

Hearing Loss

## 3M™ E-A-R™ Flexible Fit HA Earplug Frequently Asked Questions

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*Q: How is the Flexible Fit earplug different from other push-to-fit earplugs?*

A: A new, one-hand insertion method is offered in addition to the traditional two-hand method. Both methods carry their own attenuation rating. 3M is not changing how push-to-fit earplugs have traditionally been inserted. We are only adding a new option.

*Q: Is it possible to insert other earplugs with one hand if they do not have a one-hand insertion rating?*

A: Laboratory REAT testing used to derive attenuation ratings requires fitting the earplug according to the written instructions. Therefore, using a fitting method different than the one specified by the instructions will invalidate the attenuation rating. Always read and follow all User Instructions.

*Q: The two attenuation ratings are very specific to the insertion method. Does that mean users who insert with two hands will always get higher attenuation than those who use one hand?*

A: Not necessarily. Although the two-hand fitting method carries a higher attenuation rating, neither rating can be relied upon as a precise indicator of the attenuation individuals will achieve. This is due to variation in ear canal size and shape, wearer motivation and fitting skill. That is why 3M recommends individual fit testing of hearing protectors to validate the level of attenuation individuals can get from a particular hearing protector (Personal Attenuation Rating).

*Q: What are some of the possible benefits of the different fitting methods?*

**A: One-hand:**

- Able to insert when only one hand is available
- User's preference for ease of use and convenience

**Two-hand:**

- When a higher attenuation rating (NRR/SNR) is required or preferred
- When a consistent method is desired for all available hearing protectors across an organization

*Q: For one-hand insertion, does it have to be right hand to right ear, etc., or can the user reach over?*

A: Users can use whichever hand they prefer. Regardless of which method is used, the same insertion technique should be used when fit testing so that fit test results reflect the fit of the regular hearing protector as it is worn on the job.

*Q: How do I know when it is time to replace the earplug?*

A: Replace earplugs immediately if the foam tip is damaged, detaching from the stem, or is no longer soft and pliable.

*Q: How deep should the Flexible Fit earplug be inserted?*

A: Insert until the sides of the cone-shaped tip are inside the ear canal and not visible. Individuals with larger ear canals may find it necessary to insert even deeper. Individuals with small or sharply curved ear canals may not be able to achieve this insertion depth. In such cases, an adequate fit may be possible, but should be verified by fit testing. If fit testing is not available, use a different hearing protector. *Image shows minimum recommended insertion depth.*



**Please remember: Always read and follow all User Instructions. For assistance, contact 3M Technical Service at 1 (800) 243-4630.**

*For a downloadable PDF of these FAQs, click here.*

*You can learn more about 3M's E-A-R™ Flexible Fit HA Earplug on MSCDirect.com.*

**[www.mscdirect.com/betterMRO](http://www.mscdirect.com/betterMRO)**

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