

Hearing Protection for Residential Construction

Residential construction workers are often exposed to on-the-job noise which can permanently damage hearing.



It is important to wear hearing protection when exposed to noise; sources of noise include: air nailers, chop saws, chain saws, circular saws, routers, screw guns, drills, and power planers.

The employer is responsible for providing protection and earmuffs or earplugs are acceptable. As communication with co-workers may be critical, hearing protectors which do not block out too much sound should be worn, for example custom molded earplugs with vents, banded earplugs (earplugs on a band), **Class B** earplugs or earmuffs, electronic earmuffs or earplugs, etc.

There are many types of hearing protectors available and several factors determine which is the best protector for an individual worker.

The two most important factors are comfort and noise exposure level.

Other considerations when choosing a hearing protector are:

- physical requirements of the job (climbing, bending, lying down)
- hearing levels of the worker
- temperature in the workplace
- use of other personal protective devices
- physical characteristics of the worker—for example, size and shape of head or earcanals

To monitor the effectiveness of hearing protection, construction workers must have their hearing tested *every year* by persons authorized by WorkSafeBC. A coloured record card is issued to each worker as proof of a hearing test. A hearing test includes discussion of the test results, what they mean and what follow-up by the worker may be required, and an in-depth discussion of hearing protection--use, care, fit, maintenance, suitability, preferences, etc.



See also the WorkSafeBC *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*, Part 7 “Noise and Hearing Conservation”, as well as the Canadian Standards Association Standard Z94.2-02 “Hearing Protection”. Visit the WorkSafeBC.com website for the *Regulation* as well as more information about Hearing Protection and Hearing Loss Prevention in the Construction Industry. (in the Health & Safety Centre).