

Hearing Safety Dos and Don'ts

DO inspect hearing protectors for cracked, stiff, broken or loose parts. Replace worn or damaged gear.

DON'T compromise ear protection by wearing it over long hair, hats or eyeglasses.

DO get your hearing tested regularly if you work in a noisy environment.

DON'T substitute makeshift hearing protection (e.g., cotton or audio headsets) for personal protective equipment.

DO take care to select the right level of hearing protection for you and the task at hand. If you are not sure which type of hearing protection is best, ask your supervisor or risk manager.



DID YOU KNOW? Researchers are studying the role of ototoxins. Ototoxins — particularly chemicals such as solvents, and some metals such as lead and mercury — may contribute to hearing loss when absorbed through your skin, inhaled or ingested, especially when combined with noise exposure. Take additional safety precautions when necessary.

Subtle Clues to Hearing Loss

- When away from work, do your ears feel plugged?
- In a quieter environment, do your ears have a mild ringing or whooshing noise that lasts for one to two hours?
- Do you have difficulty hearing a companion at arm's length?

Heed the warnings: buzzing in the ears ... a noticeable change in hearing ... sounds, particularly voices, are muffled. Get your hearing evaluated and start preserving the hearing you still have.

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• Prevent Hearing Loss •

1. Replace hearing protection when it's worn or damaged
2. Choose the proper hearing protection for the job or activity
3. Get your hearing tested regularly

COVER YOUR EARS

Noise-induced hearing loss is gradual but usually permanent, and it affects people of all ages. If you are often in a noisy environment (on or off the job), always wear the recommended hearing protection.

Ear Protection 101

Use earplugs, earmuffs or canal caps if you're often exposed to noise levels of 85 decibels (dBA) or above.

- **Good:** earplugs ... inserted into the ear to reduce noise; premolded or expandable; reusable or disposable
- **Better:** earmuffs ... block noise by covering and sealing the outer ear
- **Best:** earplugs and earmuffs ... particularly when noise levels exceed 105 dBA



Note: Canal caps, which are usually the most comfortable and convenient, may provide the least protection.

Clean hearing protectors according to manufacturer's instructions. Store them in a dry, clean place away from extreme heat or cold, and direct sunlight.

WHAT'S THE NOISE LEVEL?

Snowmobile.....	100 dBA
Snowblower.....	105 dBA
Power saw/leaf blower.....	110 dBA
Rock concert.....	100–120 dBA
Jackhammer/power drill ...	130 dBA
Stockcar races	130 dBA
Rock singer with lips on microphone	140 dBA
A firecracker.....	140+ dBA

Hearing Robbers

- Shrill noises
- Noise from machinery in the workplace; power tools, chainsaws, lawnmowers and leaf blowers; rock concerts, car races and motorcycles