

HEARING LOSS CALCULATOR USER GUIDE



HL Calculator v4.7

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Hearing Loss Calculator

Even when using text generated by the new Hearing Loss Calculator, all rating decisions must take into account the applicable provisions of the regulations. (*See*, e.g., 38 C.F.R. §§3.385, 4.485, 4.486) You must review due process requirements, sufficiency of the evidence, any VA examination, any other medical evidence, and make all other determinations as in any hearing loss claim.

The Hearing Loss Calculator generates stand-alone paragraphs for use in the reasons and bases section of your rating decisions. The calculator determines the percentage evaluation for service-connected hearing loss based on speech discrimination scores and/or puretone threshold averages, along with answers to follow-up questions you enter into the calculator. The calculator text generated outlines the steps taken to determine the highest level of hearing loss, along with the specific criteria met in light of the regulations. The calculator takes into consideration the provisions of 38 C.F.R. 4.86(a) and (b) when determining the percentage evaluation.

The calculator *does not* populate any fields in RBA2000. The paragraphs generated are stand-alone text. You must copy and paste the calculator-generated text into the reasons and bases portion of your RBA 2000 rating decision.

If the language generated by the calculator is in error, **PRINT** the decision from the main calculator screen, place the printed decision and screenshot in the claims folder, and use RBA 2000 to complete the decision.

If you do not use the calculator-generated text, you MUST notify the Rating Job Aids mailbox.
Please describe the error in detail.

Appendix A at the end of this User Guide tells you how to find a list of Military Occupation Specialties on the RVSR Job Aids website.

Appendix B at the end of this User Guide lists text generated by the calculator and also lists suggested language for you to use when giving reasons and bases for your decision.

How to Navigate the Hearing Loss Calculator User Guide

This Guide is divided into three sections based on type of claim: **New Claim**, **Claim for Increase**, and **Reopened Claim**. The User Guide section on **New Claims** contains many example screens. The sections on **Claim for Increase** and **Reopened Claim** refer back to the **New Claim** section example screens. For this reason, it is recommended that you read the **New Claims** section prior to navigating through the sections on **Claim for Increase** or **Reopened Claim**.

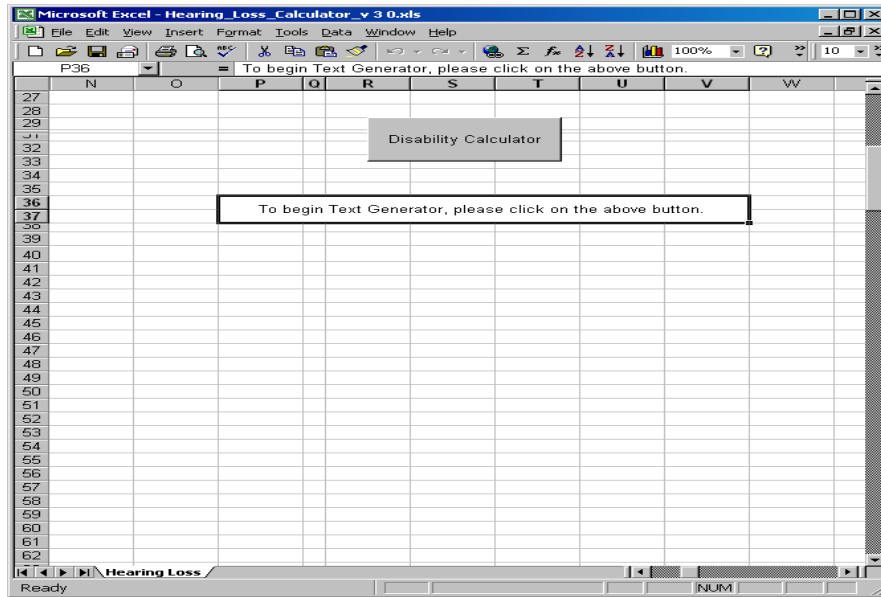
The main calculator screen is divided into several screen sections with various choices in each section. Screen sections include: **Claim Type**, **STR Findings**, **VAE Considerations**, etc. **Screen Sections** of the main calculator screen are addressed one at a time in this guide and are indicated in **Bold Underlined Typeface** under each of the three types of claims.

When you look at the main calculator screen, you see there are several options to choose below each **Screen Section**. For example, under the screen section **STR Findings**, you may choose between “**No hearing loss**,” “**Hearing loss on discharge**,” and “**STRs not available**.” This guide indicates possible “**Choices**” within each screen section through use of “**Bold Typeface**” and quotation marks. “**Bold Typeface**” and quotation marks also indicate possible “**Choices**” on pop-up prompts that appear to ask you for information more specific to the claim you are evaluating.

There are several “**Choices**” possible within each **Screen Section**. In addition, “**Choices**” are possible with each pop-up prompt. Because there are so many variations due to these “**Choices**,” we recommend that new users read through the examples of possible choices prior to returning to the main calculator screen and going on to the next screen section. As you become more familiar with the User Guide and with the calculator itself, you will be able to go to the screen section, make your choice and answer any prompts, then move on to the next main screen section.

The Hearing Loss Calculator – Starting the Program

After selecting the “Hearing Loss Calculator” from the **Rating Job Aids** website, this screen will appear:



Left-click on “**Disability Calculator.**” The following screen appears:

☐ Both Ears have same claim facts

Right Ear

Claim Type

☐ New

☐ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☐ No hearing loss

☐ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☐ No opinion

☐ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ No Acoustic Trauma

☐ Military Occupation Specialty

☐ In-service shift

☐ Service treatment records

☐ Combat

☐ Other

Other Records

☐ None

☐ Yes

Left Ear

Claim Type

☐ New

☐ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☐ No hearing loss

☐ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☐ No opinion

☐ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Presumption

☐ Sensorineural hearing loss at 10% within 1 year of discharge

S/C Decision: N/A

S/C Decision Basis: N/A

NSC Decision: N/A

NSC Decision Basis: N/A

Prior Percentage: 0

Current Percentage: 0

	500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz	4000 Hz
Left Ear	0	0	0	0	0
Right Ear	0	0	0	0	0

Speech Discrimination

Left: 100

Right: 100

☒ Scores Available

Roman Numeral: 0

Table Used: 0

Disabling per VA: 0

Exit

Reset

Print

Grant/ Increase

Denial Narrative

During your decision process, you will be returned to this main screen many times. You generate the text for your rating decision by selecting buttons on this screen and answering prompts. The following sets of screens will appear as you evaluate a claim for hearing loss.

New Claim Example

Both ears have same claim facts

The first box in the upper left corner of the main screen of the calculator states “**Both ears have the same claim facts.**” You may either check the box now if the statement applies or you may wait until the end of your decision to make this selection. Please note that the calculator is capable of generating both “grant” and “deny” text simultaneously if one ear is service connected and the other is not. You also have the option of using the calculator twice: once, to generate text for the right ear, then going through the decision process again to generate separate text for the left ear.

Claim Type

Under “**Claim Type**,” select the choice which best describes the Veteran’s hearing loss claim:

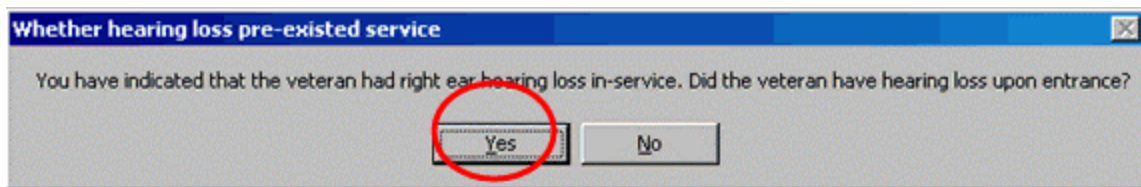
The screenshot shows the 'Hearing Loss Calculator' window. The 'Both Ears have same claim facts' checkbox is unchecked. For both the Right and Left ears, the 'Claim Type' is set to 'New' (circled in red). The 'STR Findings' for the Right Ear are set to 'No hearing loss' (indicated by a red arrow). The 'VAE Considerations' and 'Acoustic Trauma' sections are also visible. On the right, there are fields for 'S/C Decisions', 'NSC Decisions', 'Prior Percentage', and 'Current Percentage', all currently set to 'N/A' or '0'. A table shows 'Loss at 500 Hz' through '4000 Hz' for both ears, with all values set to '0'. Below this is a 'Speech Discrimination' section with 'Left' and 'Right' values set to '100'. At the bottom right, there are 'Exit', 'Reset', and 'Print' buttons, and a text area for 'Grant/Increase' and 'Denial Narrative'.

Here, “**New Claim**” is chosen, shown by the red circles. (For information on “**Increased**” or “**Reopen**” claim types, see those sections of this User Guide.)

STR Findings

The next screen section is STR Findings. See the red arrow on the screenshot above. Enter the correct selection for the Veteran’s separation examination findings. If you choose “**No hearing loss**” or “**STRs not available**,” there are no further prompts and you remain on the main calculator screen.

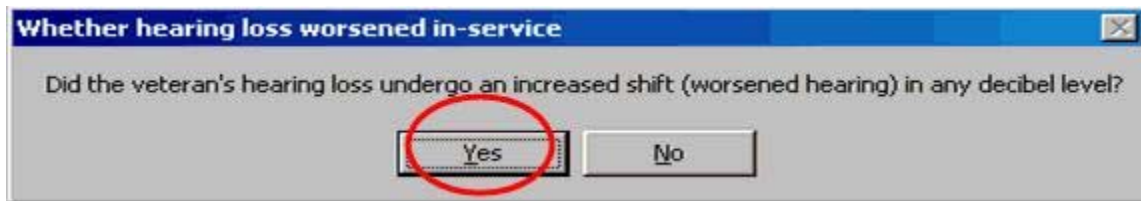
If you indicate there was evidence of hearing loss upon separation from service by choosing “**Hearing loss on discharge**,” the following dialog box will appear.



Whether hearing loss pre-existed service

You have indicated that the veteran had right ear hearing loss in-service. Did the veteran have hearing loss upon entrance?

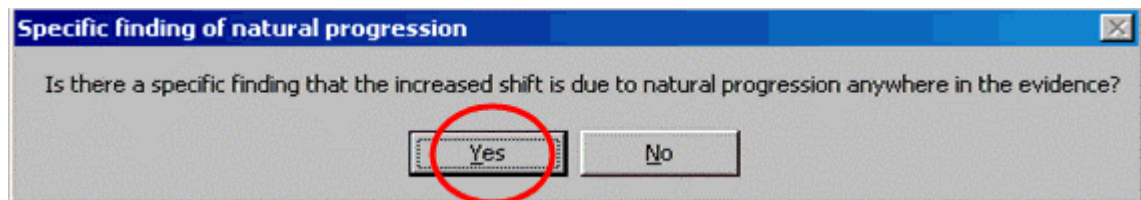
If you click on “**No**,” the Veteran did not have hearing loss upon entry into service, you will return to the main calculator screen. If you indicate “**Yes**,” the Veteran did have hearing loss upon entrance into service, the following pop-up box will appear:



Whether hearing loss worsened in-service

Did the veteran's hearing loss undergo an increased shift (worsened hearing) in any decibel level?

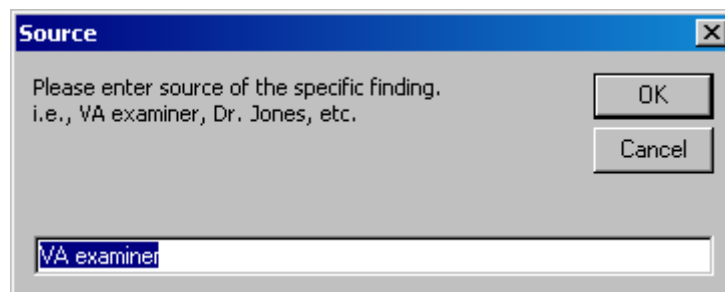
If you respond with “**No**,” there is no evidence of an increased threshold shift during service, you will be returned to the main screen. If you indicate “**Yes**,” there is evidence of an increased threshold shift during service, the following dialog box will appear:



Specific finding of natural progression

Is there a specific finding that the increased shift is due to natural progression anywhere in the evidence?

This pop-up screen asks whether there is medical opinion evidence showing the Veteran’s hearing loss was due to natural progression and not due to military acoustic trauma (i.e., whether there is evidence to the contrary). If you answer “**No**,” there is no medical opinion evidence that the Veteran’s increased threshold shift was caused by natural progression in service, you will be returned to the main screen. If “**Yes**,” there is medical opinion evidence that the Veteran’s increased threshold shift was caused by natural progression during service, a pop-up screen will prompt you to provide the source of the specific finding of hearing loss. For example:



Source

Please enter source of the specific finding.
i.e., VA examiner, Dr. Jones, etc.

VA examiner

Once this is provided, you will return to the main calculator screen.

VAE Considerations

The next section on the main calculator screen is “VAE Considerations.” If you choose “No Show” or “Test not reliable,” there are no further screen prompts.

Hearing Loss Calculator

☐ Both Ears have same claim facts

Right Ear

Claim Type

☒ New

☐ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☐ No hearing loss

☒ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☒ No opinion

☐ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ No Acoustic Trauma

☐ Military Occupation Specialty

☐ In-service shift

☐ Service treatment records

☐ Combat

☐ Other

Other Records

☐ None

☐ Yes

Left Ear

Claim Type

☒ New

☐ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☐ No hearing loss

☒ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☒ No opinion

☐ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Presumption

☐ Sensorineural hearing loss at 10% within 1 year of discharge

S/C Decisions:

N/A

NSC Decision:

Not service

Prior Percentage:

0

S/C Decision Basis:

N/A

NSC Decision Basis:

Hearing Normal for

Current Percentage:

0

Loss at 500 Hz 1000 Hz 2000 Hz 3000 Hz 4000 Hz

Left Ear

0 0 0 0 0

Right Ear

0 0 0 0 0

Speech Discrimination

Left

100

Right

100

☒ Scores Available

Roman Numeral

0 0

Table Used

0 0

Disabling per VA

0 0

Exit

Reset

Print

Grant/Increase:

N/A

Denial Narrative

Service connection for bilateral hearing loss is denied because there is no evidence that you currently have a hearing loss for VA purposes. Service connection may not be established for disability due to impaired hearing unless the auditory threshold in any of the

If, as here, you choose “No opinion,” the calculator will ask whether the Veteran’s hearing loss evaluation is based upon an in-service VA examination:

Microsoft Excel

Is there no opinion because it is an in-service VA examination?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If you choose “No,” you will be returned to the main calculator screen. If you answer “Yes,” the calculator will ask whether the examination data you will enter to evaluate the Veteran’s disability is based upon this in-service, pre-discharge examination:

Microsoft Excel

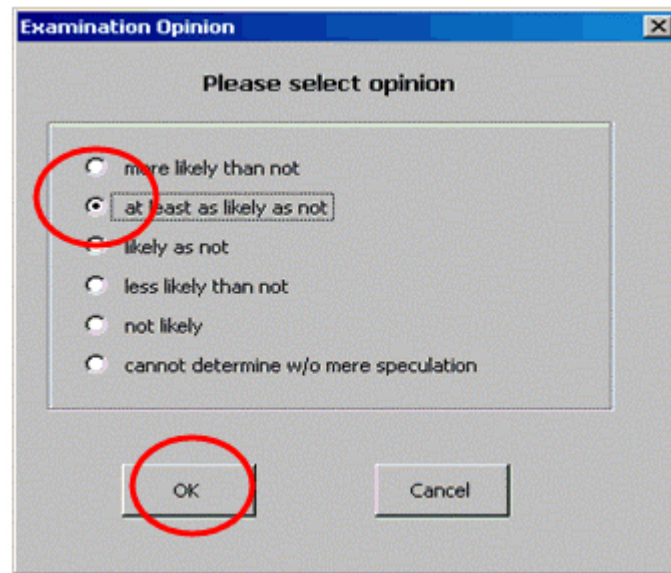
Is the evaluation based on an in-service pre-discharge VA examination?

☒ Yes

☐ No

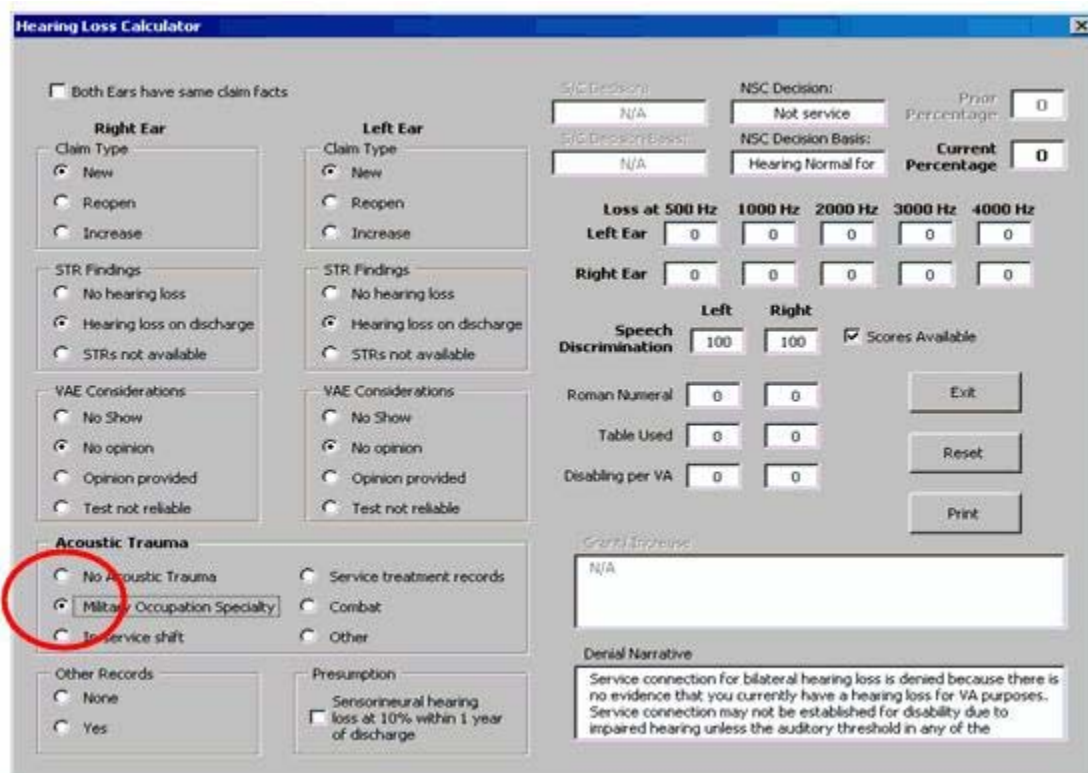
Either a “Yes” or “No” answer to this prompt will send you to the main calculator screen.

If under **VAE Considerations**, you choose “**Opinion provided**” on the main screen, the following screen will pop-up and prompt you for the opinion language provided in the VA examination opinion. Indicate the language used by the Veteran’s examiner and select “**OK.**” For example:



The image shows a dialog box titled "Examination Opinion" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The main text inside says "Please select opinion". Below this text is a list of six radio button options: "more likely than not", "at least as likely as not", "likely as not", "less likely than not", "not likely", and "cannot determine w/o mere speculation". The "at least as likely as not" option is selected and is circled in red. At the bottom of the dialog box, there are two buttons: "OK" and "Cancel". The "OK" button is also circled in red.

The next screen to appear is the main calculator screen.

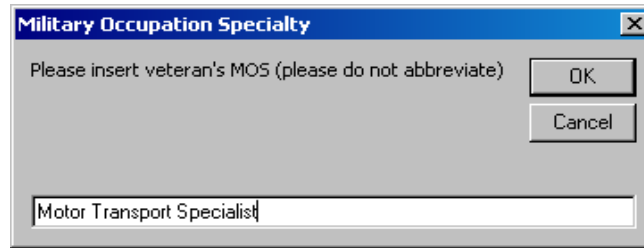


The image shows the "Hearing Loss Calculator" main screen. It has a blue title bar and a close button (X) in the top right corner. The screen is divided into several sections. On the left, there are two columns for "Right Ear" and "Left Ear". Each column has a "Claim Type" section with radio buttons for "New", "Reopen", and "Increase". Below that is an "STR Findings" section with radio buttons for "No hearing loss", "Hearing loss on discharge", and "STRs not available". Then is a "VAE Considerations" section with radio buttons for "No Show", "No opinion", "Opinion provided", and "Test not reliable". At the bottom left is an "Acoustic Trauma" section with radio buttons for "No Acoustic Trauma", "Military Occupation Specialty", "In-service shift", "Service treatment records", "Combat", and "Other". The "Military Occupation Specialty" option is circled in red. To the right of these columns are several input fields: "NSC Decision" (N/A), "NSC Decision Basis" (N/A), "Prior Percentage" (0), "Current Percentage" (0), "Loss at 500 Hz" (0), "1000 Hz" (0), "2000 Hz" (0), "3000 Hz" (0), "4000 Hz" (0), "Speech Discrimination" (Left: 100, Right: 100), "Roman Numeral" (0, 0), "Table Used" (0, 0), and "Disabling per VA" (0, 0). There are also buttons for "Exit", "Reset", and "Print". At the bottom right, there is a "Denial Narrative" section with a text area containing the text: "Service connection for bilateral hearing loss is denied because there is no evidence that you currently have a hearing loss for VA purposes. Service connection may not be established for disability due to impaired hearing unless the auditory threshold in any of the".

Acoustic Trauma

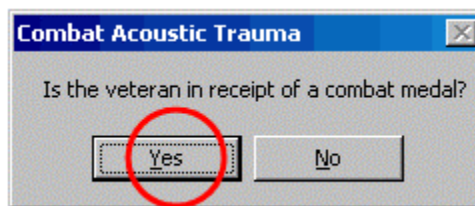
Next, is the “Acoustic Trauma” section on the main calculator screen. If you choose “No Acoustic Trauma,” “In-service shift,” or “Service treatment records,” there are no further prompts.

If, as here, the evidence shows the Veteran's acoustic trauma is due to a **"Military Occupation Specialty"** (MOS), this screen asks you to provide the job title of Veteran's MOS. (For more information on where to find specific MOS job titles, see the Appendix A.) For example:

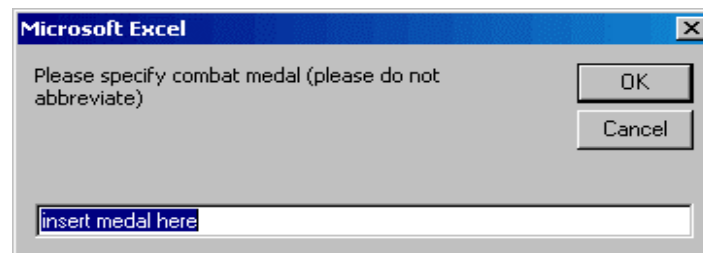


After you enter the Veteran's MOS information, you return to the main calculator screen.

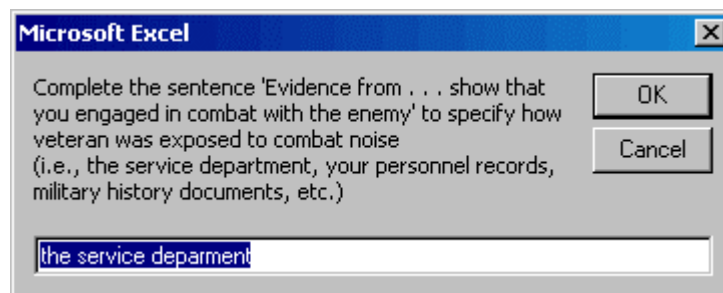
If, on the main calculator screen, you choose **"Combat,"** instead of asking for the MOS information, above, the calculator will ask whether the Veteran is in receipt of a combat medal:



If you choose **"Yes,"** you will be asked to specify the medal received. Just type the name of the medal:



If you choose **"No,"** to the question as to whether the Veteran is in receipt of a combat medal, you will be asked to complete the following sentence:



You are returned to the main calculator screen.

Under **Acoustic Trauma**, if you choose **"Other,"** you are prompted to provide a reason for conceding acoustic trauma.

Microsoft Excel

Complete the sentence 'Acoustic trauma is conceded because . . . ' to specify how veteran was exposed to military noise (i.e., your duties required you to be near the flightline, etc.)

your military duties required you to be near hazardous noise

After providing this information, you are returned to the main calculator screen.

Other Records

Next, you indicate whether there are any records other than STRs or a VA examination in evidence. If there are no other records and you choose “None,” you remain on the main calculator screen.

Hearing Loss Calculator

☐ Both Ears have same claim facts

Right Ear

Claim Type

☒ New

☐ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☐ No hearing loss

☒ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☒ No opinion

☐ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ No Acoustic Trauma

☒ Military Occupation Specialty

☐ In-service shift

Other Records

☐ None

☒ **Yes**

Left Ear

Claim Type

☒ New

☐ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☐ No hearing loss

☒ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☒ No opinion

☐ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ Service treatment records

☐ Combat

☐ Other

Presumption

☐ Sensorineural hearing loss at 10% within 1 year of discharge

SJC Decision:

SJC Decision Basis:

NSC Decision:

NSC Decision Basis:

Prior Percentage:

Current Percentage:

	500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz	4000 Hz
Left Ear	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Right Ear	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>

Speech Discrimination

	Left	Right
Speech Discrimination	<input type="text" value="100"/>	<input type="text" value="100"/>

☒ Scores Available

Roman Numeral

Table Used

Disabling per VA

Grant/Increase:

Denial Narrative

Service connection for bilateral hearing loss is denied because there is no evidence that you currently have a hearing loss for VA purposes. Service connection may not be established for disability due to impaired hearing unless the auditory threshold in any of the

If, as here, you click “Yes,” you will be prompted to provide evidence type, either lay testimony or medical evidence. Select all that apply to the evidence you are considering:

Other Records

Please Select All That Apply

- ☒ Lay Testimony
- ☒ Involving in-service
- ☐ Involving post-service
- ☒ Medical Evidence
 - ☒ Audiometrics show hearing loss
 - ☐ Audiometrics show no hearing loss
 - ☐ Speech discrimination using MD CNC
 - ☐ Positive opinion
 - ☐ Negative Opinion

OK Cancel

If you choose “**Lay testimony**,” you may also select whether that lay testimony witnessed in-service or post-service disability. If you select “**Lay testimony**” without selecting “**Medical Evidence**,” you return to the main calculator screen.

If you choose “**Medical Evidence**,” you will be prompted to provide the name of the medical provider:

Provider Name

Please enter the name of the medical provider (i.e., the VAMC, Dr. Jones, Medical Center, etc.)
If there are multiple providers, please enter using 'and' (i.e., 'the VAMC and Dr. Jones' or 'the VAMC, Dr. Jones, and Medical Center')

OK Cancel

the VAMC

If, under “**Medical Evidence**,” you choose “**Audiometrics show hearing loss**,” “**Audiometrics show no hearing loss**,” or “**Speech discrimination using MD CNC**,” there are no further prompts and you will be returned to the main calculator screen. If you choose “**Positive opinion**,” you will be prompted to provide the opinion language:

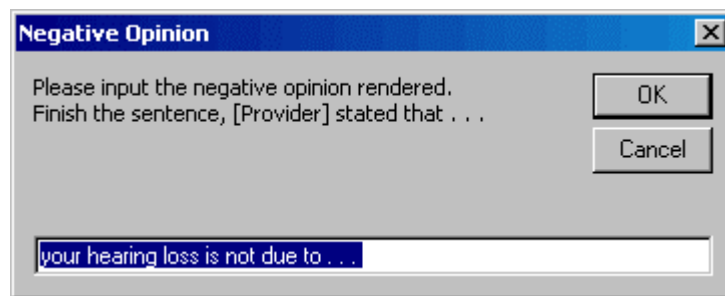
Positive Opinion

Please input the positive opinion rendered.
Finish the sentence, [Provider] stated that . . .

OK Cancel

it is very likely your hearing loss is due to . . .

If, under “**Medical Evidence**,” you choose “**Negative opinion**,” you will be prompted to provide the negative opinion language:



Negative Opinion

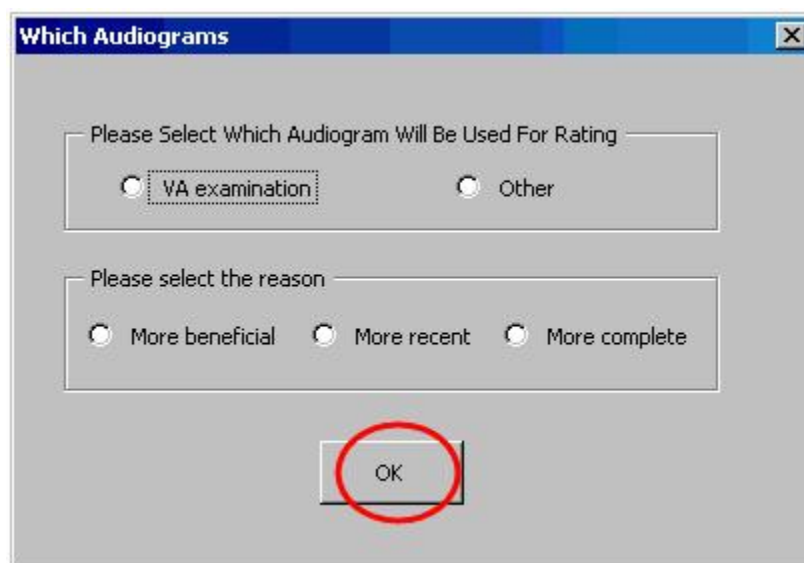
Please input the negative opinion rendered.
Finish the sentence, [Provider] stated that . . .

OK Cancel

your hearing loss is not due to . . .

If you have both a positive and a negative opinion regarding hearing loss, it is possible to select both “**Positive opinion**” and “**Negative opinion.**” You will be prompted to provide language from both opinions.

If under the previous main screen section **VAE Considerations** there is no opinion provided and in this section **Other Records**, you choose “**Medical Evidence**” and “**Positive Opinion,**” you will be asked to choose which audiogram will be used for rating purposes and to give a reason for your choice, as below. After you have made your choice, click on “**OK.**”



Which Audiograms

Please Select Which Audiogram Will Be Used For Rating

☐ VA examination ☐ Other

Please select the reason

☐ More beneficial ☐ More recent ☐ More complete

OK

Presumption

Close to the center of the bottom of the main calculator screen, the hearing loss calculator also has a check-the-box choice for service connection through presumption. You do not need to make any selection under this section of the main calculator screen in order to generate text for *other* types of service connection. You check this box only if there is evidence of sensorineural hearing loss to a compensable degree within one year of the Veteran’s separation from service.

Examination Findings

At this point, you will start entering audiometric findings from the hearing examination, including speech discrimination score(s).

Hearing Loss Calculator

☐ Both Ears have same claim facts

Right Ear

Claim Type

☒ New

☐ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☐ No hearing loss

☒ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☒ No opinion

☐ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ No Acoustic Trauma

☒ Military Occupation Specialty

☐ In-service shift

Other Records

☐ None

☒ Yes

Left Ear

Claim Type

☒ New

☐ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☐ No hearing loss

☒ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☒ No opinion

☐ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ No Acoustic Trauma

☐ Service treatment records

☒ Combat

☐ Other

Presumption

Sensorineural hearing loss at 10% within 1 year of discharge

☐

S/C Decision: Service connected

S/C Decision Basis: incurred

NSC Decision: N/A

NSC Decision Basis: N/A

Prior Percentage: 0

Current Percentage: 0

	Loss at 500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz	4000 Hz
Left Ear	10	25	35	35	40
Right Ear	20	35	35	50	50

Speech Discrimination: Left 84, Right 84

✓ Scores Available

Roman Numeral: II, II

Table Used: VI, VI

Disabling per VA: Yes, Yes

Exit

Reset

Print

Grant/ Increase

We have granted your claim for bilateral hearing loss. Service connection is warranted because your service treatment records show that your hearing loss began in-service. You submitted lay testimony that you had decreased hearing in-service, but hearing loss

Denial Narrative

N/A

If there is sufficient evidence to grant service-connection, the calculator will prompt you for an effective date and the reason for that the assigned effective date, as noted below. This prompt appears soon after you start entering audiometric data. You can return to entering audiometric data after addressing the effective date.

Effective Date Generator

Please enter Effective Date

MM / DD / YYYY

Effective Date Reason

☐ Date of claim

☒ Date received claim

☐ Facts found

☐ Other

☐ Within year of discharge

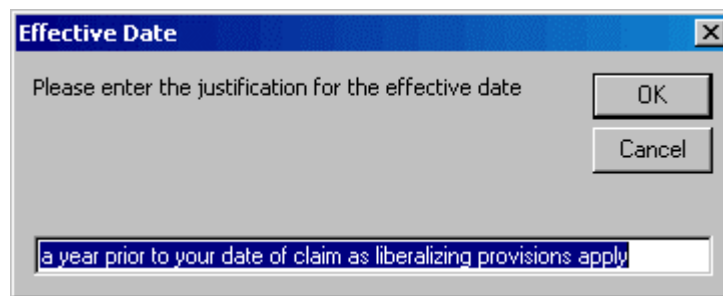
☐ Within year of prior rating

OK

Cancel

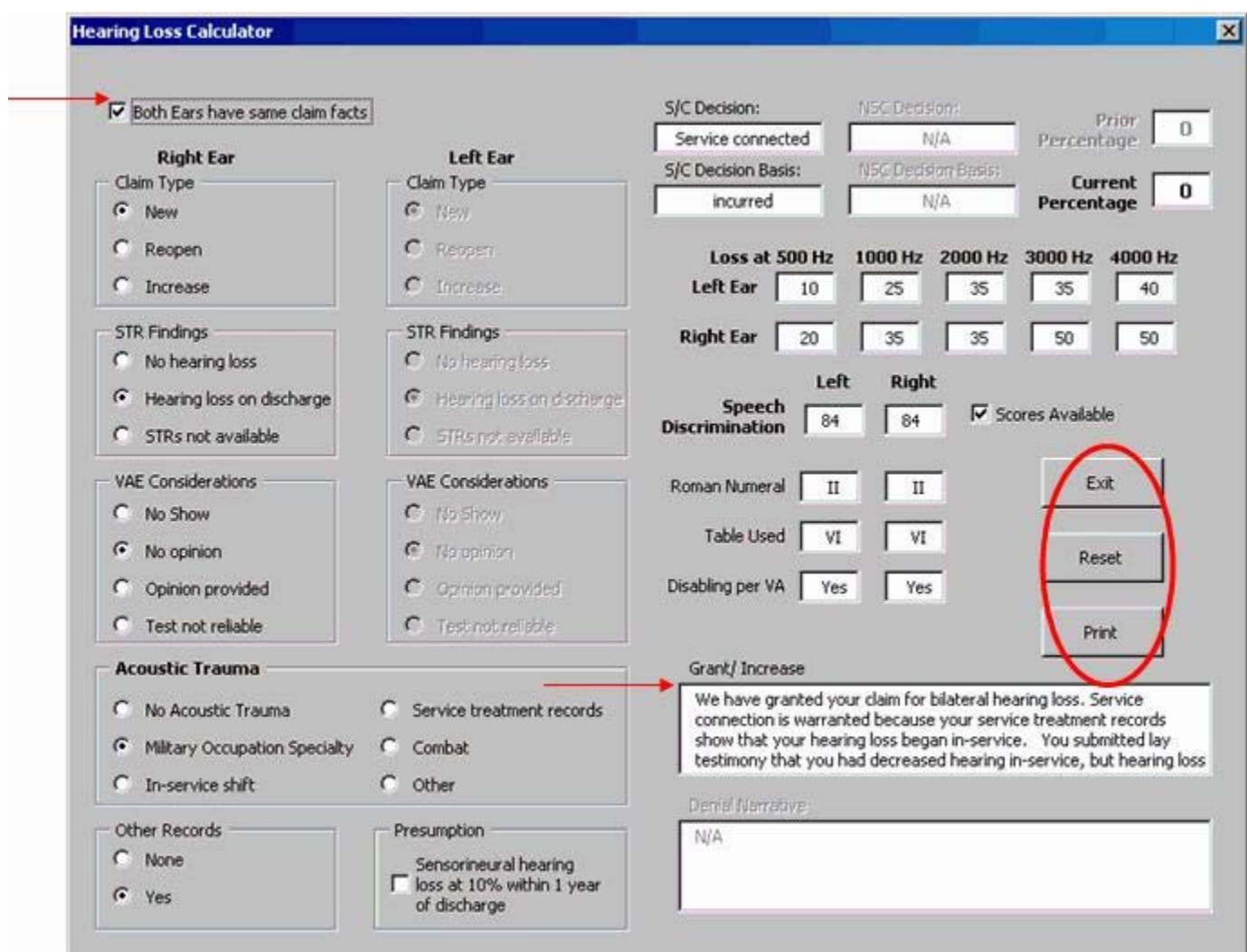
Please make your effective date selections carefully! To change the effective date after you make these selections, you must either: 1) edit your generated text, or 2) close the calculator and start over.

If, on the effective date screen, you choose “Date of claim,” “Date received claim,” “Facts found,” “Within year of discharge,” or “Within one year of prior rating,” there are no further prompts. If you choose “Other,” for your effective date, you will be asked to enter language justifying your choice of effective date:



The 'Effective Date' dialog box has a title bar with a close button. The main area contains the text 'Please enter the justification for the effective date' and two buttons, 'OK' and 'Cancel'. At the bottom, there is a text input field containing the text 'a year prior to your date of claim as liberalizing provisions apply'.

After choosing “OK,” you are returned to the main calculator screen. You may continue entering audiometric data from the Veteran’s exam.



The 'Hearing Loss Calculator' main screen is divided into several sections. On the left, there are two columns for 'Right Ear' and 'Left Ear' data entry, each with radio buttons for 'Claim Type' (New, Reopen, Increase), 'STR Findings' (No hearing loss, Hearing loss on discharge, STRs not available), 'VAE Considerations' (No Show, No opinion, Opinion provided, Test not reliable), 'Acoustic Trauma' (No Acoustic Trauma, Military Occupation Specialty, In-service shift, Service treatment records, Combat, Other), 'Other Records' (None, Yes), and 'Presumption' (Sensorineural hearing loss at 10% within 1 year of discharge). A red arrow points to a checkbox labeled 'Both Ears have same claim facts' in the top left. In the center, there are tables for 'Loss at 500 Hz', '1000 Hz', '2000 Hz', '3000 Hz', and '4000 Hz' for both ears. Below these are 'Speech Discrimination' scores for Left and Right ears, and 'Roman Numeral' and 'Table Used' (VI) for both. On the right, there are 'S/C Decision' and 'NSC Decision' fields (Service connected, N/A), 'S/C Decision Basis' and 'NSC Decision Basis' (incurred, N/A), 'Prior Percentage' (0), and 'Current Percentage' (0). At the bottom right, there are 'Exit', 'Reset', and 'Print' buttons, which are circled in red. A 'Grant/ Increase' section contains a text box with a pre-filled message: 'We have granted your claim for bilateral hearing loss. Service connection is warranted because your service treatment records show that your hearing loss began in-service. You submitted lay testimony that you had decreased hearing in-service, but hearing loss'. Below this is a 'Denial Narrative' field with 'N/A' entered.

If both ears have the same fact pattern, then select the box in the upper left corner of the main screen of the calculator.

Copying Generated Text into Your Rating Decision

If the evidence is sufficient to grant service connection and once all the required information has been entered into the calculator, hold down the “**Ctrl**” button and type “**C**” to copy the language from the calculator for pasting into the reasons and bases portion of your RBA 2000 rating decision.

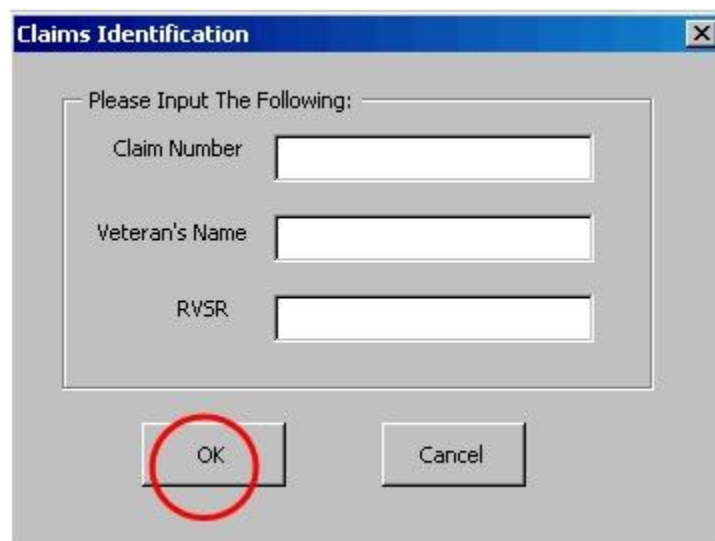
Exit, Reset, Print

On the right side of the main calculator screen are three buttons: **Exit**, **Reset**, and **Print**.

The **Exit** button will take you out of the calculator main screen and back to the spreadsheet page illustrated on page 5 of this User Guide.

The **Reset** button will clear all data you have entered so you may start over. You will not leave the main calculator screen if you choose **Reset**, but all data will be erased.

The **Print** button allows you to print both a screenshot of your choices on the main calculator screen, along with the generated text. If you choose to **Print**, the calculator will ask you for the following information:

A screenshot of a Windows-style dialog box titled "Claims Identification". The dialog box has a blue title bar with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The main area is light gray and contains the text "Please Input The Following:" followed by three input fields. The first field is labeled "Claim Number", the second is labeled "Veteran's Name", and the third is labeled "RVSR". Below the input fields are two buttons: "OK" and "Cancel". The "OK" button is circled in red.

Enter the claim number, the veteran’s name and your name, then choose “**OK.**” The information you enter on this pop-up screen will appear on the top of the screenshot and above the generated text of your printout, along with the current date.

New Claim Example Text

The following is an example of text generated by the calculator based upon information entered through the previous example screens:

We have granted your claim for bilateral hearing loss. Service connection is warranted because your service treatment records show that your hearing loss began in-service. In addition, your military occupational specialty, (MOS) of Motor Transport Specialist is consistent with acoustic trauma and your hearing loss has been linked to that acoustic trauma. Your VA examiner opined that it is as least as likely as not that your hearing loss is due to military noise exposure. The effective date of this grant is January 1, 2010, which is the date we received your claim.

VA examination findings show the left ear with 88 percent discrimination. Decibel (dB) loss at the puretone threshold of 1000 Hertz (Hz) is 25, with a 35 dB loss at 2000 Hz, a 35 dB loss at 3000 Hz, and a 40 dB loss at 4000 Hz. The average decibel loss is 33.8 in the left ear. From Table VI of 38 CFR 4.85, Roman Numeral II is derived for the left ear. This is determined by intersecting the percent of speech discrimination row with the

puretone threshold average column. The right ear shows a speech discrimination of 84 percent. Decibel loss at the puretone threshold of 1000 Hz is 35, with a 35 dB loss at 2000 Hz, a 50 dB loss at 3000 Hz, and a 50 dB loss at 4000 Hz. The average decibel loss is 42.5 in the right ear. From Table VI of 38 CFR 4.85, Roman Numeral II is derived for the right ear. This is determined by intersecting the percent of speech discrimination row with the puretone threshold average column. A 0 percent evaluation is derived from Table VII of 38 CFR 4.85 by intersecting row II, the better ear, with column II, the poorer ear.

An evaluation of 0 percent is assigned because your left ear has an average loss of 33.8 with a speech discrimination of 88 percent and your right ear has an average decibel loss of 42.5 with a speech discrimination of 84 percent. The evaluation for hearing loss is based on objective testing. Higher evaluations are assigned for more severe hearing impairment.

Claim For Increase

Claim Type

For a claim for increase, select “**Increase**” under Claim Type.

Hearing Loss Calculator

☐ Both Ears have same claim facts

Right Ear

Claim Type

☐ New

☐ Reopen

☒ Increase

STR Findings

☐ No hearing loss

☐ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☐ No opinion

☐ VAE not needed

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ No Acoustic Trauma

☐ Military Occupation Specialty

☐ In-service shift

☐ Service treatment records

☐ Combat

☐ Other

Other Records

☐ None

☐ Yes

Presumption

☐ Sensorineural hearing loss at 10% within 1 year of discharge

Left Ear

Claim Type

☐ New

☐ Reopen

☒ Increase

STR Findings

☐ No hearing loss

☐ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☐ No opinion

☐ VAE not needed

☐ Test not reliable

S/C Decision: N/A

N/S/C Decision: N/A

S/C Decision Basis: N/A

N/S/C Decision Basis: N/A

Prior Percentage: 0

Current Percentage: 0

Loss at 500 Hz 1000 Hz 2000 Hz 3000 Hz 4000 Hz

Left Ear: 0 0 0 0 0

Right Ear: 0 0 0 0 0

Speech Discrimination: Left: 100 Right: 100 ☒ Scores Available

Roman Numeral: Left: I Right: I

Table Used: Left: VI Right: VI

Disabling per VA: Left: No Right: No

Exit

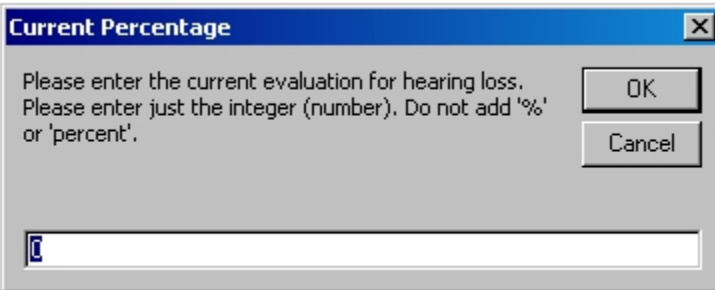
Reset

Print

Grant/Increase: More information needed

Denial Narrative: N/A

Once you have selected “**Increase**”, the following dialog box will prompt you to enter the Veteran’s previous percentage evaluation for service-connected hearing loss. In the example below, the Veteran was evaluated previously at 0 percent disabling.

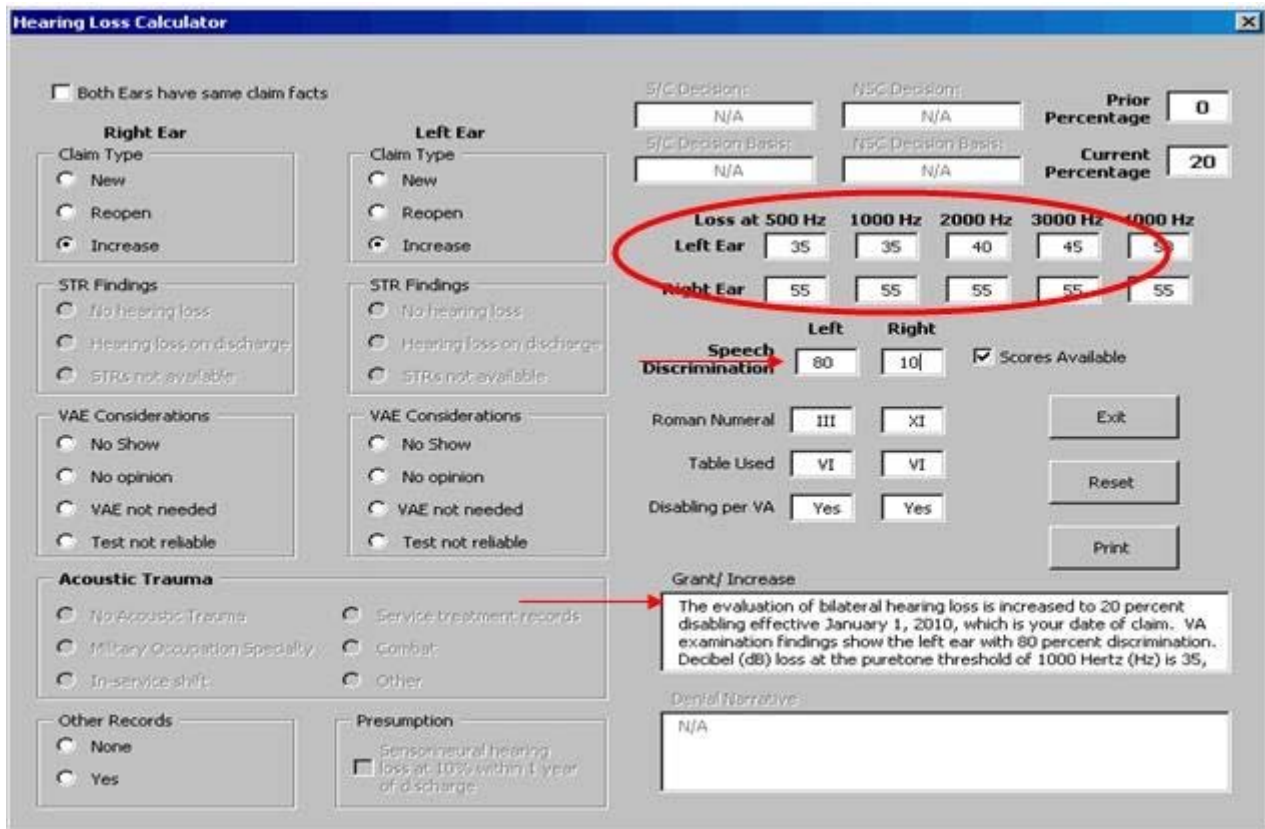


Current Percentage

Please enter the current evaluation for hearing loss. Please enter just the integer (number). Do not add '%' or 'percent'.

OK Cancel

After entering the Veteran's previous evaluation, you only have to enter the examination findings for puretone thresholds and speech discrimination for the affected ear(s).



Hearing Loss Calculator

☐ Both Ears have same claim facts

Right Ear		Left Ear	
Claim Type	<input type="radio"/> New <input type="radio"/> Reopen <input checked="" type="radio"/> Increase	Claim Type	<input type="radio"/> New <input type="radio"/> Reopen <input checked="" type="radio"/> Increase
STR Findings	<input type="radio"/> No hearing loss <input type="radio"/> Hearing loss on discharge <input type="radio"/> STRs not available	STR Findings	<input type="radio"/> No hearing loss <input type="radio"/> Hearing loss on discharge <input type="radio"/> STRs not available
VAE Considerations	<input type="radio"/> No Show <input type="radio"/> No opinion <input type="radio"/> VAE not needed <input type="radio"/> Test not reliable	VAE Considerations	<input type="radio"/> No Show <input type="radio"/> No opinion <input type="radio"/> VAE not needed <input type="radio"/> Test not reliable
Acoustic Trauma		Other Records	
<input type="radio"/> No Acoustic Trauma <input type="radio"/> Military Occupation Specialty <input type="radio"/> In-service shift		<input type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> Yes	
Presumption		Grant/ Increase	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sensorineural hearing loss at 10% within 1 year of discharge		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The evaluation of bilateral hearing loss is increased to 20 percent disabling effective January 1, 2010, which is your date of claim. VA examination findings show the left ear with 80 percent discrimination. Decibel (dB) loss at the puretone threshold of 1000 Hertz (Hz) is 35, with a 40 dB loss at 2000 Hz, a 45 dB loss at 3000 Hz, and a 50 dB loss at 4000 Hz. The average decibel loss is 42.5 in the left ear. From Table VI of 38	
Dental Narrative		N/A	

S/C Decision: N/A NSC Decision: N/A Prior Percentage: 0
 S/C Decision Basis: N/A NSC Decision Basis: N/A Current Percentage: 20

	Loss at 500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz	4000 Hz
Left Ear	35	35	40	45	50
Right Ear	55	55	55	55	55

Speech Discrimination: Left 80, Right 10
 Roman Numeral: Left III, Right XI
 Table Used: Left VI, Right VI
 Disabling per VA: Left Yes, Right Yes

Exit
 Reset
 Print

VAE Considerations and Other Records

You may wish to make choices under the VAE Considerations and Other Records sections of the main calculator screen. See the **New Claim** section of this user guide for other possible choices and prompts under these screen sections.

Copying Generated Text into Your Rating Decision

Hold down the “Ctrl” button and type “C” to copy the language from the calculator for pasting into the reasons and bases portion of your RBA 2000 rating decision.

Claim for Increase Example Text

As an example, the text generated by the calculator reads:

The evaluation of bilateral hearing loss is increased to 20 percent disabling effective January 1, 2010, which is the date we received your claim. VA examination findings show the left ear with 80 percent discrimination. Decibel (dB) loss at the puretone threshold of 1000 Hertz (Hz) is 35, with a 40 dB loss at 2000 Hz, a 45 dB loss at 3000 Hz, and a 50 dB loss at 4000 Hz. The average decibel loss is 42.5 in the left ear. From Table VI of 38

CFR 4.85, Roman Numeral III is derived for the left ear. This is determined by intersecting the percent of speech discrimination row with the puretone threshold average column. The right ear shows a speech discrimination of 10 percent. Decibel (dB) loss at the puretone threshold of 1000 Hertz (Hz) is 55, with a 55 dB loss at 2000 Hz, a 55 dB loss at 3000 Hz, and a 55 dB loss at 4000 Hz. The average decibel loss is 55 in the right ear. From Table VI of 38 CFR 4.85, Roman Numeral XI is derived for the right ear. This is determined by intersecting the percent of speech discrimination row with the puretone threshold average column. A 20 percent evaluation is derived from Table VII of 38 CFR 4.85 by intersecting row XI, the better ear, with column III, the poorer ear.

An evaluation of 20 percent is assigned because your left ear has an average decibel loss of 42.5 with a speech discrimination of 80 percent and your right ear has an average decibel loss of 55 with a speech discrimination of 10 percent. The evaluation for hearing loss is based on objective testing. Higher evaluations are assigned for more severe hearing impairment.

Reopened Claim

Claim Type

For a reopened claim, select “**Reopen**” under Claim Type.

Hearing Loss Calculator

☐ Both Ears have same claim facts

Right Ear		Left Ear	
Claim Type	<input type="radio"/> New <input checked="" type="radio"/> Reopen <input type="radio"/> Increase	Claim Type	<input type="radio"/> New <input checked="" type="radio"/> Reopen <input type="radio"/> Increase
STR Findings	<input type="radio"/> No hearing loss <input type="radio"/> Hearing loss on discharge <input type="radio"/> STRs not available	STR Findings	<input type="radio"/> No hearing loss <input type="radio"/> Hearing loss on discharge <input type="radio"/> STRs not available
VAE Considerations	<input type="radio"/> No Show <input type="radio"/> No opinion <input type="radio"/> Opinion provided <input type="radio"/> Test not reliable	VAE Considerations	<input type="radio"/> No Show <input type="radio"/> No opinion <input type="radio"/> Opinion provided <input type="radio"/> Test not reliable
Acoustic Trauma <input type="radio"/> No Acoustic Trauma <input type="radio"/> Military Occupation Specialty <input type="radio"/> In-service shift		<input type="radio"/> Service treatment records <input type="radio"/> Combat <input type="radio"/> Other	
Other Records <input type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> Yes		Presumption <input type="checkbox"/> Sensorineural hearing loss at 10% within 1 year of discharge	

S/G Decision: N/A
 S/G Decision Basis: N/A
 NSC Decision: Not service
 NSC Decision Basis: not incurred
 Prior Percentage: 0
 Current Percentage: 20

	500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz	4000 Hz
Left Ear	35	35	40	45	50
Right Ear	55	55	55	55	55

Speech Discrimination: Left 80, Right 10
 Roman Numeral: Left III, Right XI
 Table Used: VI, VI
 Disabling per VA: Yes, Yes

Exit
 Reset
 Print

Graph Increase: N/A
 Denial Narrative: Service connection for bilateral hearing loss is denied because your hearing loss has not been linked to service. Although hearing loss is not shown in-service, acoustic trauma or

STR Findings, VAE Considerations, Acoustic Trauma, Other Records, Presumption

Select all appropriate buttons for the evidence in the claim to reopen in the same way as indicated in the **New Claim** section of this User Guide. Enter all information requested by the pop-up prompt screens.

Hearing Loss Calculator

☐ Both Ears have same claim facts

Right Ear

Claim Type

☐ New

☒ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☒ No hearing loss

☐ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☒ No opinion

☒ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ No Acoustic Trauma

☒ Military Occupation Specialty

☐ In-service shift

Other Records

☐ None

☐ Yes

Left Ear

Claim Type

☐ New

☒ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☒ No hearing loss

☐ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☒ No opinion

☒ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ No Acoustic Trauma

☐ Service treatment records

☐ Combat

☐ Other

Presumption

☐ Sensorineural hearing loss at 10% within 1 year of discharge

S/C Decision: Service connected

S/C Decision Basis: Incurred

NSC Decision: N/A

NSC Decision Basis: N/A

Prior Percentage: 0

Current Percentage: 20

	Loss at 500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz	4000 Hz
Left Ear	35	35	40	45	50
Right Ear	55	55	55	55	55

Speech Discrimination

Left: 80

Right: 10

✓ Scores Available

Roman Numeral: III

Table Used: VI

Disabling per VA: Yes

Exit

Reset

Print

Grant/ Increase

We have granted your claim for bilateral hearing loss. Service connection is warranted because although no hearing loss is demonstrated in-service, your military occupational specialty (MOS) of Military Transport Specialist is consistent with acoustic trauma and

Derail Narrative

N/A

Examination Findings

Once these selections are entered, enter the puretone threshold and the speech discrimination finding from the current VA examination. The generated rating decision text will be displayed.

Hearing Loss Calculator

☐ Both Ears have same claim facts

Right Ear

Claim Type

☐ New

☒ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☒ No hearing loss

☐ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☐ No opinion

☒ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ No Acoustic Trauma

☒ Military Occupation Specialty

☐ In-service shift

Other Records

☒ None

☐ Yes

Left Ear

Claim Type

☐ New

☒ Reopen

☐ Increase

STR Findings

☒ No hearing loss

☐ Hearing loss on discharge

☐ STRs not available

VAE Considerations

☐ No Show

☐ No opinion

☒ Opinion provided

☐ Test not reliable

Acoustic Trauma

☐ No Acoustic Trauma

☐ Service treatment records

☐ Combat

☐ Other

Presumption

☐ Sensorineural hearing loss at 10% within 1 year of discharge

S/C Decision: Service connected

S/C Decision Basis: Incurred

NSC Decision: N/A

NSC Decision Basis: N/A

Prior Percentage: 0

Current Percentage: 20

	Loss at 500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz	4000 Hz
Left Ear	35	35	40	45	50
Right Ear	55	55	55	55	55

Speech Discrimination

Left: 80

Right: 10

✓ Scores Available

Roman Numeral: III

Table Used: VI

Disabling per VA: Yes

Exit

Reset

Print

Grant/ Increase

We have granted your claim for bilateral hearing loss. Service connection is warranted because although no hearing loss is demonstrated in-service, your military occupational specialty (MOS) of Military Transport Specialist is consistent with acoustic trauma and

Derail Narrative

N/A

Copying Generated Text into Your Rating Decision

Hold down the “Ctrl” button and type “C” to copy the language from the calculator for pasting into the reasons and bases portion of your RBA 2000 rating decision.

Claim to Reopen Example Text

Here is some example text generated by the calculator:

We have granted your claim for bilateral hearing loss. Service connection is warranted because although no hearing loss is demonstrated in-service, your military occupational specialty (MOS) of UH-60 Helicopter Repairman is consistent with acoustic trauma and your hearing loss has been linked to that acoustic trauma. Your VA examiner opined that it is at least as likely as not that your hearing loss is due to military noise exposure. The effective date of this grant is January 1, 2010, which is the date we received your claim.

VA examination findings show the left ear with 66 percent discrimination. Decibel (dB) loss at the puretone threshold of 1000 Hertz (Hz) is 35, with a 40 dB loss at 2000 Hz, a 55 dB loss at 3000 Hz, and a 55 dB loss at 4000 Hz. The average decibel loss is 46.3 in the left ear. From Table VI of 38 CFR 4.85, Roman Numeral V is derived for the left ear. This is determined by intersecting the percent of speech discrimination row with the puretone threshold average column. The right ear shows a speech discrimination of 72 percent. Decibel (dB) loss at the puretone threshold of 1000 Hertz (Hz) is 45, with a 45 dB loss at 2000 Hz, a 50 dB loss at 3000 Hz, and a 50 dB loss at 4000 Hz. The average decibel loss is 47.5 in the right ear. From Table VI of 38 CFR 4.85, Roman Numeral IV is derived for the right ear. This is determined by intersecting the percent of speech discrimination row with the puretone threshold average column. A 10 percent evaluation is derived from Table VII of 38 CFR 4.85 by intersecting row V, the better ear, with column IV, the poorer ear.

An evaluation of 10 percent is assigned because your left ear has an average decibel loss of 46.3 with a speech discrimination of 66 percent and your right ear has an average decibel loss of 47.5 with a speech discrimination of 72 percent. The evaluation for hearing loss is based on objective testing. Higher evaluations are assigned for more severe hearing impairment.

APPENDIX A

Military Occupation Specialties List

If you need help determining the Veteran's MOS, a list of Military Occupation Specialties is provided on the **Rating Job Aids** webpage. Look for the **Military References** tab on the left hand side of the webpage. Select the Duty MOS Noise Exposure Listing tab. The following list will appear. On this page, you can select the Veteran's branch of service, as well as whether the Veteran served as enlisted or as an officer.

Microsoft Excel - http://vha.mva.gov/M/21/rating/docs/dutymosnoise.xls [Read-Only]									
MOS									
A1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	MOS	JOB TITLE	HIGHLY PROBABLE	MODERATE	LOW				
2	11B	INFANTRYMAN	X						
3	11C	INDIRECT FIRE INFANTRYMAN	X						
4	11Z	INFANTRY SENIOR SERGEANT	X						
5	12B	COMBAT ENGINEER	X						
6	12C	BRIDGE CREWMEMBER		X					
7	12D	DRIVER		X					
8	12G	QUARRYING SPECIALIST (RC)		X	X				
9	12H	CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING SUPERVISOR	X						
10	12K	PLUMBER		X					
11	12M	FIREFIGHTER	X						
12	12N	HORIZONTAL CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER	X						
13	12P	PRIME POWER PRODUCTION SPECIALIST	X						
14	12Q	POWER LINE DISTRIBUTION SPECIALIST (RC)	X						
15	12R	INTERIOR ELECTRICIAN			X				
16	12T	TECHNICAL ENGINEER		X					
17	12V	CONCRETE AND ASPHALT EQUIPMENT OPERATOR	X						
18	12W	CARPENTRY AND MASONRY SPECIALIST	X						
19	12X	GENERAL ENGINEERING SUPERVISOR			X				
20	12Y	GEOSPATIAL ENGINEER		X					
21	12Z	COMBAT ENGINEERING SENIOR SERGEANT	X						
22	13B	CANNON CREWMEMBER	X						
23	13C	TACTICAL AUTOMATED FIRE CONTROL SYSTEMS SPECIALIST	X						
24	13D	FIELD ARTILLERY AUTOMATED TACTICAL DATA SYSTEM SPECIALIST	X						
25	13E	CANNON FIRE DIRECTION SPECIALIST	X						
26	13F	FIRE SUPPORT SPECIALIST	X						
27	13M	MULTIPLE LAUNCH ROCKET SYSTEM (MLRS)/HIGH MOBILITY ARTILLERY ROCKET SYSTEM (HMARS) CREWMEMBER	X						
28	13P	MULTIPLE LAUNCH ROCKET SYSTEM (MLRS) OPERATIONAL FIRE DIRECTION SPECIALIST	X						
29	13R	FIELD ARTILLERY FIREFINDER RADAR OPERATOR	X						
30	13S	FIELD ARTILLERY SURVEYOR (conversion to 13T 1 Oct 10)		X					
31	13T	FIELD ARTILLERY SURVEYOR/METEOROLOGICAL CREWMEMBER		X					
32	13W	FIELD ARTILLERY METEOROLOGICAL CREWMEMBER (conversion to 13T 1 Oct 10)		X					
33	13Z	FIELD ARTILLERY SENIOR SERGEANT	X						
34	14E	PATRIOT FIRE CONTROL ENHANCED OPERATOR/MAINTAINER	X						
35	14J	AIR DEFENSE COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMUNICATIONS, COMPUTERS, AND INTELLIGENCE TACTICAL OPERATIONS CENTER ENHANCED OPERATOR/MAINTAINER	X						
36	14M	MAN PORTABLE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM CREWMEMBER (RC)	X						
37	14S	AIR AND MISSILE DEFENSE (AMD) CREWMEMBER	X						
38	14T	PATRIOT LAUNCHING STATION ENHANCED OPERATOR/MAINTAINER	X						
39	14Z	AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY SENIOR SERGEANT	X						
40	15B	AIRCRAFT POWERPLANT REPAIRER	X						
41	15D	AIRCRAFT POWERTRAIN REPAIRER	X						
42	15F	AIRCRAFT ELECTRICIAN	X						
43	15G	AIRCRAFT STRUCTURAL REPAIRER	X						
44	15H	AIRCRAFT PNEUMATICS REPAIRER	X						
45	15J	OH-58D/ARH ARMAMENT/ELECTRICAL/AVIONICS SYSTEMS REPAIRER	X						
46	15K	AIRCRAFT COMPONENTS REPAIR SUPERVISOR	X						
47	15M	UH-1 HELICOPTER REPAIRER (RC)	X						
Ready									
Navy Enlisted / Army Enlisted / Navy Officer / Marine Corps / Air Force Enlisted / Air Force Officers / Coast Guard / Merchant Marine /									

APPENDIX B

This section is broken down into 4 subsections. The subsections include text for: B1) a grant of service connection; B2) a denial of service connection; B3) an increased evaluation; and B4) VA examinations. There is also suggested language for the decision maker to use when completing the reasons and bases section of the rating decision.

Appendix B1: GRANT

Intro paragraph: (ear(s) can be granted service connection.

- We have granted service connection for bilateral hearing loss.
- We have granted service connection for hearing loss, right ear.
- We have granted service connection for hearing loss, left ear.

Which ear(s) warrant grant.

- Service connection is warranted because
- Service connection for your right ear is warranted because
- Service connection for your left ear is warranted because

Reasons grant is warranted.

- **Hearing loss in service:** your service treatment records show that your hearing loss began in service.
- **Aggravation:** your service treatment records show that your hearing loss was permanently worsened by service. You had hearing loss when you entered active duty with worsened hearing upon exit. The evidence of record provides no specific finding that the increased disability was due to normal progression. Therefore, hearing loss is presumed to have been aggravated in service and service connection on the basis of aggravation is granted.
- **Presumption:** your hearing loss, determined to be sensorineural hearing loss, manifested itself to a compensable level within one year of discharge. (*direct has priority*)
- **Paired Organ:** compensation may be paid for non-service connected hearing loss (as a paired organ) if the service connected hearing loss in the other ear is compensable on its own. Compensation is established under this provision of the law. (*Direct/presumptive have priority*)
- **MOS acoustic trauma with link:** your military occupation specialty (MOS) of [USER INPUT] is consistent with acoustic trauma and your hearing loss has been linked to that acoustic trauma by XXX. (*either "your VA examiner" or "your treatment records"*).
- **In-service shift acoustic trauma with link:** you had military acoustic trauma as evidenced by a significant puretone threshold shift in-service and your hearing loss has been linked to that acoustic trauma by XXX.
- **STRs acoustic trauma with link:** your service treatment records indicate that you were exposed to acoustic trauma and your hearing loss has been linked to that acoustic trauma by XXXX
- **Combat acoustic trauma with link:** your hearing loss has been related to combat military noise exposure by XXX.
 - o You are in receipt of the [USER INPUT]; therefore, combat noise exposure is conceded
 - o Evidence from [USER INPUT] show that you engaged in combat with the enemy
- **[Other] acoustic trauma with link:** your hearing loss has been linked to acoustic trauma. Acoustic trauma is conceded because [USER INPUT]

More text if in service or aggravated.

- In addition, your military occupation specialty (MOS) of [USER INPUT] is consistent with acoustic trauma and your hearing loss has been linked to that acoustic trauma.

- In addition, you had military acoustic trauma as evidenced by a significant puretone threshold shift in-service and your hearing loss has been linked to that acoustic trauma.
- In addition, your service treatment records indicate that you were exposed to acoustic trauma and your hearing loss has been linked to that acoustic trauma.
- In addition, your hearing loss has been related to combat noise exposure.
 - o You are in receipt of the [USER INPUT]; therefore, combat noise exposure is conceded.
 - o Evidence from [USER INPUT] show that you engaged in combat with the enemy
- In addition, your hearing loss has been linked to acoustic trauma. Acoustic trauma is conceded because [USER INPUT]

Lay statement considerations:

- **Decreased hearing both in and after service:** You submitted lay testimony that you had decreased hearing in-service and post-service, but hearing loss is based on objective testing. Lay testimony cannot definitively establish the actual decibel loss at a given range and therefore cannot be used to state that you meet a specific decibel level of hearing loss.
- **Decreased hearing currently:** You submitted lay testimony that you have decreased hearing, but hearing loss is based on objective testing. Lay testimony cannot definitively establish the actual decibel loss at a given range and therefore cannot be used to state that you meet a specific decibel level of hearing loss.
- **Hearing loss in-service:** You submitted lay testimony that you had decreased hearing in-service, but hearing loss is based on objective testing. Lay testimony cannot definitively establish the actual decibel loss at a given range and therefore cannot be used to state that you meet a specific decibel level of hearing loss.

Other Records.

- **No findings:** We have received treatment records from [USER INPUT], but these records did not provide audiometric findings.
- **Opinion provided:** Treatment records from [USER INPUT] indicate that [USER INPUT] . (opinion)
- **Inadequate for rating:** Your treatment records have audiometric findings, but to be adequate for rating purposes, there must be a Maryland CNC test to determine speech discrimination. As there is no indication that the treatment records from [USER INPUT] used a Maryland CNC test, the audiometric findings are not adequate for rating purposes. *(will not show up if extraordinary levels of hearing loss are present)*
- **Adequate for rating:** Both your VA examination and treatment records contain findings which are adequate for rating purposes. Your XXX are being used for this evaluation because XXXX.

Evaluation considerations. (if Lay & PTR, then this will be paragraph 2; otherwise, it will be paragraph 1)

- **VAE used for evaluation:** VA examination findings show
- **Other records used for evaluation:** Treatment findings show
- **VAE not reliable:** You attended your VA examination, but the findings cannot be used for rating purposes as your examiner noted that the audiometric scores were inconsistent or not reliable.
- **Positive link in other records, neutral link in VAE:** Your examiner stated that the etiology of [USER INPUT] could not be determined without resorting to mere speculation. However, service connection is still warranted as the opinion from [USER INPUT] has linked your current hearing loss to your military noise exposure.

Next higher evaluation.

- An evaluation of [PERCENTAGE] is assigned because your right ear has a speech discrimination of XX with an average decibel loss of XXX and your left ear had a speech discrimination of XX with an average decibel loss of XXX.

Failure to Report for VA examination.

- This claim is considered based on the evidence of record as you failed to report for the scheduled VA examination. Evidence expected from this examination which might have been material to the outcome of this claim could not be considered. In order for your claim to be reconsidered, you must submit medical evidence of current treatment or show good cause for missing the examination, while indicating a willingness to report for another VA examination.

Claimed in other ways

- Although you claimed hearing loss on a [OTHER] basis, service connection has been granted on a direct basis.
- You also claimed service connection on a direct basis, but as service connection on this basis could not be granted as your hearing loss neither began in-service nor has been related to service.

Appendix B2: DENIAL

Both or either ear can be denied and there may be a previous denial.

- Service connection for bilateral hearing loss is denied because
- The previous denial for bilateral hearing loss is confirmed and continued because
- Service connection for bilateral hearing loss is denied. Service connection for [USER INPUT] is denied and the previous denial for [USER INPUT] is confirmed and continued because
- Service connection for bilateral hearing loss is denied. Service connection for the left ear is denied because [USER INPUT] Service connection for the right ear is denied because
- Service connection for bilateral hearing loss is denied. Service connection for [USER INPUT] is denied because [USER INPUT]. The previous denial of [USER INPUT] is confirmed and continued because [USER INPUT]
- Service connection for [USER INPUT] is denied because
- The previous denial of service connection for [USER INPUT] is confirmed and continued because

S/C may be denied because either the veteran's hearing is normal or it was not linked to service.

If the reasoning is the same, there is no problem. If the reasoning is different, then the ears need to be split. (i.e., right ear denied because . . . left ear denied because . . .)

Explaining why hearing loss has been denied.

- hearing is normal for VA purposes.
- your hearing loss has not been linked to service.
- your hearing loss was not aggravated by service.
 - o **No aggravation:** For aggravation to be considered, there must be an actual worsening of your condition. However, your service treatment records do not show that your hearing loss [USER INPUT] actually worsened in-service. There is no showing of increased decibel loss [USER INPUT] upon exit.
 - o **Natural progression VAE:** Upon exit, you had an increase in your hearing loss, but service connection based on aggravation is not warranted if the increase is due to natural progression of the disease. Your VA examination made a specific finding that the worsening of your [USER INPUT] hearing loss is due to natural progression of the disease. As your increase in disability is not due to service, but due to natural progression, service connection based on aggravation may not be established.
 - o **Natural progression Other:** Upon exit, you had an increase in your hearing loss, but service connection based on aggravation is not warranted if the increase is due to natural progression of the disease. Treatment records from [USER INPUT] make a specific finding that the worsening of your [USER INPUT] hearing loss is due to natural progression of the disease. As your increase in disability is not due to service, but due to natural progression, service connection based on aggravation may not be established.

STR Findings:

- **Not available:** As your service treatment records are unavailable for review, there are no audiometrics showing that you met the above criteria for your [WHICH EAR] while in-service.
- **Hearing loss in service:** Your service treatment records show that you incurred a hearing loss [WHICH EAR] in-service, but service connection cannot be granted unless there is a showing that you currently have hearing loss for VA purposes.
- **No hearing loss in service:** There are no audiometric findings in your service treatment records that meet the above requirements for your [WHICH EAR]

Acoustic Trauma considerations:

- **No acoustic trauma:** Although [WHICH EAR] hearing loss is not shown in-service, acoustic trauma or military noise exposure may constitute injury of the ear. However, in this case, acoustic trauma is not shown by the evidence of record.
- **Acoustic trauma, no link:** Although [WHICH EAR] hearing loss is not shown in-service, acoustic trauma or military noise exposure may constitute injury of the ear. Medical expertise is needed to establish a link between your current hearing loss and in-service military noise exposure. However, to this date, we have received no medical records showing that your hearing loss is due to service.
- **Acoustic trauma, no hearing loss:** You have in-service acoustic trauma, but service connection based on military noise exposure alone cannot be granted. For service connection to be considered there must first be a showing of actual hearing loss for VA purposes.

The Language needed for Normal Hearing for VA purposes (this is RBA language)

- Service connection may not be established for disability due to impaired hearing unless the auditory threshold in any of the frequencies 500, 1000, 2000, 3000 or 4000 Hertz is 40 decibels or greater; or the auditory thresholds for at least three of the frequencies 500, 1000, 2000, 3000 or 4000 Hertz are 26 decibels or greater; or speech recognition scores using the Maryland CNC Test are less than 94 percent. (38 CFR 3.385).

Lay statement considerations:

- **Decreased hearing both in and after service:** You submitted lay testimony that you had decreased hearing in-service and post-service, but hearing loss is based on objective testing. Lay testimony cannot definitively establish the actual decibel loss at a given range and therefore cannot be used to state that you meet a specific decibel level of hearing loss.
- **Decreased hearing currently:** You submitted lay testimony that you have decreased hearing, but hearing loss is based on objective testing. Lay testimony cannot definitively establish the actual decibel loss at a given range and therefore cannot be used to state that you meet a specific decibel level of hearing loss.
- **Hearing loss in-service:** You submitted lay testimony that you had decreased hearing in-service, but hearing loss is based on objective testing. Lay testimony cannot definitively establish the actual decibel loss at a given range and therefore cannot be used to state that you meet a specific decibel level of hearing loss.

Other Records

- **No findings or link:** We have received treatment records from [USER INPUT], but these records did not provide audiometric findings or a link to service.
- **Hearing loss, no link:** We have received treatment records from [USER INPUT] showing hearing loss in [WHICH EAR], but these records did not provide a link to service.
- **No hearing loss:** We have received treatment records from [USER INPUT], but these records did not show a hearing loss for VA purposes.
- **Opinion:** Treatment records from [USER INPUT] indicate that [USER INPUT] . (opinion)

- **Inadequate:** Your treatment records have audiometric findings, but to be adequate for rating purposes, there must be a Maryland CNC test to determine speech discrimination. As there is no indication that the treatment records from [USER INPUT] used a Maryland CNC test, the audiometric findings are not adequate for rating purposes.

Appendix B3: INCREASE

Decision regarding evaluation.

The evaluation of [WHICH EAR] is

- **Confirmed and continued evaluation:** continued as/
- **Evaluation increased:** increased to [PERCENT] effective XXX which is XXXX.

Lay Statement Considerations:

- **Decreased hearing:** You submitted lay testimony that you have decreased hearing, but hearing loss is based on objective testing. Lay testimony cannot definitively establish the actual decibel loss at a given range and therefore cannot be used to state that you meet a specific decibel level of hearing loss.

Lay testimony of in-service hearing loss is not relevant as veteran has already established service connection for hearing loss.

Other records language:

- **Inadequate** Your treatment records have audiometric findings, but to be adequate for rating purposes, there must be a Maryland CNC test to determine speech discrimination. As there is no indication that the treatment records from [USER INPUT] used a Maryland CNC test, the audiometric findings are not adequate for rating purposes.
- **Adequate & VAE** We have received treatment records from [USER INPUT], but these records did not show that an increase is warranted.
- **No findings:** We have received treatment records from [USER INPUT] but these records did provide audiometric findings.
- **Adequate with no VAE:** Nothing, it will be considered in the findings language.

Additional Considerations

- **Deciding which examination to use:** Both your VA examination and treatment records contain findings which are adequate for rating purposes. Your XXX are being used for this evaluation because XXXX
- To date, we have not received any records showing that an increase is warranted.
- In our letters to you, we wrote to you telling you what the evidence must show to substantiate your claim for increase. To this date we have received no audiometric findings showing increased hearing problems.

Evaluation considerations:

- **VAE used for evaluation:** VA examination findings show
- **Other records used for evaluation:** Treatment findings show
- **VAE not reliable:** You attended your VA examination, but the findings cannot be used for rating purposes as your examiner noted that the audiometric scores were inconsistent or not reliable.
- **When no examination is needed:** A claim for increase typically requires the ordering of a VA examination. One exception to this general rule is where a veteran has had a VA examination within a year of the current claim. You had a VA examination for these issues in XXX, which is within a year of your claim; therefore, no new VA examination is warranted.

- Next higher evaluation.** - An evaluation of [PERCENTAGE] is assigned because your right ear has a speech discrimination of XX with an average decibel loss of XXX and your left ear had a speech discrimination of XX with an average decibel loss of XXX.
- An evaluation of [PERCENTAGE] is continued in the absence of medical evidence showing that your condition had increased in severity.

Failure to report for VA examination.

This claim is considered based on the evidence of record as you failed to report for the scheduled VA examination. Evidence expected from this examination which might have been material to the outcome of this claim could not be considered.

VA Examination.

- **Normal Hearing:** Your VA examination does not show a hearing loss for VA purposes.
- **Opinion, less likely:** Your VA examiner opined that it is less likely than not that your hearing loss is due to military noise exposure.
- **Opinion, not likely:** Your VA examiner opined that it is not likely that your hearing loss is due to military noise exposure.
- **Opinion, mere speculation:** Your VA examiner stated that the etiology of your hearing loss cannot be determined without resorting to mere speculation. The examiner was unable to link your hearing loss to your military noise exposure.
- **Findings not reliable:** Although you attended your VA examination, the examiner noted that the audiometric scores were inconsistent or not reliable. Therefore, these score cannot be used for rating purposes.

Post VAE discussion:

- **Findings not reliable:** As no reliable audiometric findings were available, the evidence does not show that you currently have disabling hearing for VA purposes.
- **No link:** The evidence shows that you currently have hearing loss [USER INPUT] for VA purposes, but service connection cannot be granted without a medical link between your hearing loss and military service.
- **Hearing normal:** Your VA examination does not show a hearing loss for VA purposes.
- **Hearing normal:** To this date we have received no audiometrics showing a hearing loss for VA purposes.
- **Link, but no disability:** Your examiner provided an opinion that linked hearing loss to in-service acoustic trauma, but service connection cannot be granted as your hearing loss does not meet the above definition of hearing loss for VA purposes.

Conclusion:

- **Hearing Normal:** In this case, the evidence of record does not show current audiometric findings which meet the criteria for a grant of service connection for [USER INPUT] hearing loss. As you do not currently meet the criteria for hearing loss [USER INPUT] for VA purposes, service connection may not be granted.
- **No link:** Although you currently have a hearing loss [USER INPUT] for VA purposes, there is no medical link between your hearing loss and service. In the absence of such a link, service connection may not be granted.

Claimed in other ways

- You also claimed hearing loss on a presumptive basis, but there is no evidence that your hearing loss manifested itself to a compensable degree within a year of your release from active service.

- You also claimed service connection on an aggravated basis, but there is no evidence that disabling hearing loss permanently worsened as a result of service.
- Although hearing loss has been claimed on a [OTHER] basis, service connection on a direct basis must be considered. However, service connection on a direct basis is not warranted as there is no evidence showing that your hearing loss either begin in-service or has been related to service.
- Although hearing loss has been claimed on a [OTHER] basis, service connection on a direct basis must be considered. However, service connection on a direct basis is not warranted as you currently do not have a hearing loss for VA purposes.
- In addition, there is no evidence that disabling sensorineural hearing loss manifested itself to a compensable degree within a year of service.
- Although you had hearing loss within a year of service, your hearing loss was not sensorineural. There is no basis in law to grant service connection for conductive or non-sensorineural hearing loss that manifests itself to a compensable degree within a year of your release from active service.