"What? I didn't catch that."

Sensitive structures in the inner ear can be damaged when you are exposed to loud noise over 85 decibels. Depending upon the intensity and length of the exposure, this can result in noise-induced hearing loss. Noise-induced hearing loss can be:

- · Immediate or take a long time to be noticeable.
- · Temporary or permanent.
- · Affect one ear or both ears.

But, **noise-induced hearing loss can be prevented** by limiting exposure to loud sounds and/or using hearing protection such as ear plugs or ear muffs to reduce your exposure!

When is hearing protection needed?

- If you have to shout to talk to someone less than 3 feet away.
- When using noisy tools & equipment, firearms or driving noisy vehicles, i.e., tractor, motorcycle, snowmobile, riding lawn mower, etc.
- When playing in a loud band or attending a loud concert.

Remember to ROLL, PULL & HOLD when inserting foam earplugs to get the best protection!

ROLL	PULL	HOLD
Roll the earplug between your fingers to make it into a small, thin "snake."	Reaching over your head with your opposite hand, gently pull the top of your ear up & backwards to straighten out your ear canal. The rolled up earplug should easily slide right in.	Hold the earplug in place with your finger while counting out loud to 30. This will allow the earplug time to expand & fill the ear canal. If your voice sounds muffled you have a good seal.

Images illustrating how to insert soft foam earplugs used with permission from NIOSH.

Take time to make sure you have a good seal

Most of the foam earplug should be inside the ear canal. Cup your hands tightly over your ears. If sounds are much more muffled with your hands in place, the earplug may not be sealing properly. Take the earplug out and try again.

For more information on Noise & Hearing Loss Prevention visit
http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/stats.html

SAFETY MATTERS