



Hearing Loss

## **Earmuffs: A Key Component of a Hearing Conservation Program**

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When you're managing a hearing conservation program, choosing the right type of protection can help ensure your workers stay safe, comfortable and compliant. This means you have to consider a number of factors, including comfort, the level of noise workers are exposed to, equipment costs and even the level of training you'll be able to offer. Regardless of your unique workplace conditions, earmuffs can often address a number of these factors to help you build a more effective program.

### **Earmuffs**

#### **Are Cost Efficient and Reusable**

Earmuffs can be reused time and again, and, if properly cleaned and stored, can typically be worn up to three years. Also, given the size, they are harder to lose than other hearing protectors. This means you may not need to replace earmuffs as often as other types of hearing protectors.

#### **Are Simpler to Use**

One of the easiest hearing protectors to wear, earmuffs can quickly be adjusted to provide a snug and reliable fit for a wide range of ear and head sizes. Since earmuffs are not complicated to put on correctly, most users quickly learn to wear them. Additionally, earmuffs allow workers to easily put protection on and take it off throughout the day as needed.

#### **Provide Comfortable, Versatile Protection**

Earmuffs don't have to be big and bulky; many are designed using lightweight, flexible materials to help enhance comfort. As an added comfort benefit, they can help keep workers warm in cold or windy environments. Earmuffs are also versatile with many different headband and attachment options for

compatibility with other personal protective equipment (PPE). Plus, they are often compatible with hearing aids and can be a comfortable alternative to earplugs for people who don't like earplugs or have ear infections. This helps you provide every one of your employees with the hearing protection that's comfortable for them to use and that they need.

## For Help Choosing The Correct Hearing Protection

For help choosing the correct hearing protection, visit our *product selector tool*.

### Facilitate Worker Satisfaction

Protective equipment is helpful only when it's being used. A secondary benefit of the comfort and simplicity of earmuffs can be worker satisfaction. The easier and more comfortable personal protection equipment is, the more likely your employees will wear it. Additionally, because earmuffs are visible from a distance, it's easy to monitor that workers are wearing hearing protection.

### Pair with Earplugs for Dual Protection

For environments with very high noise levels (e.g., 100 dBA), earmuffs can be paired with earplugs for increased protection. In fact, auditory research has found that when earmuffs and earplugs are worn together, the combined noise reduction may be 5 to 10 dB higher than either device worn by itself. While dual protection isn't necessary for every hearing conservation program, it's important to ensure you have options when earmuffs or earplugs alone can't provide the appropriate level of protection.

Previously featured on *3M's Worker Health & Safety site*.

# 10 Reasons Earmuffs May Be Right For Your Hearing Conservation Program

## Clean & Easy On and Off

Dirty hands? Work gloves? Earmuffs are easy to put on and remove and hygiene isn't a problem.



## Comfortable to Wear

For some workers, earplugs can be unpleasant to wear. Earmuffs may be a good alternative.



## Simple Training Process

An easier fit means you can spend less time training workers on proper fit and use.



## Highly Visible for Compliance Monitoring

It's easy to monitor compliance because you can see who is wearing earmuffs even from a distance.



## PPE Compatibility

Many headband and attachment options allow workers to wear earmuffs with respirators, face shields and hard hats.\*



\* PPE can interfere with the seal of the earmuff cushion and reduce the protection of the earmuff. Select PPE to minimize interference with earmuff cushion.

When it comes to your team's hearing, you need versatile, effective protection that doesn't hinder them from getting the job done. Check out how earmuffs can help.



## Shields Against the Cold

In cold weather, earmuffs help keep ears covered and warmer.



## Pairs with Earplugs for Dual Protection

Combining earmuffs and earplugs can provide as much as 10 dB of extra protection for very high noise exposures.



## May Better Accommodate Hearing Aids

Many users can wear hearing aids under earmuffs to help facilitate communication.



## Reusable for Long Periods of Time

Earmuffs can be reused often, for as long as 3 years, when properly cleaned, stored and maintained.



## Wide Range of Protection Levels

Many noise reduction options to match noise.