

CHOOSING HEARING PROTECTION

Frequently Asked Question's

How do I know if I need protection?

If you have to raise your voice to be heard by someone less than two feet away, the noise level is at 80 decibels or greater and you should be wearing hearing protection.

Don't people in noisy environments just get used to the racket?

No - after long exposure to excess noise you begin to lose your hearing.

What's the worst kind of noise?

The most annoying noise is high-pitched, loud and irregular, or on and off but all kinds of excess noise may eventually cause hearing damage.

I hate earplugs! Won't they hurt my ears?

Just as the human ear canal varies in size and shape so do earplugs. There are a wide variety to choose from and every worker should be properly fitted to get the maximum benefit from their hearing protection. For some workers earmuffs may be the answer.

When I wear earmuffs/plugs, I can't hear the people around me as well. Isn't that a safety risk?

Although hearing protection devices dampen sound, normal-hearing listeners should still be able to understand speech in a background of noise. In most cases, they make it easier to hear speech because the distraction of background noise has been cut down.

How do I know my hearing protection is adequate?

All hearing protective devices have a Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) which represents the rating of the plug or muff to attenuate the noise entering your ear. It is accepted that NRR's are highly over-rated. The goal of hearing protection is to reduce the noise level below 80 dB. With off the shelf earplugs Sask OH&S experts recommend taking 50% of the NRR due to how easy it is to have a poor fit. SONOMAX® custom-made and calibrated ear plugs are the only plugs on the market where the NRR is measurable and 100% verifiable.

I've been working here for years without hearing protection, why should I start wearing them now?

Protective devices can stop further damage to your hearing - deafness does not have to be an occupational disease. It is preventable.

A variety of Hearing Protective Devices are available at any safety supply store. SONOMAX® hearing protective devices are available in Saskatchewan from HEALTHSERV.