

# START SAFE. STAY PROTECTED.

Wearing hearing protection every time you shoot is one of the simplest and most important ways to stay safe. The sound of gunfire can do more than harm your hearing—it can also cause stress, ringing in the ears, and long-term damage that builds over time.

By taking a few extra seconds to use ear protection, you're not just following good hunting practice—you're preserving your ability to enjoy the sounds of nature, conversation, and everyday life for years to come. Protect your hearing. It's a safety habit that lasts a lifetime.



## CONTACT US



### Lincoln

4600 Valley Rd, Suite 420  
Lincoln, NE 68510  
(402) 471-3593



### Kearney

319 West 11th St, Room 106  
Kearney, NE 68845  
(308) 865-5447



### Omaha

1313 Farnam St, Suite 304  
Omaha, NE 68102  
(402) 471-3593



### Scottsbluff

505A Broadway, Suite 700  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361  
(308) 633-3751



[ncdhh@nebraska.gov](mailto:ncdhh@nebraska.gov)



[ncdhh.nebraska.gov](http://ncdhh.nebraska.gov)

# NEBRASKA



2200 N 33rd St.  
Lincoln, NE 68503



(402) 471-0641



[OutdoorNebraska.gov](http://OutdoorNebraska.gov)



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# HUNTING & HEARING SAFETY

# AIM HIGH. PROTECT YOUR HEARING.

Not all dangers are visible. While we often focus on physical safety, the powerful noise of gunfire can quietly cause permanent hearing damage. Awareness and protection make all the difference.

Noise-induced hearing loss caused by gunfire is among the most preventable conditions in Nebraska. More than 10 million Americans already suffer from irreversible hearing damage caused by excessive noise.

Excessive noise damages delicate hair cells in the inner ear, causing hearing loss. This hearing loss is a cumulative process affected by level and exposure time. It is irreversible, worsens with aging and occurs randomly.

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing offers community education programs, referrals and other materials on this topic. Please see back panel for contact information.

# HOW DANGEROUS IS GUN FIRE TO HEARING?

## PEAK SOUND PRESSURE LEVELS (SPL)

Type of Gun	SPL (dB)
.44 Revolver	170
44 Automatic	165
M-16	160
.357 Revolver	160
12 Gauge Shotgun	155
.38 Revolver	150
.22 Rifle	145

Noise levels above **85dB** can cause permanent damage

Gunfire is one of the most hazardous non-occupational noises. A single shot near an unprotected ear can cause immediate, permanent hearing loss. Just because you've avoided hearing damage in the past doesn't mean you'll be safe in the future.

Exposure to peak sound pressure is similar to dropping a glass bottle: Sometimes it breaks; sometimes it doesn't.

# IMPACT OF HEARING LOSS

Hearing loss can affect you in the field as well as at home. Here are some things that you might miss out on during your next hunt if you don't protect your hearing today:

**Mild Hearing Loss:** Soft sounds like leaves crunching, bird calls, or a whisper from your hunting partner.

**Moderate Hearing Loss:** Important cues such as turkeys gobbling, approaching waterfowl, or a quiet call for help.

**Severe Hearing Loss:** Only loud, nearby sounds remain—like a duck call, gunfire, or a dog's bark.

# PREVENTION

There are hundreds of products designed to protect your hearing—ranging from inexpensive earplugs to advanced electronic earmuffs. Combining protective devices can enhance your level of protection, especially for frequent shooters. No matter which device you choose, **proper fitting is key.**

## LOOK FOR THESE TYPES OF PROTECTIVE WEAR:

- Disposable foam earplugs
- Reusable silicone earplugs
- Electronic earplugs
- Non-electric earplugs

