

# Hearing Protection

1. Why do we need it? Because hearing damage is irreversible.
2. Do we really need it with a Goldwing (the Cadillac of motorcycles)? Yes
3. What is the most harmful noise while riding? Wind noise, studies show that one hour of wind noise at freeway speeds can cause hearing damage.
4. How is noise measured? Decibels or db. Studies show that motorcycle wind noise @37 mph is comparable to operating a lawn mower or leaf blower @ 80-85db. The CDC says noise above 70db over a prolonged period of time may start to damage your hearing and noise above 120db can cause immediate harm to your ears.
5. What can we do to reduce our riding noise levels? Helmet type and brand, windshield style and position, ear plugs, wind deflectors.
6. Are any of these enough by themselves? No, not from my research. A study done on helmets and wind noise shows most only provide 3-5db of protection.
7. What is NRR? Noise Reduction Rating. NRR is how ear plugs are rated. The highest rated ear plugs are 33 and provide a 29.5db reduction. ( $NRR - 7 \div 2 = \text{db reduction}$ )
8. Are all ear plugs the same? No, there are many types, styles, materials and ratings available. They can range from cotton balls, foam, jell, clay, formed, custom molded, muffs, specialty, and many more. Thankfully most are readily available at a location near you or on the internet. I have tried many and found the specialty plugs work the best for me, I use No-Noise, they are designed to filter out wind noise using a specialty designed ceramic acoustic filter ( they claim to reduce 29.6db of wind noise). There are similar brands like Alpine Hearing that have interchangeable filters. Prices range from a few cents a pair to hundreds of dollars.
9. Can loud noise cause other problems? Yes, exposure to noise can increase stress, anxiety, loss of sleep and fatigue. It can also cause elevated blood pressure, heart disease and increased heart rate among other things.
10. What are some of the signs of hearing loss? Speech and other sounds seem muffled, difficulty hearing high pitched sounds ( birds, doorbell, telephone, alarm clock), difficulty hearing conversations in a noisy place like a restaurant, difficulty hearing phone conversations, you need to increase the volume of radio or television, ringing in the ears, are hypersensitive to certain sounds.