

APRIL 2004

## CHOOSING AND USING HEARING PROTECTION

Silence may be golden-but not when it's permanent. Hearing loss is a condition that occurs over time from repeated exposure to excessive noise, over 84 decibels. We can't always prevent noise, but we can prevent hearing loss by following established safety procedures. Using the appropriate hearing protectors should reduce effective sound levels to less than 84 dB or 140 dB peak, for the noise hazards we face each day. Like other kinds of personal protection equipment, you must use the right protection for the job.

Consider the following:

<b>Kinds of noise</b>	What are the noise hazards in your Workplace? How loud is the noise?
<b>Length of exposure</b>	How long will you be exposed to dangerous noise? Will your exposure be for the whole workday or will you come and go in a noisy environment?
<b>Your workplace</b>	What safety hazards exist? Is your workplace confined?
<b>Proper fit</b>	Does the hearing protection provide you with the safety you need? Can you comfortably wear it?
<b>Easy to use</b>	How easy is the protection to insert or put on? Is it easy to clean?
<b>Durability</b>	Is the PPE sturdy enough to last a long time, or disposable one-time-use?



and are easier to store.

**EARMUFFS (Circumaural)** Earmuffs help protect you against moderate to high-level noise. For a proper fit, the earmuff must form a seal around the ear. Hair and earrings should be pushed aside or removed as to insure this proper seal. Glasses can break the seal of earmuffs, so use caution and check the fit. Of course, in some high noise areas, you may have to wear earmuffs and earplugs together

**Advantages:** Easy to put on and take off; protects all parts of the ear. **Disadvantages:** Some are bulky and uncomfortable in hot weather, inconvenient to store. Newer models fold up

**EARPLUGS (Inserts)** Some kinds of earplugs are disposable while others are reusable. Earplugs are inserted into the ear canal and must fit tightly, so that no air can get through. Your hands must be clean before inserting earplugs. If they are carefully fitted, earplugs can cut noise levels by up to 20 dB. **Advantages:** Small, inexpensive, portable, comfortable in hot weather, easy to clean can't be shared. **Disadvantages:** Hard to fit and careless use can introduce dirt into ear canal; molded plugs may be expensive at first and refitting may be necessary later; easily lost.

**Remember:** Never use homemade hearing protection-cotton balls, stereo headsets, etc. These devices DO NOT really protect your hearing



## EYEWASH STATIONS

Plumbed and portable eyewashes must provide a water flow of 1.5 liters (0.4 gallon) to eyes, face and body per minute for 15 minutes in treating a chemical splash. Eyewash station locations should be located as close to the hazard as possible, but must be no more than 10 seconds to reach, and should be within 100 feet from the hazard. For strong acids and caustics, the eyewash station should be within 10 feet.

- **Plumbed** eyewashes must be flushed **weekly** for 3 minutes.
- **Portable** eyewashes must be serviced **quarterly** or per manufacturer's recommendations, whichever is more frequent.

Work centers must maintain written, dated and signed documentation.

In FY-03, 36% of mishaps that occurred at NAS Oceana resulted in sprains or bruised muscles, causing 50 lost workdays. 42% of all mishaps were off-duty. We see a trend of mishaps due to sports related injuries, with 27% of all FY-03 mishaps resulting from sports or recreation activities. The following article is a second in a series of articles on Prevention of Sports Injuries. As winter weather breaks, many of our service members and their families will be hitting the fields with softball in hand.

## Prevention of Sports Injuries- Softball

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### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Common injuries in softball include leg, foot, back, and shoulder injuries.
- A history of prior injury to an extremity indicates an increased risk of re-injury.
- The position played during softball influences the risk of injury. Pitchers suffer more shoulder injuries. Catchers may have a greater number of back and knee injuries due to the amount of time spent in the crouched position. Injuries to the hand are closely

associated with the act of catching and is frequently associated with an inability to accurately judge the flight of the ball and to catch the ball within the gloved hand.

### PERSONAL FITNESS

- Remember to participate in a total body warm-up and stretch routine at least 5 – 10 minutes prior to participation in softball activities.

### EQUIPMENT:

- Rubber molded cleats and the use of baseball hats when batting are equipment items that are mandated during military softball participation.
- Breakaway bases a.k.a. progressive-release bases rather than the use of anchored bases substantially decreases the risk of softball injury when sliding.

- Jewelry, i.e., rings, necklaces, etc. are not recommended during softball activity participation.
- Clothing attire that contain pockets are not recommended due to the risk of fingers getting caught in the piece of clothing.

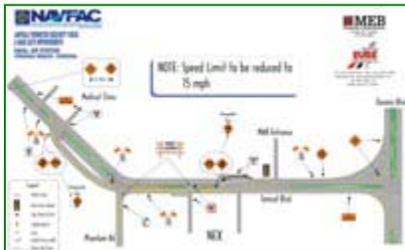
#### TRAINING / TECHNIQUE:

- Pre-participation education from trained coaching staff or from MWR Athletic Department staff is important for softball injury prevention measures. Many softball injuries can be prevented through proper coaching techniques: improving the pitching and throwing techniques, instruction in proper sliding and fielding techniques, instruction in avoiding pitched balls while batting, and the proper use of safety equipment.
- NOTE: Many MWR Facilities provide safety/injury prevention information to coaches, players, and officials regarding preparation, conditioning, and training proper playing techniques.
- The more contact the player incurs with other players, (such as sliding, collisions with other players, etc), the higher the risk of injury.

#### ENVIRONMENT:

- Be aware of the environment around you. Check the playing fields for any predisposing risk factors such as divots, holes, soft drink tops, glass, etc. Fences should be a reasonable distance from fair territory, in good repair, and contain no exposed edges.
- Alcohol consumption should be discouraged during participation in any sporting activity.
- Liquid and nutrition replenishment is recommended to decrease exposure-related illness.
- The size of the field should be proportional to the size of the players.
- A screened – in dugout or similar enclosures will assist in prevention of injury to offensive players and the non-playing members of the defensive team.

REFERENCE: Caine, J., Caine, C., and Lindner, K. Epidemiology of Sport s Injuries.. Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc., 1996.



## MAIN GATE CONSTRUCTION

Continue to be vigilant by watching your speed through the Main Gate construction area on NAS Oceana. To facilitate construction of the new Main Gate at NAS Oceana, a temporary bypass road has been built to route traffic away from the construction site with a **speed limit of 15 MPH**. If you are new to NAS Oceana, you can find more details on the construction and changes to traffic patterns by going to the [Safety Storefront website](#) shown below and/or the [NAS Oceana website](#).

## MISHAPS IN MARCH

1. While participating in live fire training, employee felt shortness of breath after training **(on-duty, 2 lost workdays)**.
2. Employee was securing storage room door when his thumb got caught in the door **(on-duty, 0 lost workdays, human error)**.
3. Employee experienced tightness in lower lumbar region after exercising with free weights **(on-duty, 0 lost workdays)**.



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