

# Selecting hearing protection

**H**earing protection is an absolute must if, on most days, your work is noisy enough that you have to raise your voice to be heard by someone 1 m (3 ft.) away. The following factors must be considered when deciding which hearing protection device is adequate for your needs:

- Daily noise exposure
- Hearing ability
- Communication demands
- Use of other personal protective equipment

- Temperature and climate
- Physical constraints of the worker or work activity
- Comfort

All forms of hearing protection are effective when worn properly, but the best hearing protector is the one you'll wear for the entire time you're exposed to noise. The brief overview of hearing protection below explains some of the factors that may influ-

ence your preference. There are many types of hearing protection, all of them useful, but there is no single protector that will work for everyone.

For more information on selecting and using hearing protection, visit [WorkSafeBC.com](http://WorkSafeBC.com) and choose "Hearing Loss Prevention" from the Safety at Work topic list. You may also contact WorkSafeBC's occupational audiologist at 604 276-3090 (toll-free at 1 888 621-7233, local 3090) for assistance.

## Earmuffs

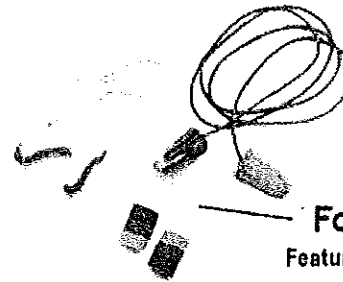
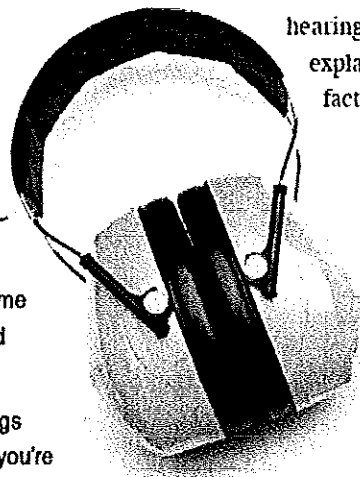
**Features** — High visibility, size of dome allows you to control amount of sound reduction

**Scenarios** — Ideal if handling earplugs would be difficult or unhygienic (e.g., you're wearing gloves or your hands or work environment are dirty)

## Non-foam earplugs

**Features** — Comfortable, pre-formed, inexpensive, reusable, come with handles or cords

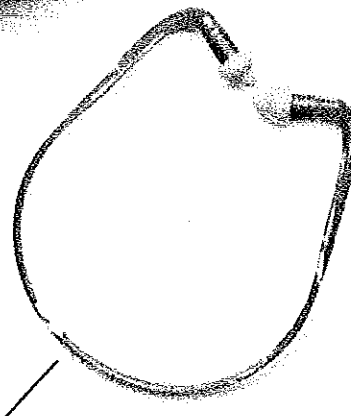
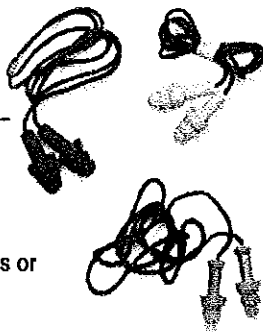
**Scenarios** — Ideal if you need a bit less sound reduction and your hard hat or face shield might interfere with conventional earmuffs



## Foam earplugs

**Features** — Compact, can be used up to 10 times, often come with cords, high level of sound reduction

**Scenarios** — Ideal if you need lots of sound reduction and your hard hat or face shield might interfere with conventional earmuffs



## Ear canal caps

**Features** — Earplugs on a band, worn under your chin

**Scenarios** — Ideal if you are in and out of noisy environments all day, as they can be put on and taken off quickly.



## Custom moulded earplugs

**Features** — Custom moulded to the shape of wearer's ear canal for good fit

**Scenarios** — Ideal if you have an unusual shape of ear canal, which could make it difficult to get a good fit with other earplugs

**WORK SAFE BC**

WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

# How Loud Is It?

## General Industry

Hearing loss results from exposure to noise above 85 dBA for an 8 hour day or its equivalent (85 dBA Lex).



### Agriculture

Augers .....	98-102 dBA
Orchard Sprayer .....	85-101 dBA
Tractors (no cab) .....	92-94 dBA
Tractors (with cab) .....	77-80 dBA

### Automotive

Autobody Technician..	90 dBA Lex
Partsman .....	80 dBA Lex
Detailer .....	97 dBA Lex
Mechanic .....	87 dBA Lex
Tire Installer .....	87 dBA Lex

### Construction

Carpenter, Framer .....	91 dBA Lex
Crane Operator .....	90 dBA Lex
Electrician .....	89 dBA Lex
Equipment Operator....	91 dBA Lex
Ironworker .....	93 dBA Lex
Roofer (shake) .....	95 dBA Lex

### Entertainment

Casino Dealer .....	78 dBA Lex
Fitness Instructor .....	90-92 dBA Lex
Nightclub .....	91-115 dBA

### Forestry

Faller .....	102 dBA Lex
Logging Truck Driver.	88-96 dBA Lex
Rigging Slinger/Choker	75-80 dBA Lex
Skidder Operator .....	98-100 dBA Lex
Yarder Operator .....	91-93 dBA Lex

### Hospitals

Food Services Worker.	80 dBA Lex
Laundry Worker .....	86 dBA Lex
Maintenance Worker...	86-88 dBA Lex

### Municipalities

Grader Operator .....	90 dBA Lex
Lifeguard .....	78-90 dBA Lex
Mechanic .....	83-90 dBA Lex
Sewer Worker .....	88-100 dBA Lex
Truck Driver .....	86-98 dBA Lex
Welder .....	88-94 dBA Lex

### Pulp Mills

Bleach Plant .....	86-91 dBA Lex
Millwright .....	86-92 dBA Lex
Paper Machine Tender	94-98 dBA Lex
Screen Tender .....	86-92 dBA Lex

### Sawmills

Cut-off Saw Operator..	82-96 dBA Lex
Debarker .....	91-94 dBA Lex
Dropsorter .....	95-101 dBA Lex
Edger Operator .....	87-102 dBA Lex
Green Chain .....	79-89 dBA Lex
Sawfiler .....	83-93 dBA Lex

### Schools

Bus Driver (gas) .....	83 dBA Lex
Music teachers .....	86 dBA Lex
PE teachers (who referee)	86 dBA Lex
Tech Ed teachers .....	87 dBA Lex



# How Loud Is It? Off The Job

Hearing loss results from exposure to sound levels at or above **85 dBA** for extended periods of time. *Protect your hearing when involved with these types of activities.*



## Music

- At the bar..... 90 dBA
- Car stereos..... up to 154 dBA
- Clubs and discos ..... 91-115 dBA
- Home stereo ..... up to 115 dBA
- Personal stereos..... 60-120 dBA
- Rock concerts ..... 90-125 dBA
- Symphony concerts..... 80-100 dBA

## Firearms *NOTE: A single exposure to gunfire can cause permanent hearing loss.*

- .22 rifle..... 132-139 dB Peak
- Hand guns ..... 150-167 dB Peak
- Rifles..... 156-167 dB Peak
- Shotguns..... 147-149 dB Peak

## Home & Garden

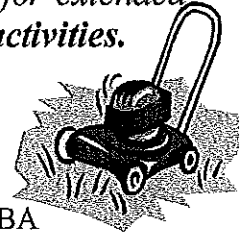
- Air conditioner ..... 60-72 dBA
- Alarm clock ring ..... 80 dBA
- Average home inside... 50 dBA
- Hedge cutter ..... 95 dBA
- Leaf Blower ..... up to 115 dBA
- Chain Saw ..... up to 125 dBA
- Dishwasher..... 54-85 dBA
- Food blender ..... 88 dBA
- Garbage disposal ..... 68-93 dBA
- Lawn mower ..... 80-95 dBA
- Vacuum cleaner ..... 60-82 dBA

## Environmental

- Heavy traffic ..... 70-80 dBA
- Thunder clap ..... 120 dBA

## Workshop

- Circular saw..... 113 dBA
- Electric drill..... 94 dBA
- Power saw..... 95-115 dBA
- Router ..... 85-110 dBA
- Snow blower..... 85-91 dBA



## Toybox

- Balloon pop ..... 157 dBA
- Bicycle horn ..... 143 dBA
- Cap gun..... 99-156 dBA
- Hammer & peg board.. 94-97 dBA
- Rattles..... 75-91 dBA
- Toy rifle..... 143-153 dBA
- Wind-up drummer ..... 88-91 dBA

## Miscellaneous

- Aircraft, jets (cruising) 71-83 dBA
- Ambulance siren..... 120 dBA
- Apollo liftoff..... 188 dBA
- Fishing (powerboat) .... 60-115 dBA
- Jazzercise class..... 90-92 dBA
- Motorcycle..... 80-115 dBA
- Movies ..... 80-85 dBA; up to 118
- Private aircraft ..... 80-110 dBA
- Referee whistles ..... 103-107 dBA
- Snowmobile..... 86-100 dBA
- Sporting events..... 95-100 dBA
- Truck Show ..... 90-110 dBA
- Video arcade..... 80-110 dB

