

## What hearing protection should I use?

If you can't make noise quieter or remove it, you need to use protection.

### Choose correctly

Here's how to choose the right kind of hearing protection:

- It must be comfortable to wear
- It must be a good fit
- It must be appropriate for the work you do
- It must have the correct class for the type of work you do
- Seek expert advice if necessary.

### Use correctly

Hearing protection only works if you use it correctly. Here's what you need to do:

- Make sure you wear it every time you are around noise
- Don't take it off until you're away from noise, or until the noise has stopped
- If you need to talk to someone, move away from the noise before removing your protection.

### For ear muffs

- Make sure the band goes over the top of your head, not around the back (unless it is approved for this use)
- Make sure the cushions fit tightly over your ears
- Ear muffs rely on a close fit over the ears, so don't wear them over your hat.

### For ear plugs

#### How to insert formable earplugs

1. **ROLL** the plug between your thumb and fore fingers to compress it into a small, smooth round cylinder.
2. **REACH** over the top of your head and pull up or back on the top of your ear. This straightens out your ear canal so the plug can go in far enough.
3. **INSERT** the tightly rolled plug into the straightened ear canal.
4. **HOLD** the plug in place for a few seconds to give it time to expand and seat itself in the ear canal.

If you can get at least half of the plug into your ear canal, and it expands enough to stay firmly seated, it's a good fit.

### Other tips for using earplugs

- When an earplug is properly inserted, your voice should sound louder and deeper.
- To check the fit, cup your hands over your ears and make a good seal. Count out loud while slowly cupping and un-cupping your ears. If the fit is good, your voice should sound the same as you cup and un-cup your hands.
- Use clean hands when rolling and inserting your earplugs, as dirt can irritate your ears.
- When removing an earplug, slowly twist the plug to break the seal. If you pull it out quickly without first breaking the seal, you could harm your ear.
- Note that there is equipment available from most suppliers that will enable the fit of a plug to be verified. This is a simple test and takes about 10 minutes. Most suppliers will do this test for you as well.