

HEARING GUIDE

PREPARED FOR HEARING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



[HEARING.HEALTH.MIL](https://hearing.health.mil)



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
**HEARING CENTER
OF EXCELLENCE**



In both on- and off-duty settings, hearing is an important element of life.

ON DUTY

- Situational awareness
- Survival
- Teamwork
- Operational planning and execution
- Response to commands
- Communication
- Unit safety
- Mission accomplishment

OFF DUTY

- Personal relationships
- Conversation
- Laughter
- Sounds of nature
- Music
- Team and community activities
- Television and movies

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF HEARING LOSS

- Social isolation
- Depression
- Chronic disease
- Decreased operational effectiveness
- Reduced productivity
- Decreased quality of life

[HEARING.HEALTH.MIL](https://hearing.health.mil)

WHY IS HEARING SO IMPORTANT?



NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS (NIHL) AND TINNITUS

can result from exposure to noise that:

- Is too loud
- Is too close
- Lasts too long

WARNING SIGNS OF UNPROTECTED EXPOSURE to hazardous noise include:

- You can't hear normal speech within three feet of you
- You have a feeling of "fullness" in your ears after leaving a noisy area
- You hear a ringing or buzzing in your ears immediately after exposure to noise
- You have difficulty understanding speech after exposure to noise

NIHL IS INVISIBLE, PAINLESS, PROGRESSIVE, AND PERMANENT. It can result from:

- Sudden, one-time exposure to high intensity noise
- Repeated or prolonged exposure to excessive noise

YOU MIGHT HAVE NIHL IF:

- Sounds seem distorted or muffled
- You have problems hearing over the telephone
- You have trouble following conversation, if two or more people talk at the same time
- You have to turn the TV volume up high
- You have to strain to understand conversation
- You have trouble hearing in a noisy background
- You find yourself asking people to repeat themselves
- Many people you talk to seem to mumble or not speak clearly
- You misunderstand what others are saying and respond inappropriately
- You have trouble understanding the speech of women and children
- People get annoyed because you misunderstand what they say

HEARING.HEALTH.MIL

NOISE CAN AFFECT YOUR HEARING



OCCUPATIONAL NOISE

Some of the noisiest occupations in the United States include:

- Agriculture
- Mining
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Military service

POTENTIAL noise levels of service-related occupational noise include:

- Jet engines: 155 decibels
- Gunfire: 160 decibels
- Bomb blasts: 175 decibels

RECREATIONAL NOISE

Some common recreational activities and their POTENTIAL noise levels include:

- Motorboats: 85 - 115 decibels
- Snow mobiles: 99 decibels
- Motorcycles: 105 decibels
- Personal listening devices with headphones: 105 - 120 decibels
- Video arcades: 110 decibels
- Movie theaters: 118 decibels
- Health clubs and aerobic studios: 120 decibels
- Live music concerts: 120 decibels and beyond
- Sporting events: 117 - 139 decibels
- Firecrackers at an average distance of 10 feet: 125 - 155 decibels
- Gunshots: 160 - 170 decibels

HEARING LOSS PREVENTION STRATEGIES

EARS ² U	STRATEGY
EDUCATE	Learn what noises are hazardous (85 dBA or greater).
ADJUST	Turn down your personal listening equipment.
RECOGNIZE	And reduce noise hazards.
SELECT	Wear hearing protection devices (HPDs), ear plugs, or noise muffs when you are exposed to hazardous noise.
SEEK	If you notice ringing, fullness, and/or muffled speech, see an audiologist.
UNDERSTAND	One-time and/or repeated, unprotected exposure to hazardous noise over a period of time can cause permanent inner ear damage.

HEARING.HEALTH.MIL



The first key in preventing hearing loss is awareness. Knowing the risks can help you decide if you need hearing protection.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Work environment
- Steady-state or intermittent noise
- Noise exposure levels
- Specific job and communication requirements

TYPES OF HEARING PROTECTION:

- Ear plugs
- Noise muffs
- Noise attenuating helmets
- Tactical communication and protective systems (TCAPS)

Consult with your audiologist or hearing healthcare professional for specific recommendations.

HEARING.HEALTH.MIL

It's a noisy world ... Protect your hearing.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
**HEARING CENTER
OF EXCELLENCE**