



# COMBAT ARMS®

★ EARPLUGS ★

## COMBAT ARMS EARPLUG: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. When is the Combat Arm Earplug (CAE) in the impulse noise (weapons fire) mode and when is it in the steady/continuous noise mode?

When weapons are being pointed at you (or when you are the one pointing the weapon) the pistol and the hole on the dial should be pointing toward the earplug (your head). When you feel the dial click in place, you are in the impulse noise mode. All other positions on the dial pointing toward the earplug (your head) are in the steady/continuous noise mode.

2. When do I set the dial for either impulse noise or steady/continuous noise?

If you are firing a weapon (in training or in combat) and you have to maintain situational awareness and hear verbal communication, set the dial in the open impulse noise mode. For steady/continuous noise, like in a helicopter or tracked vehicle, set the dial in the closed mode. You will be protected from weapons fire in either mode, but only from steady/continuous noise in the closed mode.

3. How does the CAE protect my hearing from weapons fire or explosions in the impulse noise open mode?

The blast energy (impulse noise) must pass through two calibrated holes that filter the more hazardous sound energy. Think of the reduction of this sound energy as sound friction which increases as the impulse noise becomes louder. Meanwhile, lower level sound like conversation get through the filter relatively unchanged.

4. How protective is the CAE in the impulse position?

When properly inserted, Army studies found the plug protective for impulse noise (weapons fire and explosions) up to 193 dBP. That covers the loudest weapons in the inventory at the firer's position.

5. Why does weapon's fire sound louder in the impulse noise mode than in the steady/continuous noise mode?

More low-frequency sound energy, which is not as hazardous to hearing as high-frequency sound, gets through in the open position.

6. How do I determine the correct size?

It is essential that someone with the appropriate training fits you with the correct size. Sizes are color-coded – small (olive drab), medium (yellow) and large (red). An eargage will provide an approximation of the correct size, but the insertion of a trial earplug is needed to confirm. A recommended sizing distribution for a military population would be 25% small, 60% medium and 15% large. Approximately 1% will require a different size in each ear. There will be a shift toward the smaller sizes for females, African Americans and younger personnel. Conversely, there is a shift toward the larger sizes for Caucasian males.

7. As long as it stays in my ear, will any size work? What's the problem if the size is a little off?

You want these earplugs to be tough on the noise, not your ears. For your own comfort and maximum protection you want the size that fits best. The correct size also keeps the ear sealed without having to constantly reinsert the plug.

8. How do I insert the earplug properly and know when it is in correctly?

Reach behind your head and pull your ear out to straighten the ear canal. Insert the plug with your free hand. Gently tug on the plug for a required tension. Your own voice will also sound low-toned, muffled even more so in the closed mode. If the plugs do not appear to be blocking any sound, try again to reinsert them. If they still do not appear to be working, have a person trained in earplug fitting recheck you for the correct size. Remember, if you don't have them in correctly, you might as well not have them in at all.

9. What is the best way to clean the earplug?

Use plain soap and water only; no harsh chemicals or detergents. Ensure the soap is thoroughly rinsed off so no holes are clogged. For best results, separate the plug from the plastic housing and clean the plug separately.

10. How do I know when to replace the Combat Arms Earplug?

Replace if the plug flanges become torn, harden or cannot be cleaned, or when the selector dial becomes loose when rotated and does not appear to seal and block sound.

11. How should I store the earplug?

When not in use, keep in the plastic case provided or tie the cords to the helmet webbing for quick access.

12. Can I remove the cord?

Yes, it just snaps off. Note: the cord cannot be re-attached.

13. Are any other modifications to the CAE recommended?

None are recommended. Any other modifications could degrade the ability of the earplug to protect you from hazardous noise and/or interfere with your ability to maintain situational awareness and hear verbal communications.



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