



# PROPER USE AND TYPES OF HEARING PROTECTION

## TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – HEARING CONSERVATION

February 2024

Protecting your hearing is essential in noisy workplaces. This handout provides guidance on the proper use of hearing protection and introduces the different classes of hearing protection devices (HPDs).

**Why Use Hearing Protection?** Exposure to high levels of noise can lead to permanent hearing damage. Using hearing protection is a crucial step in preventing noise-induced hearing loss.

**Classes of Hearing Protection:** There are various types of hearing protection devices, categorized into different classes based on their design and effectiveness. The primary classes include:

### 1. Earplugs:

- Fit into the ear canal to block or absorb sound.
- Available in disposable or reusable forms.
- Effective for a wide range of noise levels.

### 2. Earmuffs:

- Fit over the ears to create a seal and block out noise.
- Provide a comfortable and reusable option.
- Suitable for moderate to high noise levels.

Noise Exposure (dB)	Permissible Noise Dose
80 dB	Start looking into hearing conservation
82 dB	16 hours
85 dB	8 hours
88 dB	4 hours
91 dB	2 hours
94 dB	1 hour
97 dB	30 mins
100 dB	15 mins
103 dB	7.5 mins
106 dB	< 4 mins
109 dB	< 2 mins
112 dB	< 1 min
115 dB	30 seconds
118 dB	15 seconds
121 dB	7 seconds
124 dB	< 4 seconds
127 dB	< 2 seconds
130 dB	< 1 second
<b>Above 140 dB</b>	<b>INSTANT HEARING LOSS</b>



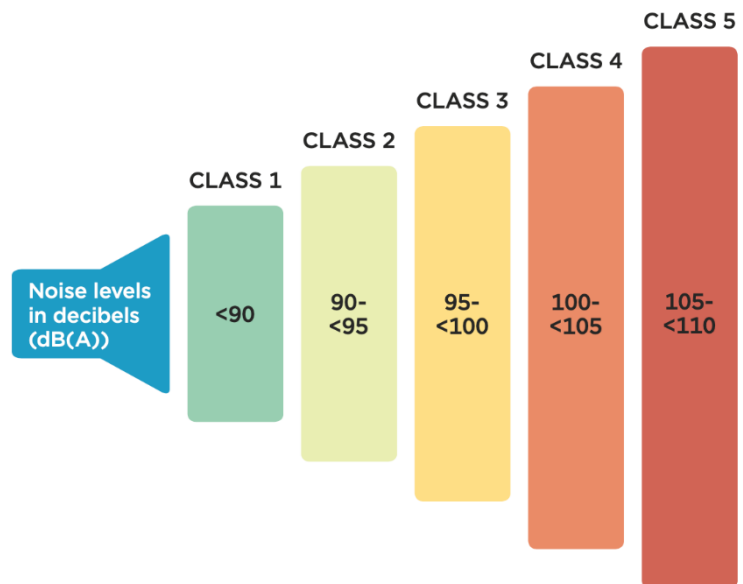
### 3. Combination Devices:

- Some devices combine earplugs and earmuffs for enhanced protection.
- Useful in extremely noisy environments.

**Selecting the Right Hearing Protection:** Choosing the appropriate hearing protection is crucial for its effectiveness. Consider the following factors:

#### 1. Noise Level:

- Select hearing protection based on the noise level in your work environment.
- Ensure the device provides enough attenuation to bring noise levels to a safe level.



*Hearing Protection Classes. What class is your hearing protection?*

#### 2. Comfort and Fit:

- A proper fit is essential for optimal protection.
- Comfortable and well-fitting devices are more likely to be used consistently.

#### 3. Communication Requirements:

- If communication is crucial in your job, consider devices with communication features or electronic earmuffs that allow speech to be heard while protecting against loud noises.

### Proper Use of Hearing Protection:

#### 1. Insertion (Earplugs):

- Roll, pull the ear up and back, and insert the earplug deep into the ear canal.
- Ensure a snug fit to effectively block out noise.



**2. Placement (Earmuffs):**

- Place earmuffs over the ears, ensuring a proper seal.
- Adjust the headband for a comfortable but secure fit.

**3. Consistency:**

- Wear hearing protection consistently in noisy environments.
- Remove only when in designated quiet areas.

**Maintenance and Care:**

**1. Cleanliness:**

- Keep hearing protection devices clean to maintain effectiveness.
- Follow manufacturer's guidelines for cleaning and maintenance.

**2. Inspection:**

- Regularly inspect earplugs and earmuffs for wear and tear.
- Replace damaged or deteriorated devices promptly.

**Conclusion:** Proper use of hearing protection is crucial for maintaining your hearing health. Select the right type of protection based on your work environment, ensure a proper fit, and use them consistently. By taking these simple steps, you contribute to creating a safer and healthier workplace for everyone.

Thank you for prioritizing your hearing safety!