

## Topic: **Hearing Protection**

Often workers resist wearing hearing protection more than any other type of personal equipment. One of the most common reasons that they give is that they don't think they really need it. But hearing loss is so gradual, even in intense exposures, that by the time you realize you can't hear as well as you used to, the damage has been done, and can't be reversed.

Another common reason workers give for not wearing hearing protectors is that they are uncomfortable. Evidence of this attitude can be found in such practices as springing muffs so they don't seal against the head, clipping off the inner end of plugs and leaving only the outer end tab to fool the supervisor, and improper molding and insertion of malleable-type plug materials.

Good protection depends on a good seal between the surface of the skin and the surface of the ear protector. A very small leak can destroy the effectiveness of the protection. Protectors have a tendency to work loose as a result of talking, chewing, etc., and they must be re-seated from time to time during the workday. The use of ear protection will NOT make it more difficult to understand speech or to hear warning signals when worn in a noisy environment.

Most of the available ear protectors, when correctly fitted, provide about the same amount of protection. Therefore, the best ear protector is the one that you can wear properly.

- If foam earplugs are used, they should be inserted correctly into the ear. It is important to hold the earplug in place for 15 seconds, so that it expands properly inside the ear canal.
- Earmuffs are easy to use, but always check the noise reduction rating of the earmuff, or earplug, to ensure you have the right level of protection.

### Three factors may be used to determine the level of noise:

1. If it is necessary for you to speak in a very loud noise or shout directly into the ear of a person in order to be understood, it is likely that the exposure limit for noise is being exceeded.
2. If you have heard noises and ringing noises in your ears at the end of the workday, you are being exposed to too much noise.
3. If speech or music sounds muffled to you after leaving work, but sounds fairly clear in the morning when you return to work, there is no doubt about your being exposed to noise levels that can eventually cause a partial loss of hearing that can be permanent.

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## Topic: **Wearable Noise Indicator**



**Flashing Green**  
indicates noise level  
is below 85 dBA.



**Flashing Red**  
indicates noise level  
is above 85 dBA and hearing  
protection may be needed.



### Supervisor's / Management Addendum

#### 3M Noise Indicator NI-100

It is not our objective or intent to ever push or recommend any product or company. However, sometimes a product stands out in an area of concern, like hearing loss, and monitoring noise levels.

Many of us are not aware that we are in a situation where hearing loss could be a concern. If your facility has problem areas where noise can be a hazard, the 3M Noise Indicator NI-100 may be a product for your company.

It is a small, easy to use rechargeable noise monitor that clips onto the individual.

Again, we are not promoting or recommending this product, but if this product, or products similar in nature, help American workers avoid hearing loss, we are all winners.

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## **Simple Safety Meetings® Leader Guide**

### Procedural recommendation for a Simple Safety Meeting® Leader:

- A. Prior to the meeting read the topic content to be sure you understand it.
- B. Make notes regarding specific company issues, policies or items for extra emphasis.
- C. Have each participant “sign in” on the participant information sheet prior to starting the meeting and the meeting clock.
- D. Hand out the “Topic Content” meeting sheet when the participant “signs in” making sure each participant has a pencil or pen for note taking.
- E. Instruct the participants to take their time and read through the content, taking their time to understand it and make notes about questions or suggestions they may have.
- F. Wait until everyone is done reading, asking the early finishers to please be quiet while everyone else finishes. (During this time it is a good idea for the leader to re-read the content so as not to appear to be paying attention to who are slow readers and fast readers. Do not embarrass slow readers, but encourage them to take their time to finish so they completely understand and can ask questions.)
- G. After everyone has completed reading and making notes, use a few moments to emphasize, clarify or restate any of the most relevant topic points.
- H. Ask the participants if they have any questions, suggestions or need any clarification.
- I. When the 10-minute bell goes off, the leader must be totally done, except answering questions from the participants.
- J. If another meeting is scheduled, remind everyone of the next meeting date and time.
- K. End the meeting by thanking the participants for their attention and questions.
- L. Remind the participants that working safely is a choice, and you (the leader) and the company wants them to make a conscious effort to choose to work safely

Our content is such that it can be passed out to the participants for them to read during the meeting. The leader’s function is to merely emphasize company specific points, ask if everyone understands the topic points and ask for comments and suggestions.

Our theory is that many shift level safety meeting leaders are not presenters and can feel uncomfortable making any sort of presentation in front of a group of people. However, shift level safety meeting leaders are typically knowledgeable in their area and can handle participant questions and suggestions quite well. The goal of any safety meeting is to communicate the information and make sure the participants understand the safety issues, procedures and policies at hand for your specific company.

Our approach is a simple one. Short, to the point meetings that last no longer than 10 minutes. In fact, we suggest having a standard kitchen timer at the meeting. As soon as the meeting starts, set the timer for 10 minutes. When the bell goes off, the leader’s portion **MUST** be concluded and the **ONLY** allowable discussion is participant questions, suggestions and comments.

Ideally, the topic content should be covered within 10 minutes, not including employee questions. After 10 minutes of presentation, employee’s minds begin to wander, thinking about the workday ahead, future plans in their personal life or just daydreaming.