

HEARING PROTECTION FACTS AND FIGURES

Introduction

The OHS act stipulates that workers must wear hearing protection devices in prescribed areas where the noise level is above 85dB(A). It further requires that such hearing protection devices comply with the requirements with the applicable part of SABS 1451 – the standard specification for hearing protectors.

SABS specifications and its role

SABS specifications stipulate minimum attenuation values across a range of frequencies that hearing protectors shall comply with. In addition it prescribes the method of test to be in accordance with internationally accepted standards – in this case ISO 4869.

SABS, as an independent test laboratory, regularly tests hearing protection devices in accordance with the above standard and test method. On completion of such a test it will issue a test report indicating whether the units tested comply or fail the specification.

Based on the test report, and provided that additional SABS requirements regarding quality and consistency of production methods and procedures are adhered to, the SABS may grant a mark permit to a manufacturer which allows the manufacturer to display the SABS certification mark on such hearing protection devices. Such a mark permit is subject to frequent re-examination and re-testing to ensure continuous compliance to the specification of these hearing protection devices.

A test report **does not ensure** that all units manufactured actually comply with SABS 1451. It merely states that the samples submitted was tested and complied or failed. However, once granted a SABS mark permit, the SABS endeavours to ensure that **all units manufactured** will be in compliance with the attenuation requirements, e.g. Noise-Ban™ Elite.

Noise-Ban™ custom-made hearing protection

H.A.S.S Industrial is in possession of a SABS test report number stating that Noise-Ban™ hearing protectors does meet with the minimum attenuation requirements given in SABS 1451 Part 2. (The full SABS test result is available on request)

In accordance with the process described above, the SABS has granted a Mark Permit Number to H.A.S.S Industrial for the Noise-Ban™ Elite custom-made hearing protection devices. The fact that these devices carry the SABS Mark of Approval constitutes independent evidence that each and every Noise-Ban™ Elite manufactured and fitted meet with the attenuation requirements.

Currently Noise-Ban™ Elite is the only hearing protection device (earmuffs, earplugs and custom-made hearing protection devices) that is manufactured under the SABS Mark Permit and therefore allowed to display the SABS Approved Performance Mark.

Hearing Conservation Programme Consultants (HCPC)

What makes Noise-Ban™ Elite unique in this regard is that all Noise-Ban™ Elite units are fitted by HCPC who are evaluated for competency by the SABS on a regular basis. These competencies include:

- Taking of ear impressions for manufacturing to the exact dimensions of the ear canal
- Fitting of the manufactured unit and control to ensure wearer comfort
- Computerised testing for a leak-tight test fit of **each unit** in the ear canal of the user
- Adjustment and computerised testing for the correct attenuation
- Capturing the results of these tests in a database that forms part of H.A.S.S Industrial Total Quality Management System
- Regular consultations between the HCPC and the user that includes service of the Noise-Ban™ Elite unit to ensure ongoing compliance with specification SABS 1451
- It is required from all HCPC to do a calibration check on the computerised Attenuation Control Unit (ACU) before proceeding to fit Noise-Ban™ Elite units.

Client benefits

SABS Product Certification acts on behalf of the user by ensuring that the manufacturer (H.A.S.S Industrial) will continuously deliver only units that are in compliance with SABS 1451 specifications – for the user's peace of mind.

This ensures in practice that the user receives:

- A quality product adhering to SABS 1451
 - Guaranteed attenuation – an important safety feature
 - Optimum communication – an important safety feature
- A follow-up service to continue receiving the above and continued compliance with the SABS 1451
- Participation in a Hearing Conservation Programme controlled by H.A.S.S Industrial Total Quality Management System

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