

Personal Protective Equipment: Hearing

- The goal of SJSU’s Hearing Conservation Program is to to comply with Cal/OSHA regulations and to coordinate efforts to reduce occupational noise exposures and prevent occupational hearing loss.
- All University employees with potential noise exposures equal to or exceeding an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA) of 85 decibels (dbA) are enrolled in the Hearing Conservation Program.
- All employees with an 85 dBA TWA or higher must attend hearing conservation training annually and receive an annual audiogram.
- A general rule of thumb for detecting excessive noise levels is if you have to raise your voice when speaking to someone three feet away. If you have concerns about a noisy environment, contact EH&S and they can measure the noise level in the area with a noise dosimeter.

Single-Use Ear Plugs	Single-use ear plugs are made of waxed cotton, foam, silicone rubber or fiberglass wool. They are self-forming and, when properly inserted, they work as well as most molded earplugs.
Pre-Formed or Molded Earplugs	Pre-formed or molded earplugs are individually fitted by a professional and can be disposable or reusable. Reusable plugs should be cleaned after each use.
Earmuffs	Earmuffs require a perfect seal around the ear. Glasses, facial hair, long hair, or facial movements such as chewing may reduce the protective value of earmuffs.
Canal Caps	Canal caps have flexible tips that act as caps which plug the ear canal. They DO NOT extend into the ear canal, only close the ear opening. Therefore, they do not give you as much protection as ear plugs or ear muffs. Canal caps are ideal for situations where hearing protection must be taken on and off frequently.
Hearing Protection for the Arts	Triple-flange earplugs are the most affordable option and produce good results. Electronic earplugs reduce loud noise and boost low-level sounds. These are typically more expensive, but they could be especially useful for musicians.

Need Help?

- Ask the lab/shop supervisor
- Ask the department/college safety staff
- Ask SJSU Environmental Health & Safety ehs@sjsu.edu