**How Does the VA Rate Hearing Loss?**

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**Hearing Loss**

According to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), more than 2.7 million veterans currently receive disability benefits for hearing loss. Veterans are 30 percent more likely than nonveterans to have severe hearing impairment. Those who served after September 2001 are four times more likely.

Most of the hearing loss in the military is due to noise exposure – often from gunfire, aircraft, tanks, heavy equipment, and roadside bombs. Normal age-related hearing loss can make the problem worse.

**How to Establish Service Connection for Hearing Loss?**

In order to receive VA disability benefits it must been proven to the VA that the hearing loss is the result of time in service. For a direct service connection, the following three things must be established:

1. A current diagnosis
2. An in-service event that may have caused or contributed to hearing loss
3. A medical opinion linking the in-service event and hearing loss.

**Current Diagnosis**

The first step to getting VA disability for hearing loss is showing that there is a current diagnosis.  The VA is strict about the type of diagnosis it will accept when it comes to hearing loss. In general, hearing loss is usually diagnosed when there are certain decibels that are lost at different frequencies of hearing.

For VA purposes, a veteran must undergo a hearing exam by a licensed audiologist. The audiologist must administer two tests in order for the VA to accept a diagnosis of hearing loss:

* **Maryland CNC Test:**This test is a speech discrimination test which determines a veteran’s ability to understand words due to hearing loss. The tester will say various words in a controlled environment and the veterans has to repeat them back. The results for this test are percentages which is then used to rate the condition.
* **Puretone Audiometric Test:** This test measures the loudness (decibels) and pitches (frequencies) which a veteran can hear a sound. It determines the level of hearing loss by measuring the faintest tones someone can pick up on.

**In-Service Event**

The second part of establishing direct service connection involves submitting evidence on an in-service event that may have caused or contributed to hearing loss. Common in-service events include combat service, exposure to artillery fire and small arms fire, and certain military occupational specialties that involve mechanical work on vehicles, aircrafts, etc.

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Once the VA has the test results from the Maryland CNC test and Puretone audiometric test, a Roman numeral gets assigned *to each ear*, These Roman numerals are a tool used to keep the rating system organized.

For hearing loss ratings, the monthly compensation levels as of 2020 are as follows:

* **0% disability rating**: $0.00 per month
* **10% disability rating**: $142.29 per month
* **20% disability rating**: $281.27 per month
* **30% disability rating**: $435.69 per month
* **40% disability rating**: $627.61 per month
* **50% disability rating**: $893.43 per month
* **60% disability rating**: $1,131.68 per month
* **70% disability rating**: $1,426.17 per month
* **80% disability rating:** $1,657.80 per month
* **90% disability rating**: $1,862.96 per month
* **100% disability rating**: $3,106.04 per month