

March 2024

NOISE CANCELLING HEADPHONES AS PPE?

**1st Vic. OHS
Manslaughter
Charge**

**When are Child
Seat Restraints
Required?**

**Economics of
Safety**

**World
Hearing Day**

**BBQ Wire
Brushes**



What's New in February?

With World Hearing Day on 3rd of March it's timely to question if noise cancelling headphones are safe to use in hearing protection (PPE) zones?

Also this month;

- When are child car seat restraints required?
- Real purpose of "baby on board sign".
- Economics of safety
- Are barbeque wire brushes safe?

Stay Safe!



SAFETY ACTION TEAM



Gary Rowe



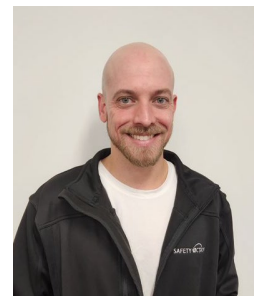
Andrea Rowe



Stephen Weber



Sarah Oliver



Nick Bennett

Safety Webinar – 8th March 2024

Join us at 10am on the Friday 8th March for our free monthly webinar to keep you up to date on Workplace Health and Safety. Gary and the team present short informal sessions of only 20 to 30 minutes on topical issues and answer your question.

[Register Here](#)

Missed our last webinar? View it [here](#)



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Are Noise Cancelling Headphones Safe?

A reader has advised some of their staff have started wearing their own noise cancelling headphones in hearing protection (PPE) zones, so they can listen to music while they work, and asked two very good questions:

- 1) Will the workers hearing be protected with noise cancelling headphones, or will the music simply add to the noise level?
- 2) Will the music played in the headphones prevent workers hearing warnings eg vehicle horns, emergency alarms, or co-workers calling out?

Our good friends at 3M, who specialise in high-quality science-based work solutions, advise noise cancelling headphones are safe as long as they comply with the relevant Australian Standards eg AS 1270: Hearing Protectors.

The noise cancelling headphones, compliant with AS 1270, provide the stated noise reduction eg between 24 to 32 decibel reduction against ambient sources, but simultaneously allows music, radio or phone calls via Bluetooth from smart phones.



Airpods do not protect hearing and are not PPE

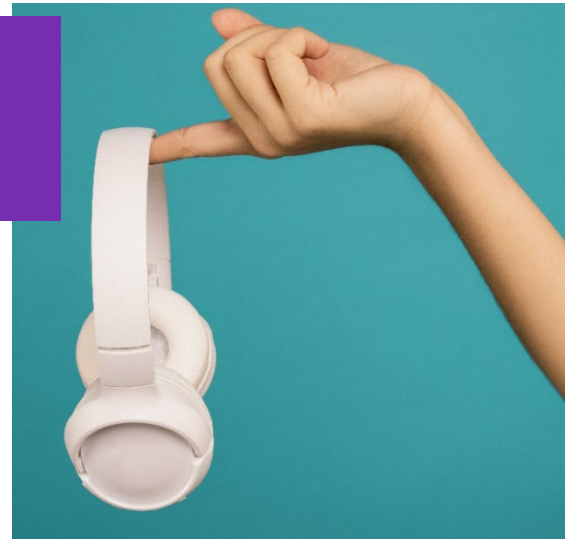


3M brand noise cancelling headphones

For example, 3M PELTOR brand Protac III headphones have built-in microphones that allow the wearer to hear desired music and ambient sounds, but limits the noise coming into the earmuff to a safe 82 decibels (dB). The benefit is unlike normal hearing protection, the wearer can hear machine sounds, warning signals or someone talking to them without removing their hearing protection.

Note: Air pods, even noise cancelling type, do not provide any hearing protection, as they are not designed to reduce harmful levels of ambient noise entering the ear, as properly designed earmuffs do when compliant with AS 1270.

There are varying models of noise cancelling headphones so check; the sound attenuation level provided against what you require, compliance with AS1270, and desired comfort level and whether helmet mounted or separate earmuffs.



WORLD HEARING DAY

There are 4 million Australians currently living with hearing loss. World Hearing day, held on the 3rd March, raises awareness on how to prevent unnecessary hearing loss and promotes better ear protection and health.

Over 80% of ear and hearing care needs remain unmet globally. Deeply ingrained social misperceptions and mindsets are key factors that limit efforts for preventing hearing loss.

World Hearing Day aims to:

- Promote public health actions for hearing care;
- Raise awareness of hearing loss at national and community levels across the world;
- Encourage better behaviour towards healthy ear and hearing care (EHC) practices.

For More information visit [The World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/world-hearing-day).



Real Purpose of "Baby on Board" Signs

Baby on Board signs in cars are not to alert emergency personnel to search accident vehicles for children, as we are assured standard emergency training includes checking vehicles for occupants in all circumstances.

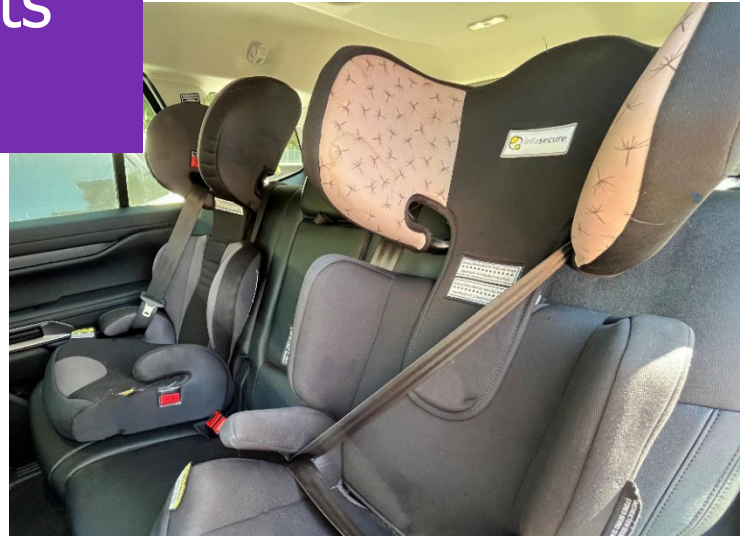
Therefore, the signs are simply to let fellow motorists know you have "precious cargo" on board.



When Are Child Restraints Required?

When can a child switch from an anchored child seat harness to a booster seat? When are children allowed to use a front seat, and what type of restraints meet the regulations? These are some of the questions often asked by parents and grandparents.

The rules for child safety restraint in cars vary by state but we summarise the main requirements here.



Special booster seat using car seatbelt for 7 years or older, smaller children

Anchored child seat with harness

- Under 6 months age to be rear facing capsule.
- After 6 months old, up to 7 years, forward facing anchored seat with harness.

Booster Seat with Car Seatbelt

- From 7 years of age, but preferably if child at least 145cm tall, booster seat with car seatbelt.
- Best practice checks to safely use booster seats:
 - Can they sit with their entire back against the seat back with their knees comfortably bent over the seat edge? eg legs long enough.
 - Does the lap belt sit low across the hips and touch the thighs?
 - Does the shoulder sash of the seatbelt sit across the middle of the shoulder, not on the neck, or across the arm?
 - Is the child mature enough or well-behaved enough to stay in the correct seating position for duration of the trip?

Special Booster for Smaller Children

- If child is over 7 years but too small for standard booster with car seatbelt, per above checks, use a special booster possibly up to 10 years of age.

When can Kids Sit in Front Seat?

- Generally, from 7 years of age.
- Under 7 years of age only if no rear seat, eg sports car, or all rear seats used by other children under 7 years, and child in front seat is in a properly fitted child seat eg top tether with harness.
- Under 6 months old, in rear facing capsule, but only if no passenger airbag.

\$1.3 Million Fine for Victorian First Workplace Manslaughter



In a landmark case, LH Holding Management Pty Ltd, trading as Universal Stone and Marble, has become the first company convicted under Victoria's workplace manslaughter laws. The conviction comes after a tragic incident at a Somerton factory, where a 25-year-old subcontractor was fatally crushed by a forklift operated by the company's sole director, Laith Hanna.

The Victorian Supreme Court sentenced the company to a \$1.3 million fine after pleading guilty to negligent conduct that breached a duty of care and resulted in the worker's death. Additionally, Laith Hanna was convicted and placed on a two-year Community Corrections Order, requiring him to complete 200 hours of unpaid community work and a forklift operation course.

The court also ordered the company and Hanna to pay \$120,000 in compensation to the worker's family for pain and suffering. A WorkSafe investigation revealed that the company failed to take reasonable precautions to ensure the safe operation of the forklift, such as driving with the load low to the ground and keeping a safe distance from other people.

This case serves as a stark reminder of the severe personal and financial consequences that employers face if they neglect the health and safety of their workers. WorkSafe Executive Director of Health and Safety, Dr. Narelle Beer, emphasized that workplace harm is entirely preventable and highlighted the importance of adhering to safety protocols, especially when using mobile plant equipment like forklifts.

Employers are urged to implement comprehensive traffic management plans, effective communication systems, appropriate signage and barriers, visibility controls, and ensure that operators are adequately trained and that equipment is maintained according to manufacturer's recommendations.

Consider additional forklift safety features, like "[SEnS+, Toyota's Smart Environment Sensor Plus™](#)", which detects pedestrians and obstructions, warns the forklift operator, and if necessary adjusts speed and stability.



Economics of Safety

Below is a selected summary of the key points most relevant to workplace safety from the renowned economist, Thomas Sowell's latest book entitled Economic Facts and Fallacies.



How to Get Unpopular Programs Approved

Most fallacies use vague terms which sound nice and are difficult to argue against eg fair, social justice, equality. Politicians often use this technique to get unpopular and bad policies approved.

Beware of the "Fog of lofty idealistic rhetoric"

Open-Ended Fallacy

No one argues against health, safety, open space, clean air, or clean water. However, these are open-ended objectives, and resources are always limited.

Open-ended demands lead to ever-expanding programs, bureaucracies, and budget blow-outs. There is always more you could do to improve safety, and other worthy social programs, it never ends. So, what should we do?

We as safety professionals need to consider if alternate programs, other than our own pet projects, might provide better safety results and more beneficial use of available resources. Of course, if there is a serious non-compliance or life safety risk we need to be clear about the problem and firm in our advice to management.

Chess-Piece Fallacy

The chess-piece fallacy assumes changing human behaviour is as easy as moving chess pieces on a board eg issue a new policy or procedure. However, everyone has their own preferences, values, and plans, which often conflict with corporate safety experiments.

Our safety leadership foundation course includes an introduction to safety culture, and clearly identifies the difficulty and lengthy time needed to change the corporate culture, particularly for large organisations. Therefore, we need to plan carefully and consult with all our stakeholders before organisational change, and allow sufficient training and time to achieve the desired results.

Zero-Sum Fallacy

Many see "rich" people and think someone must be worse off. This is incorrect, as voluntary transactions would not take place unless both parties benefited. Apple founder, Steve Jobs, made billions, but Apple products have added trillions of dollars to the world economy in communication and business efficiency.

Are Barbecue Wire Brushes Safe?

With many Australian families enjoying a BBQ at home this summer, it is important to consider the quality and condition of our barbecue equipment including wire brushes.

The metal bristles on barbecue brushes can become loose and cause serious throat or digestive injuries if ingested, with thousands of injuries reported around the world, from people accidentally consuming the bristles.



In July last year a nine-year old underwent life-saving surgery in Newcastle, after swallowing a small wire bristle inside a bacon-and-egg roll, from a barbecue brush. The wire pierced her oesophagus and pushed into the carotid artery in her neck.

Consumer Protection WA recommends the following tips to help prevent injury to your friends and family:

- Buy a quality product - check the bristles' strength and see if you can pull any out with your fingers;
- Inspect it regularly - If you see loose bristles or can pull any out, replace it;
- Replace the brush as soon as you see it looks bent, damaged or filled with too much grease and dirt;
- Check the plate and grill regularly for any bristles before use;
- Examine your food before you eat it and;
- Use safer alternatives to clean your grill such as bristle-free brushes, grill scrapers, stone cleaners or tin foil and tongs.

Nobody throws a BBQ as good as me...
My record is 6 metres.

