



Hearing protection

Exposure to noise on the job can cause hearing loss.

Hearing loss can happen gradually from exposure to loud sounds over and over. Or it can happen from a single very loud event. Either way, hearing loss is permanent.

If you're exposed to sounds louder than 85 decibels (dBA), you're at risk of hearing loss. Older cranes and most power tools and equipment operate well above 85 dBA. At those noise levels, your employer needs to take action to protect your hearing, and you need to wear hearing protection.

Hearing protection devices (HPDs)

HPDs, such as earplugs and earmuffs, can help prevent harmful amounts of noise from reaching your inner ear and damaging your hearing. The HPD you choose should be comfortable to wear and offer enough protection from the noise you're exposed to.

Earmuffs

Earmuffs are quick and easy to put on and take off. You may need to adjust the tension in the headband to provide enough protection and be comfortable.

Earplugs

Several types of earplugs are available, ranging from disposable foam earplugs to reusable, custom-moulded versions. Whichever type you use, they need to be put into your ears properly. When noise levels are very high, earplugs can be worn along with earmuffs.

Foam earplugs can become dirty when you handle them. Replace them often or consider reusable earplugs.

Noise reduction ratings

A noise reduction rating (NRR) is often printed on HPDs' packaging. This rating suggests the amount of noise reduction the HPD provides. However, the real noise reduction may only be half of the printed NRR.

Ensuring the right fit for HPDs

Choosing the right size and shape of earplugs is important for ensuring a good fit in your ears. You should be able to roll and insert foam earplugs into your ears without discomfort or pain. When properly inserted, they should be barely visible or unseen from the front.

Choose earmuffs with the right headband tension, cuff (ear cushion) pressure, and weight to ensure a proper seal and a comfortable fit.

Maintaining HPDs

Most disposable earplugs should be thrown away at the end of a shift. Reusable plugs should last six months to one year with proper washing. (Never use harsh detergents, solvents, or alcohol.)

Custom-moulded earplugs can last three to four years. However, the shape of your ears can change with your body weight, so earplugs may need to be replaced.

The cuffs of earmuffs must be replaced when they lose flexibility or are damaged.

OHS Regulation reference: section 7.7

Project:

Address:

Employer:

Supervisor:

Date:

Time:

Shift:

Number in crew:

Number attending:

Other safety concerns or suggestions:

.....

.....

Record of those attending:

Name: (please print)	Signature:	Company:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		

Manager's remarks:

.....

.....

Manager:

(Signature)

Supervisor:

(Signature)

For more information on health and safety requirements for crane operations in B.C., refer to the *Workers Compensation Act* and the OHS Regulation on worksafebc.com.