

III.iv.4.D.1.c. Consideri ng National Guard and Reserve Duty for Hearing Loss and/or Tinnitus Claims Claims for SC of hearing loss and/or tinnitus due to service in the National Guard or Reserves should be considered under the same criteria as any claim for SC of hearing loss and/or tinnitus. The condition must be causally related to service.

First, consider SC on the basis of a potential relationship to periods of active duty or active duty for training (ADT).

When SC for hearing loss and/or tinnitus may not be directly related to a period of active duty or extended ADT, entitlement to SC may still be established if there has been a decrease in auditory acuity due to military duties as a member of the National Guard or Reserves.

SC for hearing loss and/or tinnitus can be established for inactive duty for training (IADT) if the condition can be linked to an injury during IADT as shown by the nature of service, MOS, lay evidence, or other competent evidence.

Follow the procedures in the table below when developing for evidence of a decrease in auditory acuity due to National Guard or Reserve duty service and deciding whether an examination and/or medical opinion is warranted.

| Step | Action |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Obtain National Guard or Reserve medical records documenting auditory baseline. |
| 2 | <p>Consider the type of MOS and military duties performed during National Guard or Reserve service. Follow the guidance in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 4.D.1.b.</p> <p>Note: For purposes of hearing loss or tinnitus during IADT, the M or other evidence establishing noise exposure serves as the injury during IADT required for SC eligibility, per M21-1, Part IV, Subpa 2.B.1.m.</p> |
| 3 | Review the entire evidentiary record for noise exposure to ascertain both in-service and post-service exposure to hazardous noise. |

Note: Although the National Guard or Reserve service records should show auditory threshold shifts during National Guard or Reserve service, the service records do not need to meet the criteria in [38 CFR 3.385](#) to warrant an examination and/or medical opinion if all other requirements for ordering examinations and medical opinions in [M21-1, Part I, 1.C.3](#) are satisfied.