

HEAR AROUND EUROPE

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ARMY HEARING PROGRAM EUROPE

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Contacts

Bavaria AHP Manager

CPT Marisa Ragonesi
marisa.l.ragonesi.mil@health.mil
314- 590-2487

LRMC AHP Manager

CPT Victoria Martin
victoria.m.martin26.mil@health.mil
314-590-6901

PHCE-AHP

Hearing Program Manager—Europe
LTC M. Joel Jennings
marvin.j.jennings.mil@health.mil
314-590-9937

NCOIC
SGT Cole Barnett
cole.a.barnett.mil@health.mil
DSN: 314.590.9877

ORG Box
usarmy.landstuhl.medcom-ph-
e.mbx.pm-army-hearing-
program@health.mil

MilBook Pages

Hearing Technician:

<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/army-hearing-program-europe-hearing-conservation-technician-guide>

Hearing Program Officer:

<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/europe-regional-army-hearing-program>

Have an idea for our next issue or want to be featured in the technician spotlight? Email all submissions to CPT Victoria Martin (contact info above)

Update to DoDI 6055.12—Hearing Conservation Program

Change 1 to DoDI 6055.12 was published on 28 November 2023.

This policy update adds the requirement for standardized hearing protector (HP) fit-testing procedures. This will improve the performance of hearing protection devices (HPD) in the field, enhancing the protection of DoD personnel from hazardous occupational noise. Correctly implemented HPD fit-testing and fit-training significantly reduces hearing loss incidence for the warfighter.

Who is required to receive fit testing:

- New hearing conservation program (HCP) enrollees [Basic Trainees and new employees enrolled in the HCP].
- Those with an “early warning shift” - a single frequency 15 dB shift at 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hz.
- Those with a permanent Signiant Threshold Shift (STS) on follow-up tests

- Those exposed at or above 95 dBA 8-hour TWA
- When physical changes to a person’s ear canal cause a poor fit of assigned hearing protection devices.

Personnel conducting fit-testing have to be specifically trained to do so and a training certification and competency requirements must be met to conduct the testing.

We have been instructed to postpone the implementation of the new DoDI requirement until Army Hearing Conservation leadership has created an execution plan. Considerable resources need to be aligned with this effort to fulfill the requirements of the regulation.

If you receive questions regarding this update and its requirements, please forward their questions to your Hearing Program Manager.

Hearing Loss and Tinnitus Associated with TBI and Blast Trauma

Hearing loss and/or tinnitus often happens in conjunction with other invisible injuries, such as traumatic brain injury (TBI) or blast trauma.

Traumatic brain injury is a structural injury and/or physiological disruption of brain function as a result of external force. Loss of consciousness, memory loss of events surrounding the injury, disorientation, and confusion are all indications of TBI. Hearing loss is often associated with TBI cases, either because the traumatic injury damages the inner ear or because there is damage to the part of the brain that processes sound.

Blast trauma can affect hearing in multiple ways. It can cause tympanic membrane perforation, ossicle disarticulation, damage to the cochlea, or damage to the part of the brain that processes sound (similar to TBI).

Auditory (hearing) problems may include:

- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- Hearing loss, especially asymmetrical hearing loss or “double hearing”

- Noise sensitivity or loudness intolerance
- Decreased sound tolerance for specific sounds
- Aural fullness (ears feel like they can't pop)
- Auditory processing problems (pass a hearing test but struggle to understand speech)

Vestibular (balance) problems may include: dizziness

- Vertigo attacks
- Balance problems
- BPPV, or benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (the sensation of spinning)
- Motion sickness
- General unsteadiness

Soldiers with a history of TBI or blast trauma may report difficulty understanding speech, particularly in background noise, but still have “normal” hearing on their hearing test. These patients should be referred to their PCM and have an Audiology consult placed for a complete diagnostic evaluation.

Hearing Technician Spotlight

Jessica Clifton



Ms. Clifton is the new Hearing Health Technician at the Baumholder AHC. She hit the ground running! She already completed a process improvement project which streamlined the counseling, education and hearing protection fitting workflow.

Hometown: Milton, FL

Favorite Sound: Birds in the morning

LTC Joel Jennings, Chief of the Army Hearing Program—Europe, Inducted into the Order of Military Medical Merit (O2M3)



The Order of Military Medical Merit, the O2M3, is a unique, private organization founded by the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Health Services Command in April 1982. The organization recognizes excellence and promotes fellowship and esprit de corps among Army Medical Department personnel. Membership in the Order denotes distinguished service, which is recognized by the senior leadership of the AMEDD.

NIOSH Sound Level Meter App

NIOSH Sound Level Meter (SLM) app for iOS devices to help promote better hearing health and prevention efforts. The NIOSH SLM also includes information on preventing hearing loss, examples of noise levels and their risks to hearing, and a searchable database of hearing protection devices.

Although this app is less accurate than the sound level meters used by Industrial Hygienists, they provide a general idea if the environment is hazardously loud. Having noise measurement applications available on smartphones to measure environmental noise is an effective way of making people

more aware of the noise levels in their environment.

As a reminder, noise becomes hazardous at levels of 85 dBA or above. If noise can not be eliminated or reduced, hearing protection should be worn (regardless of how long you will be in the environment).



Hearing Conservation Questions Answered

Q: Can I use noise-cancellation headphones as hearing protection devices?

A: No. Noise-canceling headphones and earbuds are not hearing protection devices, although they may look similar in some cases. They have not been laboratory tested to verify the level of noise attenuation they provide. While noise-canceling headphones and earbuds may allow you to listen to music at lower volumes without ambient noise disturbances, they have no controls to limit noise levels. If the noise level is over 85 dBA, it may be capable of causing hearing loss. Some of these devices can produce sounds as high as 110 dBA.