

<b>STN</b>	<b>Chrániče sluchu. Odporúčania na výber, používanie, starostlivosť a údržbu. Návod.</b>	<b>STN EN 458</b>  83 2134
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Hearing protectors - Recommendations for selection, use, care and maintenance - Guidance document

Táto norma obsahuje anglickú verziu európskej normy.  
This standard includes the English version of the European Standard.

Táto norma bola oznámená vo Vestníku ÚNMS SR č. 06/16

Rozpracované prekladom.

Obsahuje: EN 458:2016

Oznámením tejto normy sa ruší  
STN EN 458 (83 2134) z októbra 2005

**122977**

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Úrad pre normalizáciu, metrológiu a skúšobníctvo SR, 2016  
Podľa zákona č. 264/1999 Z. z. v znení neskorších predpisov sa môžu slovenské technické normy  
rozmnožovať a rozširovať iba so súhlasom Úradu pre normalizáciu, metrológiu a skúšobníctvo SR.

EUROPEAN STANDARD  
NORME EUROPÉENNE  
EUROPÄISCHE NORM

**EN 458**

March 2016

ICS 13.340.20

Supersedes EN 458:2004

English Version

**Hearing protectors - Recommendations for selection, use,  
care and maintenance - Guidance document**

Protecteurs individuels contre le bruit -  
Recommandations relatives à la sélection, à  
l'utilisation, aux précautions d'emploi et à l'entretien -  
Document guide

Gehörschützer - Empfehlungen für Auswahl, Einsatz,  
Pflege und Instandhaltung - Leitfaden

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDIZATION  
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## Contents

Page

European foreword.....	5
Introduction .....	6
1 Scope .....	7
2 Normative references .....	7
3 Terms and definitions .....	7
4 Symbols and abbreviations .....	9
5 Types of hearing protectors .....	9
5.1 Design forms .....	9
5.1.1 Earmuffs .....	9
5.1.2 Helmet mounted earmuffs .....	10
5.1.3 Earplugs .....	10
5.2 Function mode .....	10
5.2.1 Basic function mode .....	10
5.2.2 Level-dependent hearing protectors .....	11
5.2.3 Active noise reduction (ANR) protectors .....	11
5.2.4 Hearing protectors with external audio input .....	11
6 Selection .....	12
6.1 Principles .....	12
6.2 Selection according to sound attenuation .....	12
6.2.1 Guide to protection rating .....	12
6.2.2 Sound attenuation in practice (Real-world attenuation) .....	13
6.2.3 Acoustical selection methods .....	13
6.2.4 Selection of combination of earmuffs and earplugs .....	15
6.3 Selection according to work environment .....	15
6.3.1 Factors of work environment – overview .....	15
6.3.2 Acoustical factors .....	15
6.3.3 Environmental factors (non-acoustic) .....	17
6.4 Communication .....	19
6.4.1 Essential work related speech communication, especially speech intelligibility .....	19
6.4.2 Effects of over-protection .....	19
6.5 Compatibility with other PPE .....	19
6.6 Selection according to hearing protector types .....	19
6.6.1 Earmuffs – General .....	19
6.6.2 Helmet-mounted earmuffs .....	19
6.6.3 Earplugs – General .....	19
6.6.4 Hearing protectors with additional function modes .....	20
6.7 Medical disorders .....	20
6.8 Ergonomics and fitting .....	20
6.9 Conformity with relevant requirements for incorporated electronics .....	21
6.9.1 Intrinsic safety .....	21
6.9.2 Electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) .....	21
7 Use .....	21
7.1 General .....	21
7.2 Availability of hearing protectors .....	21
7.3 Correct fitting .....	21
7.3.1 General .....	21

7.3.2	Earmuffs.....	21
7.3.3	Earplugs .....	22
7.3.4	Fit check for hearing protectors.....	22
7.4	Simultaneous use of hearing protector with other PPE .....	22
7.4.1	General .....	22
7.4.2	Protective clothing .....	22
7.4.3	Spectacles .....	22
7.4.4	Goggles.....	22
7.4.5	Face shields.....	22
7.4.6	Hoods .....	23
7.4.7	Safety helmets.....	23
7.4.8	Respiratory protection devices .....	23
7.5	Speech intelligibility and signal audibility .....	23
7.6	Instruction and training.....	23
7.6.1	General .....	23
7.6.2	Information.....	23
7.6.3	Special instructions for use including training.....	24
7.7	Period of use .....	24
7.8	Leisure activities.....	25
8	Care and maintenance .....	25
8.1	General .....	25
8.2	Hygiene and cleaning .....	25
8.3	Inspection and replacement.....	25
8.4	Storage.....	25
8.5	Disposal.....	25
Annex A	(normative) Methods for assessing the sound attenuation of a passive hearing protector .....	26
A.1	General .....	26
A.2	Octave band method.....	29
A.3	HML method .....	30
A.4	HML check method.....	32
A.5	SNR method.....	33
Annex B	(informative) Method for assessing the sound attenuation of a hearing protector for impulsive noise.....	34
B.1	General .....	34
B.2	Method.....	34
Annex C	(informative) Selection method for sound-restoration level-dependent hearing protectors using HML-data.....	36
C.1	General .....	36
C.2	Method 1: HML Method.....	36
C.3	Method 2A: HML check method - Measurement check .....	37
C.4	Method 2B: HML check method - Listening method.....	37
Annex D	(informative) Selection method for active noise reduction hearing protectors.....	38
Annex E	(informative) Calculation method for hearing protectors with audio input .....	39
E.1	General .....	39

<b>E.2</b>	<b>Method .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Annex F (informative) Improving field performance and special instructions for use.....</b>		<b>41</b>
<b>F.1</b>	<b>Improving field performance .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>F.2</b>	<b>Special instructions for optimum use.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Annex G (informative) Further guidance on fit check methods for earplugs.....</b>		<b>45</b>
<b>G.1</b>	<b>General information.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>G.2</b>	<b>Fit check methods suitable for all types of earplugs .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>G.3</b>	<b>Fit check method exclusive to custom moulded earplugs.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Annex H (informative) Noise Types.....</b>		<b>47</b>

## European foreword

This document (EN 458:2016) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 159 “Hearing protectors”, the secretariat of which is held by DIN.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by September 2016, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by September 2016.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. CEN [and/or CENELEC] shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

This document supersedes EN 458:2004.

This document has been prepared under a mandate given to CEN by the European Commission and the European Free Trade Association.

According to the CEN-CENELEC Internal Regulations, the national standards organizations of the following countries are bound to implement this European Standard: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

## Introduction

This European Standard is intended to guide employers, supervisors and safety advisors. Additionally, the standard gives information to all who need to use hearing protectors.

Hearing protectors are items of personal protective equipment (PPE) intended to reduce the harmful effects that sound and noise may have on the hearing.

Guidance is provided on how to best select, use and take care of such devices. Tools to estimate the noise exposure level, when a certain hearing protector is used, are also provided.

National bodies may develop national application documents based on this standard.

Hearing protectors are generally available in two main forms: earmuffs and earplugs. Both forms are available with additional features and functions. All have their advantages and disadvantages in terms of attenuation, comfort, ease of use, communication facilities and cost.

In hearing conservation programmes noise hazard areas are identified and the personal noise exposure is assessed. Before a suitable hearing protector is considered, priority should be given to reducing noise at source and/or reducing the exposure time.

If the use of a hearing protector is found necessary or advisable, choosing optimum devices is a complex task. The most important concern is for the protector to provide sufficient attenuation.

It is often desirable to retain the ability to hear speech and warning signals. To achieve this, the hearing protector should not overprotect. In particular, this needs attention at moderate noise levels.

Hearing protectors are supplied with attenuation data in various formats. The attenuation is expressed in decibels and has been derived from laboratory tests. It is important to note that these data have been achieved under controlled laboratory conditions using trained test subjects. Under real working conditions, the attenuation achieved by the user may be lower than that generated by the laboratory testing.

The performance of hearing protectors is subject to natural variability amongst users. Correct fitting, training, regular inspection and user motivation are important to obtain the desired protection. Due to the natural variability, it is not possible to calculate the exact attenuation that a certain hearing protector will give for an individual. If a more accurate prediction is required, some form of individual attenuation check can be made. At high noise level exposures it is advisable to seek expert advice. In some cases dual protection i.e. the use of an earmuff and an earplug combination, may be required.

For hearing protectors to be effective they should be used at all times when the user is in a potentially hazardous noise environment. When selecting hearing protectors, attention should be given to factors influencing comfort and user preference.

## 1 Scope

This European Standard gives recommendations for the selection, use, care and maintenance of hearing protectors.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

EN 352-1, *Hearing protectors — General requirements — Part 1: Ear-Muffs*

EN 352-2, *Hearing protectors — General requirements — Part 2: Ear-plugs*

EN 352-3, *Hearing protectors — General requirements — Part 3: Ear-muffs attached to an industrial safety helmet*

EN 352-4, *Hearing protectors — Safety requirements and testing — Part 4: Level-dependent ear-muffs*

EN 352-5, *Hearing protectors — Safety requirements and testing — Part 5: Active noise reduction ear-muffs*

EN 352-6, *Hearing protectors — Safety requirements and testing — Part 6: Ear-muffs with electrical audio input*

EN 352-7, *Hearing protectors — Safety requirements and testing — Part 7: Level-dependent ear-plugs*

EN 352-8, *Hearing protectors — Safety requirements and testing — Part 8: Entertainment audio ear-muffs*

EN 24869-1, *Acoustics — Hearing protectors — Subjective method for the measurement of sound attenuation (ISO 4869-1)*

EN 61672-1, *Electroacoustics — Sound level meters — Part 1: Specifications (IEC 61672-1)*

EN ISO 4869-2, *Acoustics — Hearing protectors — Part 2: Estimation of effective A-weighted sound pressure levels when hearing protectors are worn (ISO 4869-2)*

EN ISO 7731, *Ergonomics — Danger signals for public and work areas — Auditory danger signals (ISO 7731)*

EN ISO 9612, *Acoustics — Determination of occupational noise exposure — Engineering method (ISO 9612)*

EN ISO 9921, *Ergonomics — Assessment of speech communication (ISO 9921)*

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