



Hearing Loss: VA Disability Rating Explained

The VA rates hearing loss based on the results of audiometric testing, which includes a pure-tone audiometry test and a speech discrimination test. The rating is determined by comparing the results of these tests to the VA's Schedule for Rating Disabilities. Here's an overview of the process:

Audiometric Testing

- 1. Pure-tone Audiometry Test:** Measures the faintest tones a person can hear at various pitches (frequencies). The test results are charted on an audiogram, and the thresholds at 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hertz (Hz) are used to calculate the rating.
- 2. Speech Discrimination Test (Maryland CNC):** Assesses the percentage of words correctly repeated from a list of words presented at a comfortable loudness level. ### Combining Results The VA uses these test results to determine hearing impairment levels in each ear, which are then combined to assign a final disability rating.

Here are the steps:

- 1. Assigning Roman Numerals:** The pure-tone thresholds and speech discrimination scores are used to assign a Roman numeral (I to XI) for each ear if certain conditions are met.
- 2. Combining the Numerals:** The Roman numerals for each ear are combined using Table VII to determine the overall percentage rating for hearing loss.

Example Calculation - Pure-tone Thresholds: - Average for the right ear: 55 dB - Average for the left ear: 70 dB

Rating Levels The VA disability ratings for hearing loss range from 0% to 100%, in increments of 10%, based on the severity of hearing impairment as determined by the combined results of the audiometric tests.

Factors Impacting the Rating

- **Bilateral vs. Unilateral:** Ratings account for hearing loss in both ears.
- **Service Connection:** The hearing loss must be connected to military service.
- **Consistency of Symptoms:** Medical evidence must consistently document the hearing loss. Veterans with hearing loss need to provide thorough medical documentation and undergo VA-approved audiometric testing to establish the severity and service connection of their condition for accurate rating determination.