



**ARMY HEARING PROGRAM TALKING POINTS  
CALENDAR YEAR 2015**

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Hearing health in the Army has improved over time, largely due to the dedicated work of hearing health experts. However, noise-induced hearing loss and associated problems have not been eliminated. The Army Hearing Program continually evolves to address hearing health challenges, and maintains the momentum to build iteratively upon previous success.

This report provides summary information regarding the prevalence of hearing injury experienced by U.S. Army Soldiers in 2015. Soldiers who completed a DD Form 2215 (*Reference Audiogram*) or DD Form 2216 (*Hearing Conservation Data*) during Calendar Year 2015 (CY15) were included in the analysis. Information is broken out by Service component and will be updated quarterly.

**TOTAL ARMY STATISTICS FOR CY15**

<b>25% of Soldiers have some degree of hearing loss:</b>	21% Active Duty
	27% Army National Guard
	28% Army Reserve
<b>6% of Soldiers have a clinically significant hearing loss:</b>	4% Active Duty
	8% Army National Guard
	7% Army Reserve
<b>2% of Soldiers have a hearing loss that requires a fit-for-duty (Readiness) evaluation:</b>	1% Active Duty
	2% Army National Guard
	2% Army Reserve
<b>7% of Soldiers evaluated in CY15 experienced a significant change in hearing (Significant Threshold Shift):</b>	4% Active Duty
	8% Army National Guard
	13% Army Reserve

## **BACKGROUND**

The Army Hearing Program traces its origins to the late 1960s with the accession of 11 uniformed audiologists. The need for more audiologists and a robust Hearing Conservation Program was quickly realized after initial studies indicated that approximately 35–40% of Infantry, Armor, and Artillery Soldiers had a clinically significant hearing loss (H-2 profile or greater). In the early 1970s, an additional 25 audiologists were commissioned with a mandate to spend at least 50% of their time performing hearing conservation efforts outside of the clinic.

Through the efforts of the Army Hearing Conservation Program, the hearing health of the Army improved. Data from 1989 showed a marked improvement in hearing health with only 15–20% of Infantry, Armor, and Artillery Soldiers showing clinically significant hearing loss. By 2000, the percent of Soldiers with clinically significant hearing loss had dropped to about 10% or less. This percentage was maintained throughout the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with very little change in the number of Soldiers who developed a clinically significant hearing loss.

The Army Hearing Conservation Program changed to the Army Hearing Program in 2008 with a broadened focus. The four areas of emphasis include: [Hearing Readiness](#), [Operational Hearing Services](#), [Clinical Hearing Services](#), and [Hearing Conservation](#).

\*See Appendix for more detailed information

## APPENDIX A Detailed Total Army Statistics

**25% of Soldiers with some degree of hearing loss:**

- Any threshold outside the range of normal hearing sensitivity (greater than 25 dB), CY15 data.
- Data: DOEHRS-HC Data Repository, Soldiers who had a DD2215 or DD2216 completed in CY15—Ad hoc report.

Active Duty		Data
% Hearing Impaired	21.3%	85,700 / 401,701
% Normal Hearing	78.7%	316,001 / 401,701

Army National Guard (ARNG)		Data
% Hearing Impaired	27.4%	72,425 / 264,467
% Normal Hearing	72.6%	192,042 / 264,467

Army Reserve (USAR)		Data
% Hearing Impaired	27.9%	41,795 / 149,645
% Normal Hearing	72.1%	107,850 / 149,645

Total Army		Data
% Hearing Impaired	24.5%	199,920 / 815,813
% Normal Hearing	75.5%	615,893 / 815,813

**6% of Soldiers evaluated in CY15 have a clinically significant hearing loss:**

- A hearing profile greater than H-1.
- Data: Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System-Hearing Conservation (DOEHRS-HC) Data Repository, CY15—Army Profile—by Testing Installation—by major Army command (MACOM)

Active Duty		Data
% Clinically Significant Hearing Loss	4.3%	20,075 / 471,144

Army National Guard (ARNG)		Data
% Clinically Significant Hearing Loss	7.9%	18,944 / 241,256

Army Reserve (USAR)		Data
% Clinically Significant Hearing Loss	7.0%	9,090 / 128,303

Total Army		Data
% Clinically Significant Hearing Loss	5.7%	48,109 / 840,703

**2% of Soldiers have a hearing loss that required a fit-for-duty (Readiness) evaluation:**

- An H-3 Hearing Profile.
- Data: DOEHRS-HC Data Repository, CY15—Army Profile—by Testing Installation—by MACOM.

Active Duty		Data
% Require Fit-for-Duty Evaluation	1.0%	4,941 / 471,144
Army National Guard (ARNG)		Data
% Require Fit-for-Duty Evaluation	2.5%	6,000 / 241,256
Army Reserve (USAR)		Data
% Require Fit-for-Duty Evaluation	2.4%	3,117 / 128,303
Total Army		Data
% Require Fit-for-Duty Evaluation	1.7%	14,058 / 840,703

**7% of Soldiers evaluated in CY15 experienced a significant change in hearing (Significant Threshold Shift):**

- New cases of significant threshold shift (STS) on periodic evaluation:
  - An STS is defined as an average change, from the reference hearing test, of 10 decibels (dB) or more at 2000, 3000, and 4000 hertz (Hz) in either ear.
- Data: DOEHRS-HC Data Repository, CY15—Positive STS—by Testing Installation—by MACOM.

Active Duty		Data
% New Cases	4.5%	18,514 / 415,077
Army National Guard (ARNG)		Data
% New Cases	8.0%	20,298 / 255,312
Army Reserve (USAR)		Data
% New Cases	12.6%	18,497 / 147,036
Total Army		Data
% New Cases	7.0%	18,514 / 415,077