

Hearing protection for instrumental music teachers and instructors

Musicians are exposed to high levels of sound through their instruments and amplifiers, so as a musician it is important to protect your ears from damaging noise levels.

Instrumental music teachers and instructors have been identified as being at risk of exposure to excessive noise and therefore are part of the Department of Education's Hearing Conservation Program (Program).

Hearing Conservation Program

The Hearing Conservation Program is aimed at achieving the safe management of noise within a workplace. In response to the mandatory requirements of the [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 \(Qld\)](#), the Program includes audiometric assessments (hearing tests) upon appointment to the department and ongoing at two yearly intervals.

[Attune Hearing](#) is currently the approved provider to conduct the hearing tests for all departmental employees. Education and instruction regarding healthy hearing including the appropriate use of hearing protection will be provided by Attune Hearing when staff have their hearing test. More details about the program are provided in the [Hearing Conservation Program fact sheet](#)

Hearing protection

Custom made hearing protection is an important part of protecting a musician's hearing.

The earplugs supplied as part of the Program will protect ears from irreversible damage without compromising the sound quality of music like traditional earplugs.

Traditional earplugs are made from foam or gel and are designed to simply block out noise, therefore they produce poor sound quality as they reduce the high pitch more than the low pitch sounds.

The musician's earplugs weaken or attenuate all pitches more evenly so the quality of the music is maintained whilst protecting the wearers hearing from damaging noise levels. The plugs are comfortable, durable and discrete.

The earplugs are custom made to fit your ears. Following the audiological assessment, an impression of your ear is made. The earplug is made from a soft substance with an attenuator (or sound filter) that looks like a little plastic 'button' with a mesh-like filter on it, this is the part of your earplug which decreases the volume of sound with little-to-no distortion.

The following information will assist you in understanding this specialised hearing protection, and how to use and maintain it.



When do I wear the musician's earplugs?

- Student lessons – strings, percussion, brass, wind etc.
- All band rehearsals and live performances – stage band, concert band, brass orchestra, string orchestra etc.
- Special performances and practices – ANZAC day, open day, speech night, etc.



Inserting the musician's earplugs

The earplugs will become lubricated by natural oils from your skin and become easier to insert with time and practice. To help in the first days of use, you may wish to smear a small amount of lubricant that is supplied with the new plugs on the canal portion of the earplug to help you insert it into your ear.

1. Take your time when learning to insert your earplugs into your ears. With practice you will become quicker.
2. The **red** is for the **right** ear. The **blue** is for the **left** ear. They are to be inserted in the ear with the writing the correct way around, if the writing is upside down it isn't inserted correctly.
3. Look at the earplug: the thinner part fits into the ear canal. The flat side of the earplug with the attenuator fits flush on the outside of the ear.
4. Take the earplug up to the ear with the correct positioning in mind.
5. Angle the canal portion downwards and inwards into the ear canal, try and think of pushing the earplug in towards the nose – it is important to do this as the ear canal is bent in a V-shape. If you don't get the earplug around the bend, it won't go in.
6. Take the flat part of your index finger and wiggle the earplug into the ear until it fits flush into the ear and it feels like it's slipped around the bend.



Cleaning the musician's earplugs

Wipe with a soft dry cloth or a tissue after use. Store in the case provided. If cleaned and stored correctly, they will not degrade. The material will discolour over time, however this does not affect the function of the earplug.



When will the musician's earplugs be replaced?

Every two years your hearing will be tested as part of the department's Hearing Conservation Program. Please take your earplugs to this appointment. After inspection the audiologist will determine whether they need to be replaced (generally they need to be replaced every 2-3 years).



Lost earplugs?

It is important that your hearing is protected at all times. If you lose your earplugs please notify

Organisational Safety and Wellbeing at: hsw@qed.qld.gov.au

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

For information regarding exposure to noise, hearing protection and healthy hearing access the [Creating Healthier Workplaces website](#).

For hearing test appointments contact: Attune Hearing on 1800 344 677

For questions regarding the Hearing Conservation Program contact: Organisational Safety and Wellbeing hsw@qed.qld.gov.au