

Protect your ears

How to use hearing protection effectively

Working in noisy environments can lead to permanent hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing in the ears).

It can also make communication harder, reduce productivity, and increase the risk of accidents. The right hearing protection protects you from harmful noise while allowing you to communicate and stay safe on the job.

Signs of hearing loss

- Ringing or buzzing in your ears
- Trouble hearing conversations
- Difficulty detecting high-pitched sounds
- Muffled hearing after leaving a noisy area
- Struggle to understand people in crowds

Choosing the right hearing protection

Consider these factors when selecting hearing protection:

- **Noise reduction:** Choose protection that reduces your exposure to safe levels
- **Worksite conditions:**
 - Personal protective equipment (PPE), like hard hats or glasses, may interfere with fit
 - Worksites or tasks may require frequent removal and replacement of hearing protection
 - Extreme temperatures or tight spaces might make earmuffs impractical
 - Dirty environments may not be suitable for foam earplugs
- **Comfort and convenience:** Select hearing protection you wear comfortably throughout your shift

Using earplugs correctly

Follow the roll-pull-hold method:

1. Roll the earplug into a tight cylinder
2. Pull your ear up and back with one hand, then insert the plug with the other
3. Hold the plug in place while it expands to ensure proper fit

Tips for wearing earmuffs

- Ensure the earmuff completely seals around your ears
- For noise above 100 dBA or impulsive noise, use double protection (earplugs under earmuffs)

Keep hearing protection in good condition

- Clean hearing protection and replace it if it's cracked, deformed, or doesn't seal
- Noise-canceling headphones or regular earbuds won't protect you unless they have a certified noise reduction rating
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use