12 Sept 2011

## INFORMATION PAPER

# Subject: HEARING CONSERVATION AND READINESS

# 1. Purpose To provide updated information on the Marine Corps Hearing Conservation and Readiness Program.

2. Key Points

* The Marine Corps Hearing Conservation Program (MCO 6260.1E) is designed to prevent Marine Corps personnel from suffering hearing loss due to noise exposure and to ensure hearing readiness and fitness for duty in the military and civilian workforce.
* The Government Accountability Office and the Naval Audit Service have completed reviews of DOD and Marine Corps’ hearing conservation programs to verify implementation and effectiveness. These audits determined the Marine Corps’ Hearing Conservation Program has not effectively protected the hearing of Marine Corps personnel.
* Department of Veterans Affairs disability payments for impaired auditory systems increase 15 percent last year, the biggest increase of any service-connected ailment. Annual VA payments for hearing related disabilities exceed $1.1 billion dollars.
* With the rise of auditory injuries among service members, DOD established a Hearing Center of Excellence and is creating a departmental registry that tracks hearing injuries and treatment.
* In response to the Naval Audit Service report recommendations (CMC ltr 7510 RFR-80 dtd 2 Feb 11), improvements to the Marine Corps Hearing Conservation program will include:
	+ Commands will conduct a hearing conservation and readiness stand-down to provide 1-hour of hearing awareness training, verify ear plug fit testing and validate hearing conservation data in Medical Readiness and Reporting System (MRRS).
	+ All military personnel will be enrolled in Hearing Conservation Program and receive annual hearing testing and have reference audio grams on file.
	+ All hazardous noise areas and processes will be identified and evaluated for viable engineering controls and adequacy of hearing protection devices.
	+ Commands will track and report hearing readiness similarly to medical and dental readiness.
	+ SD and IGMC will make hearing conservation and readiness an item of special interest during IG Inspections and Command Safety Assessments through FY2014.

* BUMED has confirmed the capacity to perform additional audiograms is available.
* SD has developed a Hearing Conservation and Readiness MARADMIN in coordination with BUMED, HS, and Marine Forces Command addressing the aforementioned programmatic changes. This draft MARADMIN is currently being reviewed at DMCS.

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