



Key to the 4Cs:

Safety Beyond Compliance

The 4Cs of Hearing Safety: Understanding and applying the 4Cs helps you select the right earplugs and earmuffs for your people — and move from compliance to safety.

Comfort

When protection feels comfortable and stays in place, people will wear it.

Communication

Be sure to protect hearing and allow clear communication with co-workers.

Convenience

Provide easy access to the right hearing protection for the job.

Caring

Demonstrate that hearing protection is an important part of life — not just another on-the-job rule.

Comfort Communication Convenience Caring

Comfort

Ears come in all shapes and sizes. The right hearing protection device (HPD) should feel comfortable in the ear or on the head — that means different products for different workers.

How to select the most comfortable earplug.

For long-term wear	Choose Single-Use or Multiple-Use earplugs.
For workers who are exposed to intermittent noise, such as supervisors	Choose Banded earplugs that can be inserted and removed as needed.
To eliminate the feeling of “tightness” in the ear canal	Use low-pressure foam earplugs that expand gently to create a seal, such as Howard Leight Max Lite®.
For workers who have difficulty inserting foam earplugs into their ear canals	Select Howard Leight Matrix™ No-Roll or Multiple-Use earplugs which do not require rolling prior to insertion.
For better fit with pre-molded earplugs	Choose a product that comes in a variety of sizes, such as Howard Leight Fusion® or SmartFit®, which adapts to the contours of the ear canal for a more personalized fit.
To simplify choices and ensure a more personalized fit for each worker	Choose Howard Leight SmartFit® earplugs with Conforming Material Technology™ that uses body heat that adapts to the shape of the ear canal for a comfortable, personalized fit, or MultiMax®, which offers two sizes in one earplug reducing inventories.

How to select the most comfortable earmuff

For workers who are exposed to hazardous noise over the entire workday and demand a high degree of comfort	Choose lightweight Bilsom earmuffs such as Lightning® L1, Thunder® T1 or Clarity® C1 earmuffs.
For hot/humid or extreme cold conditions	Add Cool II® Pads to Bilsom earmuffs to absorb perspiration or provide additional warmth.
For use with hard hats, face shields, welding helmets or respirators	Choose Bilsom Cap-Mounted, Multiple-Position or Neckband earmuffs that can be worn with other personal protection equipment [PPE] without compromising protection from noise.

Comfort **Communication** Convenience Caring

Communication

The right hearing protection device (HPD) reduces noise to a safe level, but avoids overprotection that compromises communication and worker safety on the job.

To protect workers and prevent overprotection, especially in marginal noise environments

Choose HPDs that match the noise levels in your workplace, such as Howard Leight Matrix™ earplugs or Quiet® Band series Banded earplugs or Bilsom Lightning®, Thunder®, Viking™, and Clarity® earmuffs which offer multiple attenuation levels.

To block loud noise while allowing important communication to be heard more naturally

Choose Howard Leight Matrix™ earplugs or Bilsom Clarity® series earmuffs that offer uniform attenuation, blocking low and medium frequencies while voice and other high frequency sounds can be heard without distortion.

To enhance communication for workers with a pre-existing hearing impairment

Select sound amplification earmuffs, such as the Bilsom Impact™ series, that can raise ambient sound to a safe volume, while protecting wearers from hazardous noise.

To protect workers exposed to impulse noise

Choose electronic earmuffs that limit sound amplification to a safe volume and revert to passive hearing protection when noise reaches unsafe levels, such as Bilsom Impact™ and Electro® series earmuffs.

Comfort Communication **Convenience** Caring

Convenience

At work, give employees easy access to hearing protection devices (HPDs) — and make sure that the choices are specifically matched to the work environment.

How to make earplug use more convenient.

To provide a centralized, convenient HPD source	Install user-friendly Earplug Dispensers throughout your facility – a cost-effective solution.
For workers who need to remove their earplugs during the workday.	Choose earplugs with attached cords so they stay within easy reach and don't get lost.
To meet strict hygiene requirement.	Offer Matrix™ No-Roll earplugs or other Single-Use earplugs that can be disposed of often, or easy to maintain Banded earplugs.
For workers whose hands get dirty	Choose Multiple-Use or Matrix™ no-roll earplugs which prevent dirt from transferring from their fingers to the earplug.
To meet inspection and visibility requirements	Choose brightly colored earplugs that can easily be spotted during compliance checks.
To meet process industries' zero-tolerance requirements during production	Choose Detectable earplugs that offer both visual and metal detection for food/beverage processing, pulp & paper, tobacco and other process industries.

How to make earmuff use more convenient.

For workers who use other personal protection equipment, such as hard hats, face shields and respirators	Choose Bilsom Cap-Mounted, Multiple-Position, or Neckband earmuffs that can be worn without compromising hearing protection.
To make sure earmuffs are always close at hand	Offer compact folding earmuffs with a belt case.
To ensure high visibility and enhanced safety for construction workers, transit workers, airport crews or other workers who are exposed to additional risks	Choose Bilsom Lightning Hi-Visibility earmuffs with brightly colored earcups and reflective headbands.
To meet dielectric requirements	Choose earmuffs with robust nondeforming dielectric construction that will retain headband force, such as Bilsom Thunder®, Viking™, and Clarity® series.

Comfort Communication Convenience **Caring**

Caring

Many people don't realize that hazardous noise has cumulative effects. Demonstrating the importance of hearing protection is an important step in a successful hearing conservation program, AND an important factor in maintaining an overall healthy lifestyle.

How to motivate your workers to move beyond compliance and wear hearing protection on the job and at home.

Train workers on the proper use and fit of earplugs and earmuffs – when they start with the company and on an annual basis.

Offer a wide variety of earplugs and earmuffs to fit a range of ears, not just one style for everyone.

Allow your workers to be part of the HPD selection and motivation process – worker input and enthusiasm will set an example across your workforce.

Display informational/motivational posters about hearing conservation throughout your facility, not just in the safety office.

Offer public recognition and praise for workers who always wear their HPDs.

Make sure managers set the right example by wearing their HPDs in noisy areas. This sends a clear signal that from the top down, the company cares about everyone's hearing safety.

Encourage workers to take earplugs home to prevent additional noise exposure – when they mow the lawn, use power tools, attend rock concerts or auto races or participate in shooting sports.

The best hearing protection is worn properly 100% of the time when exposed to hazardous noise.