

Hearing & Sight Conservation Program

HEARING PROTECTION

Exposure to high noise levels can cause hearing loss or impairment and can create physical and psychological stress. There is no cure for noise-induced hearing loss, so the prevention of excessive noise exposure is the only way to avoid hearing damage. Specifically designed protection is required, depending on the type of noise encountered and the auditory condition of each employee.

The Safety Chair, or his/her delegate, is responsible for providing appropriate hearing protection to employees. Pre-formed or molded earplugs are the best form of hearing protection. They should be individually fitted by a professional. Waxed cotton, foam, or fiberglass wool earplugs can also be used as hearing protection. When used properly, they work as well as most molded earplugs. Disposable earplugs should be discarded after usage. For proper protection, non-disposable earplugs should be cleaned after each use. Plain cotton should not be used as it does not effectively protect against hazardous noises.

Hearing protection is required where employees are exposed to 90 decibels or greater during an 8 hour day. A full hearing conservation program is required if employees are exposed to greater than 85 decibels, to include testing, noise level surveys, and appropriate controls. Loud noises above 120 decibels can cause immediate harm to your ears.