



Inserting Foam Ear Plugs

Toolbox Talk Lesson Plan

People should wear hearing protection if the noise level at the workplace exceeds 85 decibels dBA.

Tell employees the work areas and operations that meet this criterion

Hearing protectors reduce the noise exposure level and the risk of hearing loss. **The effectiveness of hearing protection is reduced greatly if the hearing protectors do not fit properly or if they are worn only part time during periods of high noise exposure.**

The choice of hearing protectors is a very personal one and depends on a number of factors including the level of noise reduction needed, comfort, and the suitability of the hearing protector for the worker and the environment. Most importantly, the hearing protector should provide the desired noise reduction. We provide a choice of a number of different types of devices. *Hold up samples of each type of available device.*

Fitting earplugs into your ears takes a bit of getting used to, so spend some time familiarizing yourself with them and get to understand the anatomy of your ear. Make sure that your hands are clean and be aware that sometimes when you insert the plug into your ear it may make you feel temporarily nauseous. This is a normal reaction and should cease as soon as the plug has been in position for a few seconds. Be aware that the orientation of your ear canals is backwards and upward; that is they point towards the top of the back of your head. The earplugs you must be fitted correctly for them to work effectively.

When inserting your ear plugs:

1. Before putting ear plugs in, wash your hands to prevent infections from entering the ear.
2. Inspect the ear plugs for tears, cracks or hardening.
3. To insert a soft foam ear plug, roll the plug between your fingers and thumb to make it thinner, making sure there are no wrinkles or creases in the plug.
4. Reach one hand behind your head and pull your ear outward and upward to widen the auditory canal. Insert the plug well into the ear and hold it in place for about 5-10 seconds, until it expands. Don't be afraid to place the plug into the ear canal. You cannot hurt your eardrum because the plugs are too short to reach it. If the ear canal is not completely plugged, the earplug will not be effective.



Demonstrate proper insertion before your employees. Hand out a pair of plugs to each attendee and let them demonstrate that they can insert them properly.

Testing: Test the earplug fit by rubbing your thumb and forefinger close to your ear; you should not hear anything. If you can hear this noise, the earplugs are not fitted correctly.

Removing Earplugs: Always remove your earplugs slowly with a twisting action to break the seal – removing them quickly could damage your ears. If you have difficulty removing an earplug try pulling down on your earlobe then open and close your mouth as wide as possible repeatedly. The earplug should then “walk” its way out. If an earplug does get stuck you will need to consult a medical professional. But don't worry - it will not hurt and will result in permanent damage to your hearing..

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