

UNCLASSIFIED



# HEARING PROTECTOR FIT-TESTING REQUIREMENT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

December 2023

# INTRODUCTION

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- Significant updates to the Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6055.12 “Hearing Conservation Program” were published and effective 22 November, 2023.
- The change includes a new requirement for hearing protector (HP) fit testing to be conducted for all DOD personnel who have documented noise exposure greater than or equal to 95 dBA 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA) and who are enrolled in a service hearing conservation program (HCP).



# WHAT IS HP FIT TESTING?

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- HP fit testing is a procedure used to quantitatively measure the amount of noise reduction a specific hearing protector is providing a user.
- HP fit testing measures the personal attenuation rating (PAR) specific to each individual ear and hearing protector.
- The PAR is a real-world measurement of the overall attenuation the hearing protector provides the individual's ear.



# WHY SHOULD HP FIT TESTING BE CONDUCTED? (1)

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- Reduce noise-induced hearing loss for those enrolled in HCPs
- Train workers to properly fit and use hearing protectors
- Identify workers at risk for noise-induced hearing loss due to inadequate hearing protector fit
- Properly select worker's hearing protectors to meet individual and environmental needs
- Increase self-efficacy among workers who must wear hearing protectors



## WHY SHOULD HP FIT TESTING BE CONDUCTED? (2)

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- Improve training outcomes by providing real-time feedback and documentation
- Motivate workers to consistently use hearing protectors in noisy environments
- Optimize maintenance of hearing protector inventories; potentially reduce costs
- Comply with DoDI 6055.12 and OSHA policy requirements for fitting hearing protectors, providing training, and maintaining records



## WHY SHOULD HP FIT TESTING BE CONDUCTED? (3)

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- Evaluate hearing conservation program effectiveness
- “Train-the-trainer” to better match hearing protectors to meet individual worker needs



# WHO WILL RECEIVE FIT TESTING AND WHEN? (1)

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- All DOD personnel enrolled in their service HCP and exposed at or above 95 dBA 8-hour TWA will have a hearing protector fit test at the initial reference audiogram or prior to initial duty in hazardous noise areas or as soon as possible after employment begins.
- When a positive Significant Threshold Shift (STS) is identified on the periodic audiogram. A hearing protector fit test will be used to evaluate the hearing protection devices, confirm adequacy of fit, and PAR for the noise environment.
- When physical changes to a person's ear canal cause poor fit of assigned hearing protection devices.



## WHO WILL RECEIVE FIT TESTING AND WHEN? (2)

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- When the primary type of fitted hearing protection device is no longer available (e.g. employee switches from earplugs to ear muffs).
- When a single frequency 15 dB shift at 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hz occurs.
- \*Note: These are the minimum requirements for hearing protector fit testing in the DOD—services may institute more stringent requirements for hearing protector fit testing to better meet the needs of their respective HCP.





# Form DD3126

- DODI 6055.12 requires hearing protector fit-testing results to be recorded on DD3126.
- DD3126 can be found at the below link in a downloadable, fillable .pdf form.
  - <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/form/dd/dd3126.pdf>

HEARING PROTECTION FIT-TEST RECORD										1. DATE (YYYYMMDD)			
<b>PRIVACY ADVISORY</b> Disclosure of this information is voluntary and will be used to document the results of a fit test for a hearing protection device. When completed, this form contains personally identifiable information and is protected by the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended.													
2. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)				3. DOD ID NUMBER				4. DATE OF BIRTH (YYYYMMDD)					
5. DOD COMPONENT A - ARMY F - AIR FORCE S - SPACE FORCE N - NAVY M - MARINE CORPS 1 - OTHER				6. SERVICE COMPONENT <input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR <input type="checkbox"/> NATIONAL GUARD <input type="checkbox"/> RESERVE <input type="checkbox"/> CIVILIAN <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify)									
7. SERVICE DUTY OCCUPATION CODE				8. CIVILIAN JOB SERIES				9. INSTALLATION/COMMAND/UNIT <small>(Authorized abbreviation of military installation or command.)</small>					
10. UIC													
11. PERSONAL HEARING PROTECTION													
a. MANUFACTURER		b. MODEL		c. SIZE <small>(Ear Canal - Ear            Canal - High            Canal)</small>		d. PERSONAL ATTENUATION RATING (PAR)				e. COMBINED PAR			
RIGHT EAR						125 Hz	250 Hz	500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	4000 Hz	8000 Hz	
LEFT EAR													
1. REASON FOR HP FIT-TEST (Check the appropriate box):													
<input type="checkbox"/> INITIAL ENTRY INTO HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM				<input type="checkbox"/> POST-TTS, PTS, OR STS									
<input type="checkbox"/> REQUESTED BY INDIVIDUAL				<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERNATIVE HEARING PROTECTION DEVICE									
<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify)													
2. EXPLANATION OF PAR <small>(1) Using the same fit technique will increase the probability of achieving similar PAR.            (2) The PAR is applicable to the hearing protection devices (HPDs) tested. Different HPDs may produce a different PAR.</small>													
12. HEARING PROTECTION FIT-TEST SYSTEM													
a. MANUFACTURER				b. MODEL		c. SERIAL NUMBER				d. LAST CALIBRATION DATE (YYYYMMDD)			
13. HEARING PROTECTION FIT-TEST OPERATOR													
a. NAME				b. DOD CERTIFICATION NO. OR OTHER				c. TRAINING DATE (YYYYMMDD)					

DD FORM 3126, JUN 2023

Page 1 of 1



# NEXT STEPS

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- Implementation processes will be determined by each service
  - Equipment procurement
  - Personnel training to conduct fit testing
  - Identification of who needs to be fit tested, when to test, where to test, and how to test
  - Develop testing process/flow for identified personnel
  - Establish documentation/record keeping processes (DD3126)



# DHA HEARING CENTER OF EXCELLENCE CONTACT

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- Theresa Schulz, PhD
- <https://hearing.health.mil/hcehome/Contact-Us>



# REFERENCES

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- Department of Defense. Hearing conservation program. Department of Defense Instruction 6055.12; 2023.  
<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/605512p.pdf?ver=MMbEgkCmoKoUiDfYVGBtqQ%3d%3d>
- Department of Defense. Hearing protection fit-test record. Department of Defense Form 3126; 2023.  
<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/forms/dd/dd3126.pdf>

