Hearing protection for schools officers

Hearing protection only works when it is **worn**, is the **right type** and is **well maintained**. It is important to manage it properly to ensure maximum protection. Hearing protection is provided by your school.

### When to wear hearing protection

Schools officers should wear hearing protection when using:

- leaf blowers
- brush cutters, whipper snippers, hand mowers
- power tools
- ride-on mower/tractor
- any equipment or performing any work that is noisy.

### Selecting your hearing protection

When purchasing earmuffs or earplugs make sure they have the Australian Standard approved symbol (seen to the right).

Earmuffs or earplugs must be rated at Class 5 (for noise exposures 105-110 decibels)

- earmuffs provide greater protection from noise than earplugs – earplugs are difficult to insert accurately, the wearer never gets the advertised protection
- earmuffs are easier to use when you have to take hearing protection on and off during the day
- earmuffs are a better choice when working in a job where you get dirty hands
- you can buy a box of cotton sweat pads to put over the cups of your earmuffs to make them more comfortable and not slippery to wear in summer
- earmuffs should be a snug but comfortable fit on your head
- earplugs can be good to wear at times when you are wearing other PPE.

### Maintaining your hearing protection

Hearing protection only works when it is worn, is the right type and is well maintained. It is important to manage it properly to ensure maximum protection.

- Earmuffs need to be replaced immediately if they are damaged.
- Earmuffs should provide a firm but comfortable seal around the ear.
- Cushions on earmuffs should be soft and supple and replaced as soon as they begin to harden or crack.
- Earmuffs should be replaced if the outside cups are indented, cracked or damaged.
- Bands of earmuffs should not be stored or stretched over equipment when not in use.
• Earmuffs should be stored away from direct sunlight when not in use, the band can become distorted when exposed to heat and humidity.
• Earmuffs can be wiped clean with wipes or cleaned with soap and water.
• Disposable earplugs should be thrown away after each use.
• Reusable earplugs can be cleaned using detergent and water and must be dry before the next use.
• If earplugs lose their softness, shrink or become distorted they need to be replaced.
• Earplugs should be stored where they can be kept dry, clean and out of the sun.

Noise induced hearing loss is PREVENTABLE.

Once your hearing is gone it will never come back.

PROTECT your hearing – you won’t get a second chance.

Further information
Further information on noise is available from the Creating Healthier Workplaces website.