

SEPTEMBER 2020 CCDC SAFETY MESSAGE

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL PROTECT YOUR HEARING MONTH

Most of us are aware that in occupational settings we can be impacted by loud noises that can be dangerous to our hearing health. To protect our hearing, we may use hearing protection as a sound barrier.

However, for the last six months many of us have been on the other end of the noise spectrum. There is less environmental noise (e.g. less traffic, less construction work, fewer people in workspaces) but our conversations have become harder to understand as our voices are muffled by masks and we communicate across a six foot social distance.

Muffled speech challenges our hearing and comprehension ability with or without hearing protection. Rather than yelling louder to be understood there are some tips to help others understand you better while speaking with a mask.

To be sure you are understood:

Move to a quieter location.

Make sure you have the listener's attention.

Ensure your face is seen by the listener's eyes. Do not speak downwards unless talking to someone shorter than yourself.

Speak a little louder but do not yell. Yelling distorts sound.

Speak a little slower. People process sound and the comprehension of that sound at different rates.

Lower the pitch of your voice slightly. Older people may have natural hearing loss in the upper frequencies and can have a hard time hearing a complete word at a higher pitch.

Enunciate your words completely ensuring that you finish the word or sentence at the same pitch, volume, and speed.

Ask the listener if they were able to hear and understand what you have said.

While we may be enjoying less environmental noise and more natural background noise, we still need to use hearing protection around power tools and equipment at work or at home. And we must rise to the challenge of communicating well to others using with another sound barrier - our ever present mask.

Stay safe but be heard.

THINK SMART, BE AWARE, BE FLEXIBLE, BE EDUCATED