When to Use an Alcohol Protecting Group

A silicone protecting group can be used to protect any alcohol that you don't want to react.

Some Examples:

LAH is not compatible with protic groups such as alcohols



This is not an issue with $NaBH_4$. It is a more mild reducing agent and is even routinely mixed with a protic solvent, CH_3OH .



Strong organometallic reagents like R-Li and R-MgBr are extremely basic in addition to being nucleophilic. These reagents are not compatible with alcohols as they will react together in an acid/base reaction.



Protecting groups are also sometimes used prior to an oxidation reaction where an alcohol would undergo an undesired oxidation during the reaction.



These conditions will oxidize both the secondary alcohol and the aldehyde. If you want to prevent the alcohol from being oxidized, you can protect it prior to the oxidation reaction.