



**From:** Elliott H. Berger

**Date:** January 3, 2005

**Re:** Reuse and washing of foam earplugs

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The E-A-R Classic is a PVC foam earplug that is suitable for reuse, but inexpensive enough to be treated as a disposable single-use product when circumstances require. Our experience over the past 25 years has demonstrated typical use rates of one pair/day to one pair every other day. However, we have had customers report use rates, which worked acceptably for them, of from five pairs/day in particularly dirty environments to one pair every month at the other extreme. The appropriate rate for any particular customer should fall in this range, and will be controlled by the environment in which the earplug is used, the noise levels to which the users are exposed, and the personal skin and body oil characteristics of those using the product. As an aside, some wearers find that upon first use of foam earplugs, the plugs themselves act as removers of excess-wax, and thus are particularly soiled during the first few uses, necessitating more frequent initial replacement.

Normally, the Plug can be rolled down (i.e. rolled and compressed into a tiny cylinder), and re-rolled down for use about 5 times or more without significant degradation in its noise reduction capabilities. Once removed from the earcanal and allowed to re-expand, the Plug should return to its original uncompressed shape, and softness. If not, or if the plugs are excessively soiled or contaminated, or covered with slippery earwax which would make a roll down difficult, discard the plugs.

At the option of the user, E-A-R Classic Plugs can also be washed prior to reuse. The Plugs may be washed several times before their attenuation abilities begin to diminish. The Plugs should be cleaned in warm water using a mild diluted liquid detergent, and then rinsed in clear water. After excess moisture is squeezed from the Plugs, they should be air dried on a clean surface. If the Plugs do not return to their original shape, softness, and expansion characteristics, when dry, they should be replaced.

Since Aearo Company has no control over the environment in which E-A-R Plugs are used, the circumstances or frequency of use, or the establishment or supervision of washing procedures, any reuse or washing must be the responsibility of the individuals deciding to reuse the product, and/or the responsibility of those who are specifying the product's utilization and reuse.