



## Title CSOP Hearing Protection

Version No: 2.4

Effective date: 11/04/2023

### APPROVALS

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Signature</u>
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Reviewed by:	Phil Bridle – Head of Operations		
Approval:	Dr Justin Squires – Deputy Clinical Lead		
Next Review Date:	April 2025		

### HISTORY

<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Summary of Amendment</b>
June 2013	2.0	Addition of TCAA/HEMS (archived)
24/06/2015	2.1	Review, no amendments
June 2018	2.2	Review, no amendments
May 2020	2.3	Review, info re headsets in level 3 PPE added
Feb 2023	2.4	<u>Reviewed, no amends</u>

### REFERENCES

<b>Document Reference Number</b>	<b>Document Title</b>

#### 1. Purpose

Protection of hearing is mandatory for all crew, observers and passengers at all times. Unless specifically contraindicated, hearing protection must be provided for all patients, including those who are immobilised and / or unconscious.



**Title CSOP    Hearing Protection**

Version No: 2.4

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**2. Scope**

It is well documented that exposure to intense noise, even for short periods can damage hearing, this damage can be either temporary or permanent.

Children and infants are particularly at risk.

It is commonly accepted that noise may worsen anxiety and stress.

As an employer TAAS has a duty to protect its employees and those that we serve.

**3. HEMS**

**3.1 Crew & Observers**

All crew and observers shall wear an approved helmet at all times whilst working in or around the aircraft whilst the engines are running. This helmet must be correctly sized with appropriate padding to ensure a close fit, and the earpieces must be adjusted to form a comfortable but tight seal. If glasses are worn, these should be of a type that does not restrict the function of the helmet earpieces. The use of in-ear audio-equipment or anything else that restricts the seal of the earpieces is discouraged. A dispensation for wearing an approved helmet has been agreed for any member of the crew or observer who is wearing a respirator hood in accordance with the current Level 3 PPE precautions for anticipated/actual AGP interventions during flight. In this instance for the duration of the patient transfer to hospital a David Clark headset should be worn.

**3.2 Passengers**

Passengers carried in the aircraft must be offered and encouraged to use hearing protection during the pre-flight brief. This can consist of either an aircraft headset, plugged in to the communications circuit, or a set of industrial-type ear defenders.



**Title CSOP    Hearing Protection**

Version No: 2.4

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**3.3 Patients**

Hearing protection must be considered for all patients, even for short transfers.

Patients fall into three categories:

1) Conscious patients, non-immobilised. Must be offered and encouraged to use hearing protection, which must be fitted during the pre-flight brief. This can be either:

- An aircraft headset, plugged into the communications circuit so that the Active Noise Reduction facility functions. The patient circuit may be isolated preventing feedback, and rendering the headset microphone useless. Alternatively, if the clinician on the doctor's seat plugs into the rear communications system, the rear cabin can be isolated, allowing free communication with the patient. The isolation facility must be turned off during take-off and landing, so the crews can hear instructions from the captain. The Aircraft headset must not be used on any patient where they could become contaminated with blood or vomit.
- Industrial-type ear defenders

2) Conscious Patients with Spinal Immobilisation Head Immobilisation:

Head Immobilisation devices offer no noise reduction or hearing protection. Conscious patients should have in-ear disposable foam earplugs fitted before the head-blocks are fitted. This may not be possible in a patient with a possible base of skull fracture.

3) Unconscious patients:

Unless contraindicated (base of skull fracture) disposable in-ear foam earplugs should be fitted, before application of immobilisation devices / head blocks. Earplugs must be removed on arrival at hospital.

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**Title CSOP    Hearing Protection**

Version No: 2.4

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**Storage**

Device	Located
Aircraft Headset	Cage behind rear seat Spares: Responsibility of Sloane
Industrial ear defenders	Cage behind rear seat Spares: Medical equipment store
In-ear ear defenders	Head-block / immobilisation equipment bag Spares: medical equipment store

**4. TCAA-**

**4.1 Flight Crew**

Will wear helmets provided by the aviation operator.

**4.2 Clinical Partner Teams**

Will wear their own compatible helmets or spare helmets provided by TCAA.

**4.3 Passengers**

Passengers carried in the aircraft must be offered and encouraged to use hearing protection during the pre-flight brief. This will be either a headset or spare helmet which is carried on TCAA.

**4.4 Patients**

It is the responsibility of the Clinical Partner Teams to provide the patient with hearing protection as they feel appropriate. The TCAA aircraft will carry spare ear protection as per TCAA SOP 021



**Title CSOP Hearing Protection**

Version No: 2.4

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**5. Cleaning & Disinfection**

In-ear foam earplugs	Disposable – not to be reused
Aircraft headset	Not to be used where contamination with blood or vomit is possible. Wipe clean with surface disinfectant wipes and dry before replacing in carry bag
Industrial ear defenders	After every use, and if lightly contaminated wipe clean with surface disinfectant wipes and dry before stowing in cage. If heavily contaminated, or if the foam insert is soaked dispose of the entire unit as clinical waste and replace.

**6. Definitions/Acronyms:**

Abbreviations	Definitions
TAAS	The Air Ambulance Service
TCAA	The Children’s Air Ambulance
CPT	Clinical Partner Team
AGP	Aerosol Generating Procedure
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment

**End of Document**