

Over-Ear Hearing Protection

DT Workshop Equipment Reference — D&T / STEM resource for school workshops | PPE & Protection



Photo: U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Joseph Barron — Public domain — via Wikimedia Commons (100th_AMXS_100th_MXS_test_innovative_in-ear_headset_(5660457).jpg)

Over-ear hearing protectors, or ear defenders, are cups over the ears that reduce loud noise from machines like saws, planers and grinders. They are marked with SNR or NRR ratings and are mandatory PPE in any workshop where machines exceed safe noise levels.

Key Features

- SNR ratings from 25 to 35 dB typical
- Comfortable padded headbands
- Folding models for storage
- Replaceable ear cushions
- Classroom-friendly sizes and colours

Typical Uses in the Workshop

- Protect hearing around saws, planers and extractors
- Wear over earplugs in very loud areas
- Support hearing conservation programmes
- Let students work in noisy machine bays safely

Safe Operation

1. Fit the cups fully over the ears and adjust the headband
2. Check the cups seal around each ear
3. Use consistently wherever noisy machines run
4. Remove after leaving the noisy area
5. Clean and store after each use

SAFETY NOTES

- Ear defenders reduce but do not remove noise risk
- Never modify or compress the cushions
- Check for cracks in the cups and headband
- Match the SNR to the machine noise level
- Do not share without cleaning

Maintenance & Consumables

- Wipe cushions and headbands with soapy water
- Replace cushions annually or when compressed
- Store folded protectors in their cases
- Check headband tension regularly
- Label and number each pair for issue

Specification & Buying Notes

Buy rated protectors (SNR 30+ for machine bays) with replaceable cushions. Coloured bands help identify size. Over-ear protectors are easier for students than earplugs for hygiene.