Southwest Center
FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH, INJURY PREVENTION, AND EDUCATION



Tool Box Talks

Hearing Conservation in the Logging & Forestry Industry

Tool Box Talks

Series: Hearing Protection

Selecting Hearing Protection

Meeting Goals
At the end of this meeting, employees will know about the different types of hearing protection and their features. There is one just right for you.

Lesson Content

Type	Features	Concerns
Roll down foam 	Fits many different ear canals. Provides good protection for most noise situations. Convenient. Maintenance free; can throw away.	Takes practice to insert. Must be inserted properly to get the highest possible protection.
Reuseable earplugs 	Many have flanges and handles. Come in different sizes. Come with cords, convenient to carry. Re-useable. Washable. In dusty environment, don't need to roll them.	Pre-formed so may not fit as wide a variety of ear canals as foam plugs. May need a different size for each ear. Must keep them clean. If quickly removed, it can inflame the ear canal.
Custom molded 	Molded to user's ear. Always comfortable. Long-term wear. Best for difficult to fit.	Must be made by a licensed hearing protection provider.
Canal caps 	On a band, can be worn under chin, over head or behind neck. Ideal for in and out of noise. Can be put on and taken off quickly.	Not as comfortable. Not as much protection as others.
Earmuffs 	Easy to use and wear. Fit most people. Easy to keep clean. May be preferable in certain environments. Can benefit workers with hearing loss or who have special communication needs. Some are specially designed with electronic components that help users communicate or block impulsive noises.	Can be hot and heavy. May be more difficult to get a good fit with glasses, or sideburns, or may interfere with other protective gear.

_____
Session Date

_____
Supervisor/Instructor

Attendee List:

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Credits: NIOS; Howard Leigh; Aearo Technologies, a 3M Company; Bilsom; WorkSafe BC; Northern Safety and Industrial

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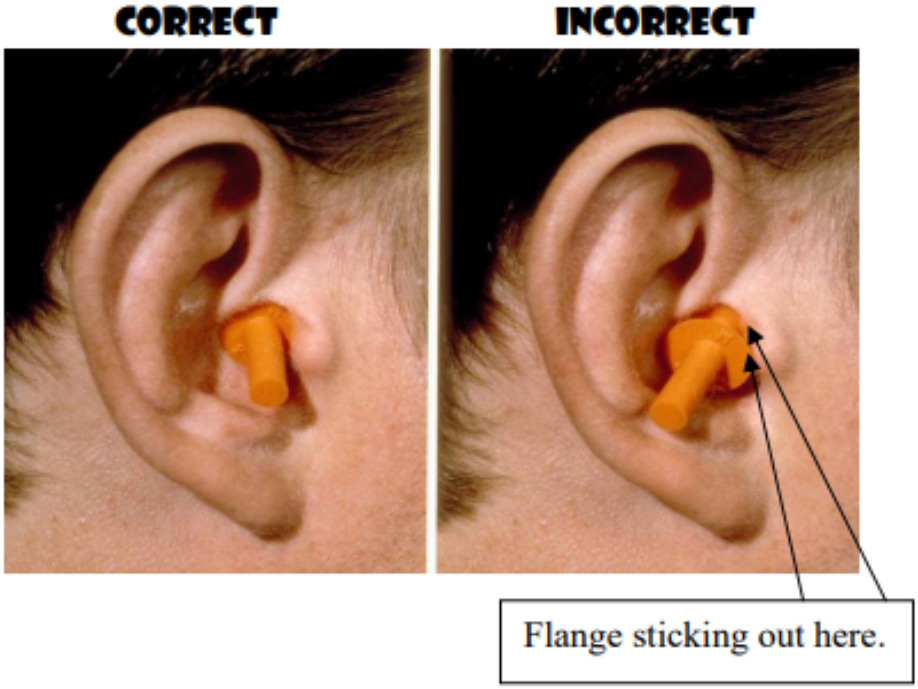
Series: Hearing Protection

Hearing Protection Fit- Flange Type Earplug

Meeting Goals
At the end of this meeting, employees will be able to determine if they put the flange type earplug in correctly.

Lesson Content

Flange type plug
- Handle may be visible from the front.
- Flange should not be sticking out.



Credit: Aearo Technologies, a 3M Company

Session Date

Supervisor/Instructor

Attendee List:

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Series: Hearing Protection

Hearing Protection Myths

Answers to hearing protection myths

- **Earplugs are too difficult to insert**
  - With practice it becomes easy.
  - The important thing is:
    - You should choose the most comfortable style that YOU WILL WEAR as long as you are exposed to loud noise.
- **You can poke out your eardrum when inserting the earplug.**
  - Not possible. You do the math:
    - Your ear canal is 1 1/4 inches long.
    - An earplug is about 1/2 to 3/4 inches long.
    - Your ear canal is not straight – makes it hard to get near your eardrum
  - Don't poke any other object in your ear.
- **If earplugs get dirty, my ears can get infected.**
  - Earplugs will not cause an infection, but you should still keep them clean.
  - Clean your hands before inserting earplugs or use plugs with stems that let you insert them without having to touch the part that goes into the ear canal.
    - You may temporarily switch to an earmuff if that style is more comfortable if you have an existing ear infection.
- **I can't hear warning sounds if I am wearing hearing protectors.**
  - Hearing protectors decrease the noise often making it easier to hear warning sounds.
    - If this is not the case for you, switch to another HP style that will make warning sounds easier to hear.
- **Hearing protectors will keep me from hearing important machinery and equipment sounds.**
  - If you have normal hearing, you should be able to hear machinery sounds. BUT,
  - HPs may make the sound seem different.
    - If you can't hear your machinery, switch to another HP style that will enable you to hear machine sounds better.
- **I won't be able to hear others talk when wearing hearing protectors.**
  - Most people wearing HP hear/understand speech just fine. Some don't.
  - If you can't, another HP style will work for you.
    - ***You and your co-workers should try talking more loudly and slowly when communicating in noise.***
- **It takes a long time to get used to hearing protectors.**
  - Some people adjust more quickly than others.
  - It is almost like adjusting to a new pair of shoes, or bifocals.
  - If HPs are the wrong size or are worn out, they will not be comfortable. Find one that is comfortable and works best for you.

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Series: Hearing Protection

Hearing Protection Myths

- **You have to be in noise a long time before it's hazardous.**
  - Hearing loss from noise is related to both the loudness of the noise and the length of time you are exposed to the noise.
    - Be sure that you always protect your ears by wearing HP anytime you are around loud noise.
- **I can't tell if a noise situation is too loud.**
  - If you have to raise your voice to talk to someone who is an arm's length away, ***then the noise is too loud.***
  - If after leaving a noisy place, your ears are ringing or sounds seem dull or flat, ***then the noise is too loud.***
  - If after leaving a noisy place, you raise the volume of your radio or CD player when you get back to your car, ***then the noise is too loud.***
- **Hearing protection won't help me. I already have a hearing loss.**
  - HP protects the hearing that you have left.
  - Loud noises can continue to damage your hearing making it even more difficult to communicate at work and with your family and friends.
- **There is one hearing protector that is the best.**
  - *The **"best"** hearing protector is the one that **fits well, is comfortable, and YOU will wear.***

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