

# Hearing Protection Devices

## What is a hearing protection device (HPD)?

This is a personal device worn as a barrier to reduce the sound level entering the ear.

Western provides several hearing protection options for workers to reduce the hazard of noise exposure. The two most common types provided are ear plugs and earmuffs.



## Who should wear hearing protection devices?

The use of hearing protection devices (HPDs) is required in all situations where exposure to excessive noise can damage hearing. Examples may include loud environments and/or using machines, tools, or other equipment that regularly exposure a worker to sound levels above the maximum allowed threshold of 85 decibels (dBA) over a typical 8-hour workday. In order to capture variations in noise level, Western's threshold limit for implementing control measures is 80 dBA.

## Why wear hearing protection?

Extended exposure to high noise levels creates a hazard to hearing. There is a significant risk of Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) when HPDs are not used where and when required. In addition, the effectiveness of HPDs is greatly reduced when worn incorrectly or removed, even for short periods of time.



## How to select a hearing protection device?

Obtaining a proper fit is essential. Factors to consider when selecting an appropriate HPD include but are not limited to ambient noise, task, environment, and user comfort.

[Western's Health, Safety & Well-being office](#) can assist with selecting the proper HPDs.

## General use instructions

- Manufacturer's instructions for use should be followed.
- Inspect the device regularly for wear and tear, and replace as needed.
- Always ensure a tight seal with the ear canal or against the side of the head is achieved.
- When handling and fitting HPDs, ensure that both the device and your hands are clean.
- When reusable HPDs are chosen, proper storage in a clean, suitable environment is critical.

## For more information about hearing protection devices



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