
Acoustics — Audiometric test methods —

**Part 1:
Pure-tone air and bone conduction
audiometry**

Acoustique — Méthodes d'essais audiométriques —

*Partie 1: Audiométrie à sons purs en conduction aérienne et en
conduction osseuse*

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 8253-1 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 43, *Acoustics*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 8253-1:1989) and ISO 6189:1983, which have been technically revised.

ISO 8253 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Acoustics — Audiometric test methods*:

- *Part 1: Pure-tone air and bone conduction audiometry*
- *Part 2: Sound field audiometry with pure-tone and narrow-band test signals*
- *Part 3: Speech audiometry*

Introduction

This International Standard specifies requirements and procedures for carrying out basic audiometric tests in which pure tones are presented to the test subject using earphones or bone vibrators. Electrophysiological test methods are not included.

In order to obtain a reliable measure of hearing ability, many factors are involved. IEC 60645-1 specifies requirements for audiometers. It is essential that audiometric equipment, when in service, be checked and the calibration maintained. This part of ISO 8253 outlines a calibration scheme. To avoid masking of the test signal by ambient noise in the audiometric test room, the levels of the ambient noise shall not exceed certain values, depending upon the method of signal presentation to the test subject, i.e. by different earphones or by bone vibrator. This part of ISO 8253 gives maximum permissible ambient sound pressure levels which shall not be exceeded when hearing threshold levels down to 0 dB have to be measured. It indicates the maximum ambient sound pressure levels which are permissible when other minimum hearing threshold levels require measurement. It sets out procedures for determining hearing threshold levels by pure-tone air conduction and bone conduction audiometry. For screening purposes, only methods for air conduction audiometry are outlined.

Audiometry can be performed by using:

- a) a manual audiometer;
- b) an automatic recording audiometer;
- c) computer-controlled audiometric equipment.

Methods for threshold audiometry are given for these three types of signal presentation. For screening purposes, only methods using a manual or a computer-controlled audiometer are set out. The procedures are applicable to the majority of adults and children. Other procedures may yield results equivalent to those derived by the procedures specified in this part of ISO 8253. For very young, aged or sick people, some modification of the recommended procedures is likely to be required. This may result in a less accurate measurement of hearing.

Acoustics — Audiometric test methods —

Part 1: Pure-tone air and bone conduction audiometry

1 Scope

This part of ISO 8253 specifies procedures and requirements for pure-tone air conduction and bone conduction threshold audiometry. For screening purposes, only pure-tone air conduction audiometric test methods are specified. It is possible that the procedures are not appropriate for special populations, e.g. very young children.

This part of ISO 8253 does not cover audiometric procedures to be carried out at levels above the hearing threshold levels of the subjects.

Procedures and requirements for speech audiometry, electrophysiological audiometry, and where loudspeakers are used as a sound source are not specified.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 389-1, *Acoustics — Reference zero for the calibration of audiometric equipment — Part 1: Reference equivalent threshold sound pressure levels for pure tones and supra-aural earphones*

ISO 389-2, *Acoustics — Reference zero for the calibration of audiometric equipment — Part 2: Reference equivalent threshold sound pressure levels for pure tones and insert earphones*

ISO 389-3:1994, *Acoustics — Reference zero for the calibration of audiometric equipment — Part 3: Reference equivalent threshold force levels for pure tones and bone vibrators*

ISO 389-5, *Acoustics — Reference zero for the calibration of audiometric equipment — Part 5: Reference equivalent threshold sound pressure levels for pure tones in the frequency range 8 kHz to 16 kHz*

ISO 389-8, *Acoustics — Reference zero for the calibration of audiometric equipment — Part 8: Reference equivalent threshold sound pressure levels for pure tones and circumaural earphones*

IEC 60645-1:2001, *Electroacoustics — Audiological equipment — Part 1: Pure-tone audiometers*

IEC 61260, *Electroacoustics — Octave-band and fractional-octave-band filters*

IEC 61672-1, *Electroacoustics — Sound level meters — Part 1: Specifications*

ISO/IEC Guide 98-3, *Uncertainty of measurement — Part 3: Guide to the expression of uncertainty in measurement (GUM:1995)*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this part of ISO 8253, the following definitions apply.

3.1

air conduction

transmission of sound through the external and middle ear to the inner ear

3.2

ear simulator

device for measuring the acoustic output of sound sources where the sound pressure is measured by a calibrated microphone coupled to the source so that the overall acoustic impedance of the device approximates that of the normal human ear at a given location and in a given frequency band

NOTE An ear simulator is specified in IEC 60318-1^[4] and IEC 60318-4^[6].

3.3

acoustic coupler

device for measuring the acoustic output of sound sources where the sound pressure is measured by a calibrated microphone coupled to the source by a cavity of predetermined shape and volume which does not necessarily approximate the acoustic impedance of the normal human ear

NOTE An acoustic coupler is specified in IEC 60318-3^[5] and IEC 60318-5^[7].

3.4

bone conduction

transmission of sound to the inner ear primarily by means of mechanical vibration of the cranial bones

3.5

bone vibrator

electromechanical transducer intended to produce the sensation of hearing by vibrating the cranial bones

3.6

mechanical coupler

device designed to present a specified mechanical impedance to a vibrator applied with a specified static force and equipped with a mechano-electrical transducer to measure the vibratory force level at the surface of contact between vibrator and mechanical coupler

NOTE A mechanical coupler is specified in IEC 60318-6^[8].

3.7

otologically normal person

person in a normal state of health who is free from all signs and symptoms of ear disease and from obstructing wax in the ear canal and who has no history of undue exposure to noise, exposure to potentially ototoxic drugs, or familial hearing loss

3.8

hearing threshold

lowest sound pressure level or vibratory force level at which, under specified conditions, a person gives a predetermined percentage of correct detection responses on repeated trials

3.9

equivalent threshold sound pressure level

for a given ear, at a specified frequency, for a specified type of earphone and for a stated force of application of the earphone to the human ear, the sound pressure level set up by the earphone in a specified acoustic coupler or ear simulator when the earphone is actuated by that voltage which, with the earphone applied to the ear concerned, would correspond to the hearing threshold

3.10**reference equivalent threshold sound pressure level****RETSPL**

at a specified frequency, the median value of the equivalent threshold sound pressure levels of a sufficiently large number of ears of otologically normal persons of both sexes aged from 18 years to 25 years inclusive, expressing the hearing threshold in a specified acoustic coupler or ear simulator for a specified type of earphone

NOTE ISO 389-1 refers to an age range of 18 years to 30 years inclusive, and specifies modal values.

3.11**equivalent threshold vibratory force level**

for a given ear, at a specified frequency, for a specified configuration of bone vibrator and for a stated force of application of the bone vibrator to the human mastoid or forehead, the vibratory force level set up by the bone vibrator on a specified mechanical coupler when the bone vibrator is actuated by that voltage which, with the bone vibrator applied to the mastoid or forehead concerned, would correspond to the hearing threshold

3.12**reference equivalent threshold vibratory force level****RETVFL**

at a specified frequency, the median value of the equivalent threshold vibratory force levels of a sufficiently large number of ears of otologically normal persons of both sexes aged from 18 years to 25 years inclusive, expressing the hearing threshold in a specified mechanical coupler for a specified type of bone vibrator

NOTE ISO 389-3 refers to an age range of 18 years to 30 years inclusive, and specifies an arithmetic mean.

3.13**hearing level of a pure tone****HL of a pure tone**

at a specified frequency, for a specific type of transducer and for a specified manner of application, sound pressure level or vibratory force level of a pure tone, produced by a transducer in a specific ear simulator or mechanical coupler, minus the appropriate reference equivalent threshold sound pressure level or reference equivalent threshold vibratory force level

3.14**hearing threshold level of a given ear**

at a specified frequency and for a specific type of transducer, hearing threshold at that frequency, expressed as hearing level

3.15**occlusion effect**

change (usually an increase) in level of a bone-conducted signal reaching the inner ear when an earphone or an earplug is placed over or at the entrance of the ear canal, thereby forming an enclosed air volume in the external ear

NOTE The effect is greatest at low frequencies.

3.16**masking**

process by which the hearing threshold of a given ear for a particular sound is raised by the presence of another (masking) sound

3.17**effective masking level of a noise band**

level equal to that hearing level of a pure tone, the frequency of which coincides with the geometric centre frequency of the noise band, to which the threshold of hearing of the pure tone is raised by the presence of the masking noise band

NOTE IEC 60645-1:2001, 8.5.2 a), specifies that masking levels for narrow-band noise be calibrated in terms of effective masking level.