

When to use a windscreen on a Microphone



HOSA Windscreen
MWS-225

Windscreens come in all shapes and sizes (examples right). Currently, when you purchase any major microphone brand, the associated windscreen will typically be included in the box. Keep your windscreens stored in a controlled environment to help keep them from becoming brittle (and breaking apart).



There's a perfect reason why a "Windscreen" is called a Windscreen! You guessed it – It's because windscreens are mainly used outdoors to protect the microphone element from those annoying wind bursts. Some recording engineers also use windscreens to help with "plosives" (those pops, P's, and B's heard from singing or talking too close to the microphone). These plosives are bursts of air that singers frequently produce during a recording session, and even though a windscreen can sometimes help in this regard - the truth is that windscreens are not made for this purpose. If you are playing a gig outside, you should consider using windscreens if you're not already using them. Windscreens should be cleaned regularly to remove dried-up saliva and sanitize the windscreens from any germs or bacteria build-up. See our Handout on Cleaning Microphones.

Windscreens are clearly designed for outdoor use. If you need to get rid of "plosives" in the studio, you will need to use a "Pop Shield" or "Pop Filter." Pop Filters are specifically made for helping to reduce "plosives" generated by singers and spoken word recordings (voice-overs, speeches, spiels) in a recording studio.

When to use a "Pop Filter" on a Microphone



Pop Filters are used in recording studios and exclusively for indoor applications. When using a Pop Filter, the talent (singer, voice, speech, etc.) should be directly in front of the microphone (Pop Filter). A Pop Filter is ineffective if the vocalist stands to the side or far away. Pop Filters are specifically designed to reduce/eliminate the popping sounds caused by the "plosives" created by the vocalist. It's important to note that Pop Filters do not remove background noises and are not necessary for any live performances.

Do you need to use a Pop Filter? It depends on what you are recording. Are you just recording a Podcast or Spiel (spoken word / general announcements)? Or are you recording the vocals for your future hit songs? My standard procedure is to use a pop filter anytime you are recording singers and only use it for speech-related recordings when necessary. Either way, every recording studio should have a Pop Filter on standby.