



Hearing

Exposure to noise at work can cause irreversible hearing damage. It is one of the most common health problems and can be difficult to detect as the effects build up gradually over time.




How can we help prevent hearing loss?

Organisations

- Use quieter equipment or a different, quieter process
- Introduce engineering/technical controls to reduce the noise at source
- use screens, barriers, enclosures and absorbent materials to reduce the noise on its path to the people exposed
- design and lay out the workplace to create quiet workstations
- Provide working techniques that reduce noise levels
- limit the time people spend in noisy areas
- Provide PPE and the appropriate training

Individuals

- Use any noise control devices properly (e.g. noise enclosures), and follow any working methods put in place
- Wear any hearing protection provided properly and look after it
- Attend your hearing checks – it is in your interest that any signs of damage to your hearing is detected as soon as possible
- Report any problems with noise-control devices or your hearing protection straight away

<p>Earmuffs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should totally cover your ears, fit tightly and have no gaps around the seals • Don't let hair, jewelry, glasses, hats etc. interfere with the seal • Keep the seals and the insides clean • Don't stretch the headband – the tension is crucial to protection • Helmet-mounted earmuffs can need particular care to get a good seal around your ears
<p>Earplugs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They go right in the ear canal, not just across it • Practice fitting them and get help if you are having trouble • Clean your hands before you fit earplugs, and don't share them • Some types you use only once, others can be re-used and even washed – make sure you know which type you have
<p>Semi-inserts/canal caps</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are held in or across the ear canal by a band, usually plastic • Check for a good seal, every time you put them on • Follow the same general advice as for earplugs and make sure any band keeps its tension.

Hearing protection is your last line of defense against damage. Employers should provide it, and train you how to use it and how to get replacements. There are many different types and designs available.

DISCUSS

What tasks or areas at your site requires hearing protection to be worn?

SAFETY MOMENT

Hearing

**STEP CHANGE
IN SAFETY**