

Hearing Test Result Categories Explained

BASELINE TESTS

A - Abnormal:

In this category the test showed some hearing loss in the lower tones. At 500, 1000 and 2000 Hz the individual was hearing the tones at a minimum of 30 decibels in either ear. We are not qualified to say what may have caused the hearing loss, as hearing loss in the low tones is not generally noise related. At the time of counseling we would give the employee a copy of their test results and recommend they see their general doctor. Also we stress the importance of proper fitting hearing protection on and off the job.

EW - Early Warning:

In this category the test showed some hearing loss in the higher tones. There was a minimum of a 15 decibel notch with the worst point at 3000, 4000 or 6000 Hz in either ear. Often the hearing test will pick out the first sign of noise-induced hearing loss even though the individual may not have noticed any problems yet. At the time of counseling we would stress how important it is to wear proper fitting hearing protection on and off the job.

N - Normal:

In this category the test showed good hearing in all tones. At the time of counseling we would stress how important it is to wear proper fitting hearing protection on and off the job.

PERIODIC TESTS

AC - Abnormal Change:

In this category the test showed hearing that has gotten worse rapidly. The individual had two adjacent frequencies between 500 and 4000 Hz drop at least 15 decibels in either ear. The large amount of change is not due to noise exposure; some other medical condition is present at the time of the test. We are not qualified to determine what this condition may be. At the time of counseling the employee we would give them the test results of this year and previous year and recommend they see their general doctor. Also we stress the importance of proper fitting hearing protection on and off the job.

EWC - Early Warning Change:

In this category the test showed there has been hearing loss in the higher tones due to noise exposure. The individual had a drop of 15 or more decibels at either 3000 or 4000 Hz in either ear. The high tones are the tones sensitive to noise exposure and this kind of change usually indicates that the employee been exposed to too much noise since the last test. This exposure may happen because their hearing protection is not blocking the noise effectively because it does not fit or is in poor condition. Or the employee may not be wearing their hearing protection all the time or not at all. Again we stress the importance of proper fitting hearing protection on and off the job.

NC - Normal Change:

In this category the test showed no significant change from the previous hearing test. At the time of counseling we would stress how important it is to wear proper fitting hearing protection on and off the job.