

OHBA Safety Pages: Hearing Protection

Hearing Protection is for Everyone

Why? Everyone is exposed to loud noise at some time in their lives—even babies! Lawn mowing, fitness classes, truck and tractor pulls, airplanes, table saws, rock concerts, snowmobiles, all these environments can be too loud. The decibel is a unit used to express sound level, and “loud noise” means sounds that are more than 80 decibels. Loud noise can be very hazardous to your health and particularly to your hearing. Over time, exposure to loud sounds on a regular basis can result in permanent hearing loss. You often don’t know you have a hearing problem until it is too late to do anything about it. Sudden, VERY loud noises, like explosions, can cause instant hearing loss.



HEARING
PROTECTION
REQUIRED



AREA DE
PROTECCION
DE LOS OIDOS



Why is hearing loss a problem? Imagine being cut off from all the things that are important to you - friends, family, TV, radio, MUSIC! It’s not a comforting thought. When you’re born, your hearing is as good as it will ever be, so you need start protecting it as soon as you can. Hearing loss due to loud noise is preventable, but it is NOT treatable once you have it.

So what kind of hearing protection should I wear? Either earplugs or earmuffs are fine. For noise exposure outside of the workplace, most types sold in safety stores or hardware stores will block out enough noise to protect your hearing. Pick a style that you like the look of and feel comfortable to wear.

Really, what’s the BEST hearing protector? The best hearing protector is one that you will want to wear for the entire time you’re exposed to noise.

How should they fit? Earplugs should fit snugly in your ear canal and someone looking at you should have a hard time seeing them. If they stick out too far, they’re not blocking sound. Earmuffs should fit close to your head, with no gaps. There is another style of hearing protector called the “banded” earplug—it’s an earplug (that can go into the ear canal or sit over it) on a headband.

How long do they last? Foam (“disposable”) earplugs will last for about 10 wearings; other earplugs will last about 1 year. The custom molded type, made of medical silicone, will last about 3-4 years. Earmuffs will last about 4-5 years, but you must replace the cuff (the part that sits right on your skin) every year. The oils and sweat from your skin will make the plastic of the cuff deteriorate.



The information we provide is not intended to include all possible safety measures and controls. In addition, the safety information we provide does not relieve the Members of its own duties and obligations with regard to safety concerns, nor does Oregon Home Builders Association guarantee to the Members or others that the Member’s property, job sites and/or operations are safe, healthful, or in compliance with applicable laws, regulations or standards. The Members remain responsible for their own operations, safety practices and procedures and should consult with legal counsel as they deem appropriate.

SAFETY PAGE MEETING GUIDE

Topic: Hearing Protection

Employer: _____ Project: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Shift: _____

Number in crew: _____ Number attending: _____

Safety or Health issues discussed. Include recent accident investigations and hazards involving tools, equipment, the work environment, work practices and any Safety or Health recommendations:

Follow up on recommendations from last safety meeting:

Record of those attending:

Name: (please print)	Signature:	Company:
1.		
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12.		

Supervisor's remarks: _____

Supervisor: _____ (Print) _____ (Signature)