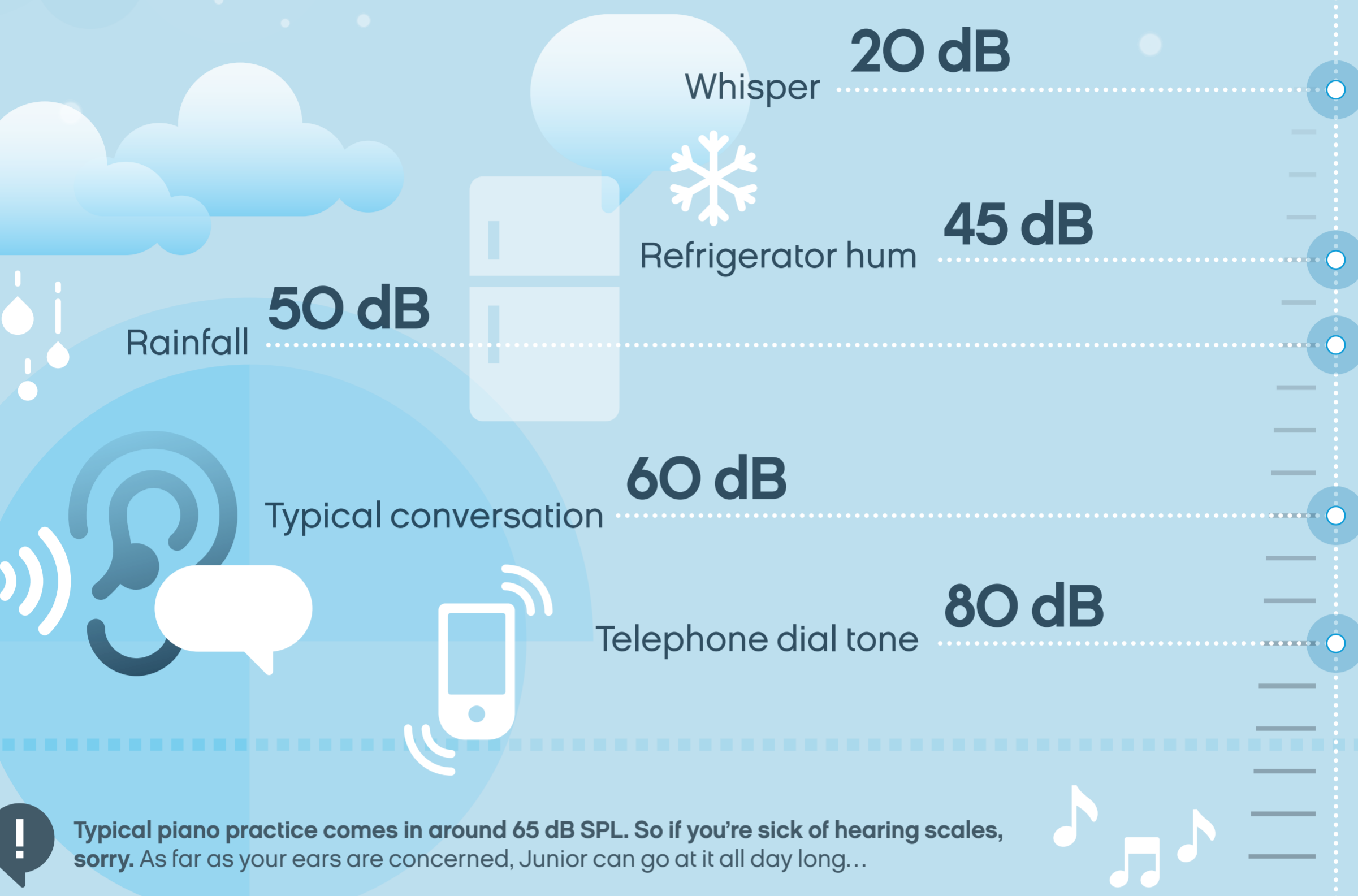
DANGEROUS DECIBELS

Everyday sounds to watch out for

That jackhammer outside your window? It's more than just annoying. Loud sounds can actually cause permanent damage to your hearing. But what about everyday sounds like traffic? The telephone? The coffee grinder? Get the lowdown on decibel levels and learn what volumes are viable for your hearing health.

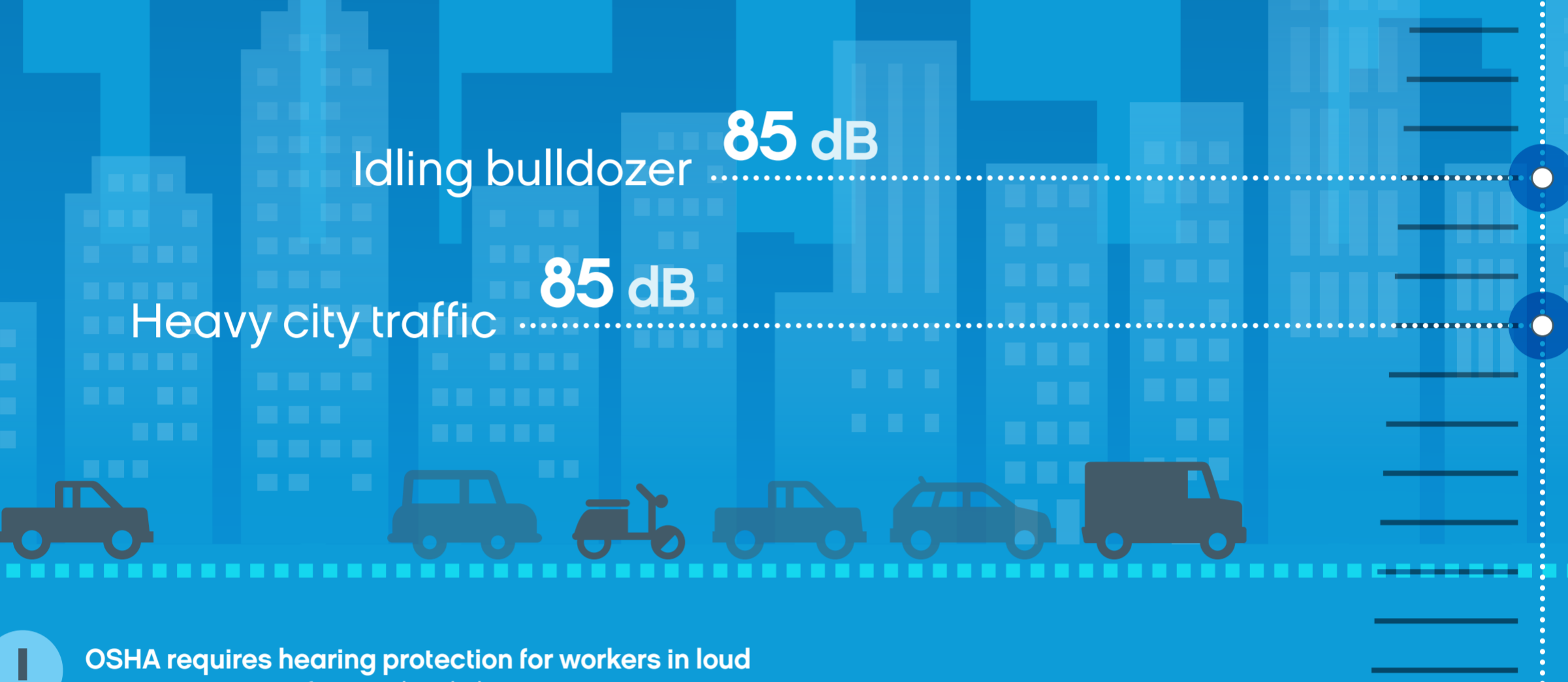
Safe and Sound

Nearby noise isn't always bad. Whether you consider them pleasant or peevish, these sounds aren't harmful—even if you do hear them all day long.



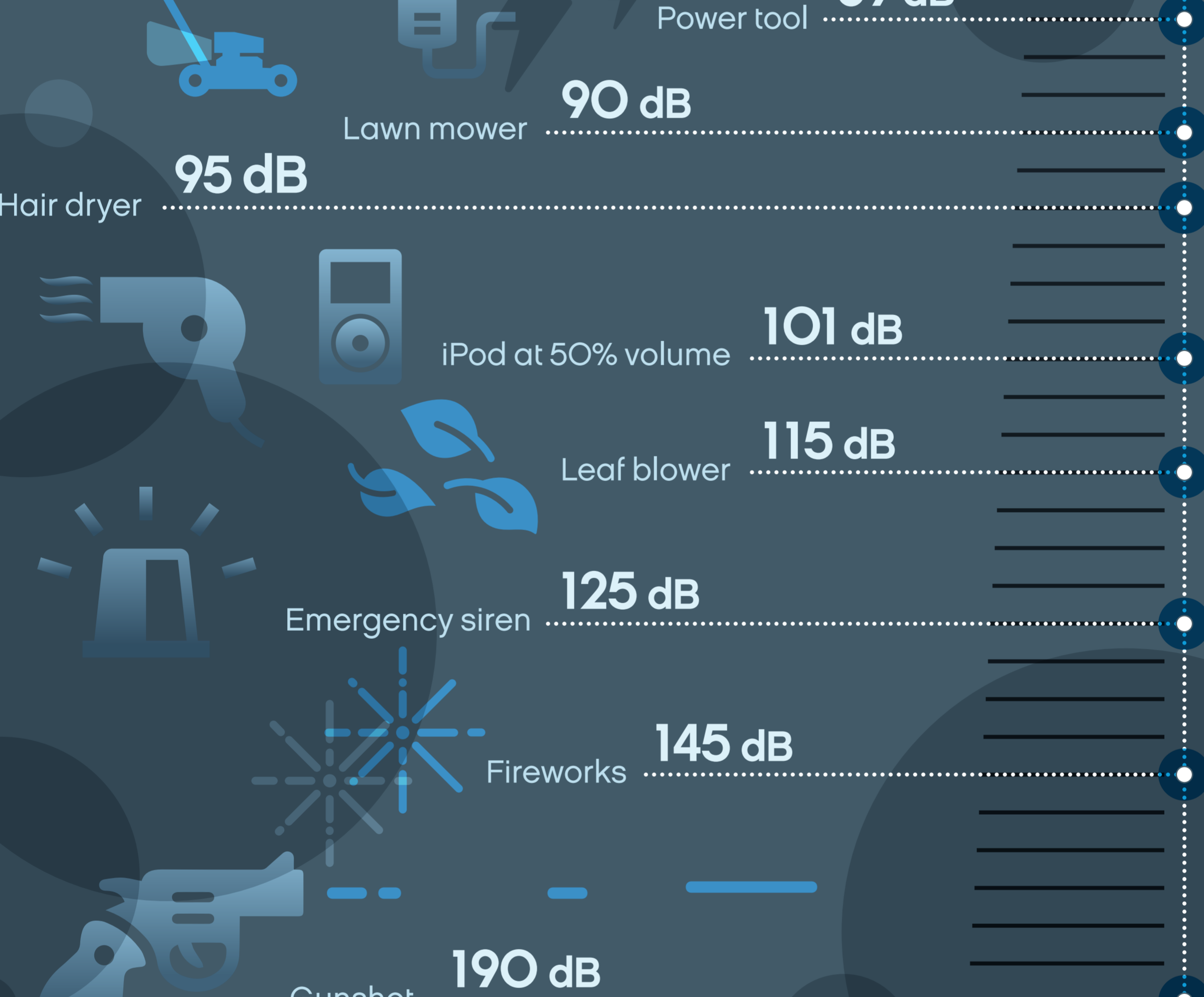
The Borderline of Blaring

The safety threshold for unprotected hearing is 85 dB SPL. At this level, be prepared to protect. Long exposure to these sounds can cause damage over time.



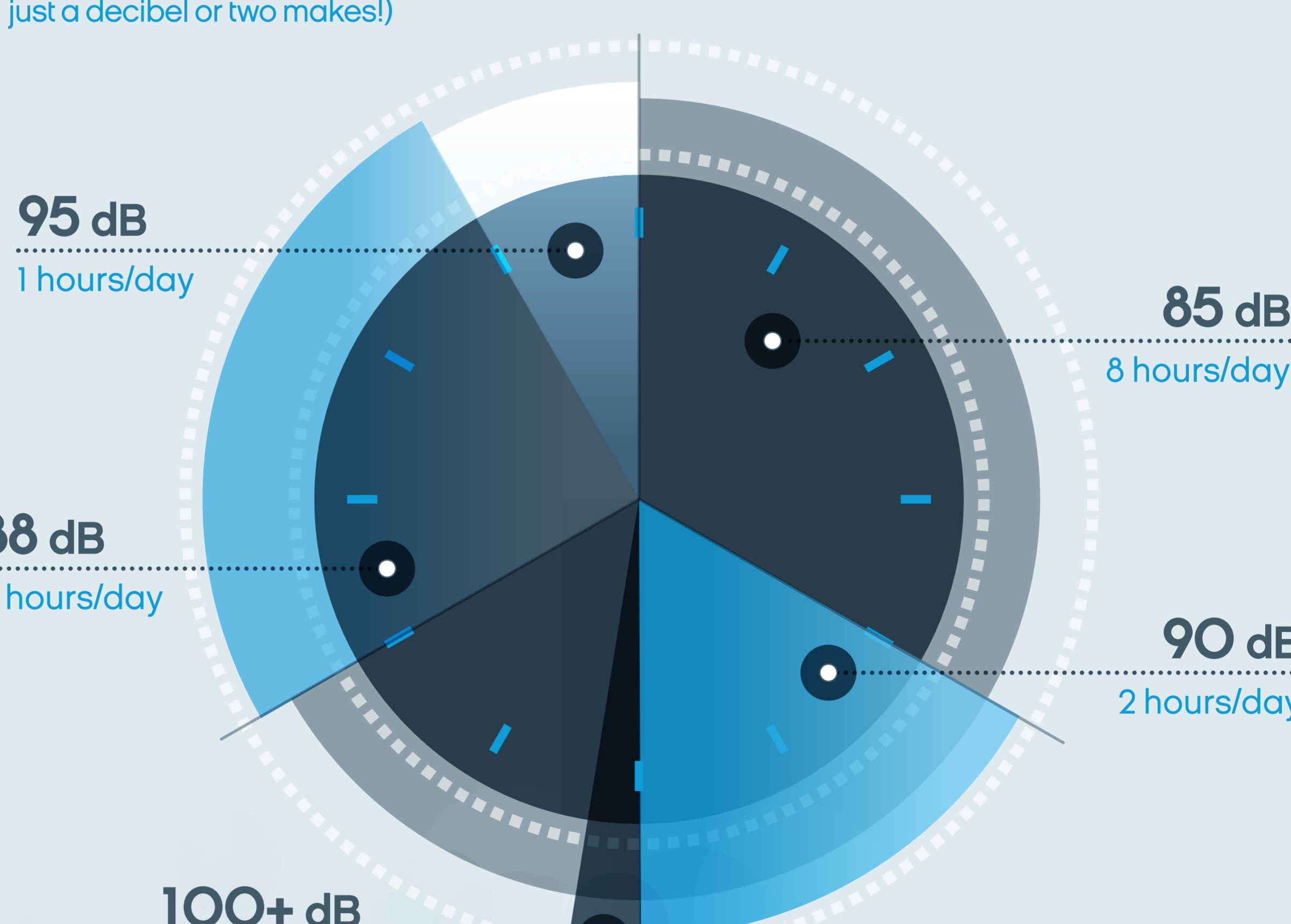
Say No to the Noise

You may be surprised that some of these daily decibel sources can be damaging. If you know you'll be around these noises, plan ahead. We offer a few proposals for protecting your hearing below.



Length and Loudness

After 85 dB SPL, your ears' tolerance diminishes quickly. The National Institute of Safety and Health suggests these limits for loudness. (Look how much difference just a decibel or two makes!)



Plan to Protect

What can you do when loudness looms? When possible, follow Mom's advice and "turn down that racket." Lower volume settings and remove ambient noises when you can. In situations that are noisy by nature, go on the defensive.

- Muffle loud appliances (like a blender or grinder) with a towel
- Use noise-reducing headphones
- Wear earplugs or foam inserts
- Take breaks from the noise
- Go back to basics: put your hands over your ears