

HEARING PROTECTION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does "attenuation" mean?

It is the difference between the noise level outside the ear defender and the level inside the ear defender - in other words, the reduction in noise level. Ear defenders attenuate differently at different frequencies.

What does H, M, L stand for?

The letters stand for the value of attenuation at different frequencies: H for high, M for medium and L for low frequencies.

What does SNR mean?

SNR relates to a statistics based single number rating indicating how ear defenders perform across the noise spectrum. Often, individual frequency attenuation can be vastly different to that indicated by the SNR value. SNR and H, M, L are sometimes used incorrectly to determine whether an ear defender is fit for purpose.

What is the legal limit for noise?

The Noise at Work Regulations 1989 permit an 8 hour time weighted maximum exposure level of 85 decibels dB(A).

What are the various standards for the different types of ear protection?

EN352-1:1993	Hearing Protectors – Safety requirements and testing Part 1. Ear-muffs Relates to ear-muffs (headband mounted)
EN352-2:1993	Hearing Protectors - Safety requirements and testing Part 2. Ear-plugs Relates to ear-plugs and also includes custom moulded ear-plugs and banded devices
EN352-3:1997	Hearing Protectors - Safety requirements and testing Part 3. Ear-muffs attached to an industrial safety helmet Relates to ear-muffs fitted to an industrial safety helmet

Sources of further information

Contact the following for further information on PPE:

- Your PPE manufacturer, ie Centurion Safety Products Ltd
- Your PPE distributor
- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Tel: Refer to your local HSE branch
See Yellow pages or local directory for telephone number
- The British Safety Industry Federation (BSIF) Tel: 01745 585600