

## Hearing Protection

Most of us take our sense of hearing for granted—we assume that we hear what everyone else hears. Loss of hearing may not be realized until a friend or spouse screams in frustration, "Why don't you ever listen to me!!" This is because hearing loss is usually gradual. Normally, it doesn't hurt, so we don't know it's happening

*Yet our ability to hear when we want to is precious and must be protected.*

The critical sound level when hearing protection should be worn is 85 decibels (dBA), established for an 8-hour time weighted average. The louder and longer your exposure, whether at work, at home, or during recreation, the more likely your hearing will be damaged. If you want to have a sense of "how loud is loud," the following examples, along with their decibel rating, will give you an idea:

### Decibels

- 30-40 quiet pleasant sounds, a bird chirping
- 40-50 quiet to normal office sounds
- 50-60 normal conversation
- 70-90 heavy machinery, electric motors, garbage disposal, city traffic
- 100-120 jack hammer, power saw, motorcycle, lawn mower, rock music
- 140+ nearly jet engine, gun shot (this level causes pain)



Many disposable or reusable plugs are available and reduce noise by about 30-33 decibels. This is the Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) you see on the box. However, since the NRR is established in a laboratory with perfectly fitted plugs, experts recommend that the true rating is generally about 7 decibels less than indicated. Hearing protectors of the ear muff type are usually closer to the actual NRR.

The key to effectively protecting your hearing is to properly wear your ear protection. Too often earplugs are seen just barely pushed in. Ensure you wear your earplugs as they were intended. Roll up the foam plugs and make sure you insert them all the way in your ear canal. **It's for your hearing . . . and your protection.**

Source: <http://safetytoolboxtopics.com/Hearing-Conservation/proper-fit-of-hearing-protection-nrr.html>

### May Vivid Courses:

Operations: Hearing Conservation

Office: Catchup on previous months

Custodial: Catchup on previous months

## Wearing Earplugs Properly



Remember the saying, "You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone?" This is really the case with your hearing. Exposure to loud noise and failure to wear hearing protection can make you lose your hearing before you know it.

This loss occurs so gradually, you may not realize it's happening. You may not be aware until it's too late. Physiologically, loud noise severely damages the inner ear. The damaging potential of noise depends on the length of exposure and the sound pressure level.

Although you may have the earplugs in place, are they really "in"? Make sure you're getting the full protection from your ear plugs by rolling the plug up between your fingers, pulling back your ear and inserting them completely in the ear canal as intended.

Source: <http://safetytoolboxtopics.com/Hearing-Conservation/wearing-earplugs-properly.html>

## Types of Hearing Protection

Ear Plugs



Molded/  
Pre Molded



Ear Muffs



Ear Canal  
Caps

