

**The Effect of Hairnets and
Tyvek® Hoods on Earmuff Attenuation**

E-A-R 06-33/HP

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INTRODUCTION

Noise-exposed employees must often wear other safety equipment in addition to their hearing protection devices (HPDs). How the other equipment interfaces with one's HPDs can affect the amount of protection afforded by the HPD. This decrease in protection is especially true when a person wearing earmuffs must also wear safety glasses and in addition a hairnet or hood, as in the food industry. The purpose of this report is to quantify the effects of wearing either a hairnet or a full-head hood on the attenuation of two different earmuffs. The effect of wearing safety glasses and muff is addressed in E•A•R 06-31/HP.

TEST METHODS

Both series of tests described in this report were performed in the E•A•RCAL test chamber. The earlier testing (Model 1000/Hairnet) was conducted in September 1994 when the lab used the Grason-Stadler/Crown Signal Generation System to produce the test tones. The latter testing with the H9A and hood, was done in August 2006 and utilized the ITA/Norsonic System. The test procedures were the same, utilizing ANSI S3.19-1974 with exception for fitting and testing the devices. The 1994 tests used the seven octave-band center frequencies from 125 to 8000 Hz and 3150 and 6300 Hz for test tones. The 2006 testing did not include 3.15- or 6.3-kHz.

Each of the ten subjects tested each condition three times. The subjects tested the hairnet in a counterbalanced method where the odd-numbered subjects first tested the hairnet/muff combination followed by the muff alone. The even-numbered subjects tested the muff alone followed by the hairnet/muff. In all cases, when preparing for the 2nd test condition, the muff was refit, either alone or with the hairnet, and the subject adjusted the muff while listening to a broadband 'fitting noise,' to obtain the 'best fit' possible.

The muff/hood test was included in a series of tests with the H9A muff and two pairs of safety glasses. An Open condition was measured, followed by the earmuff alone. The muff was removed and the hood donned, and the muff was fit over the hood with the subject again, adjusting the muffs, using the fitting noise, for 'best fit'.

DEVICES TESTED

One sample of the E•A•R Model 1000 earmuff and ten BC-42 non-woven bouffant-style hairnets (a unique sample for each subject) were tested in the 1994 test series. The hairnet manufacturer's name is unknown.

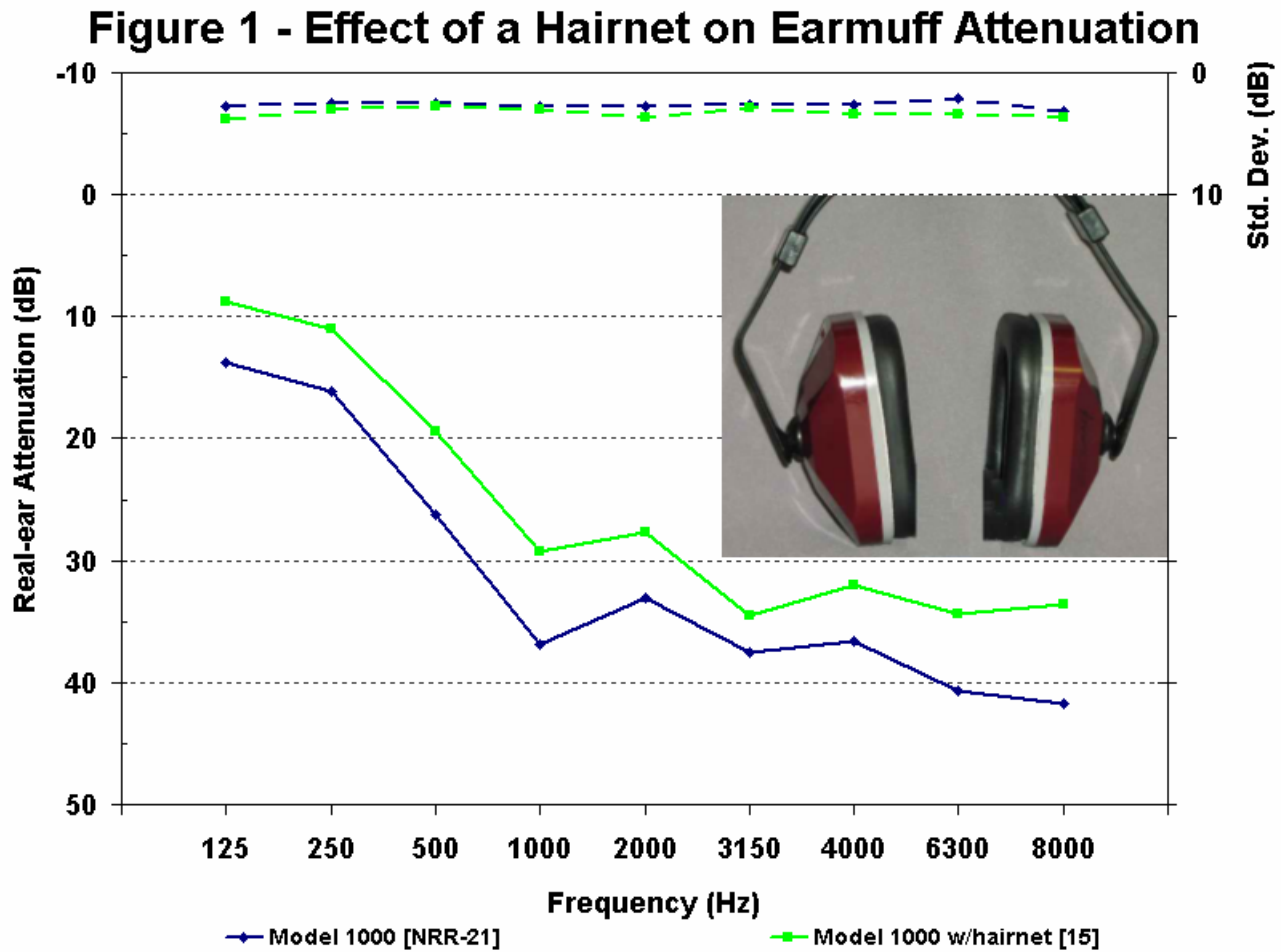
The 2006 tests used two Peltor H9A muffs and ten Dupont Tyvek Hoods. A different hood was worn by each subject. Five of the ten subjects tested each of the two H9As.

RESULTS

Table 1 lists the devices, the Noise Reduction Ratings (NRRs) achieved and the effect of the hairnet/hood on the muff's attenuation. The individual attenuation values for the ten subjects in each of the four tests are in Appendix I. Figures 1 and 2 are graphical comparisons of the means and standard deviations (SDs) obtained for the earmuffs under each test condition. Images of the Model 1000 muffs and of the H9A muff and hood fit on a KEMAR manikin are also shown.

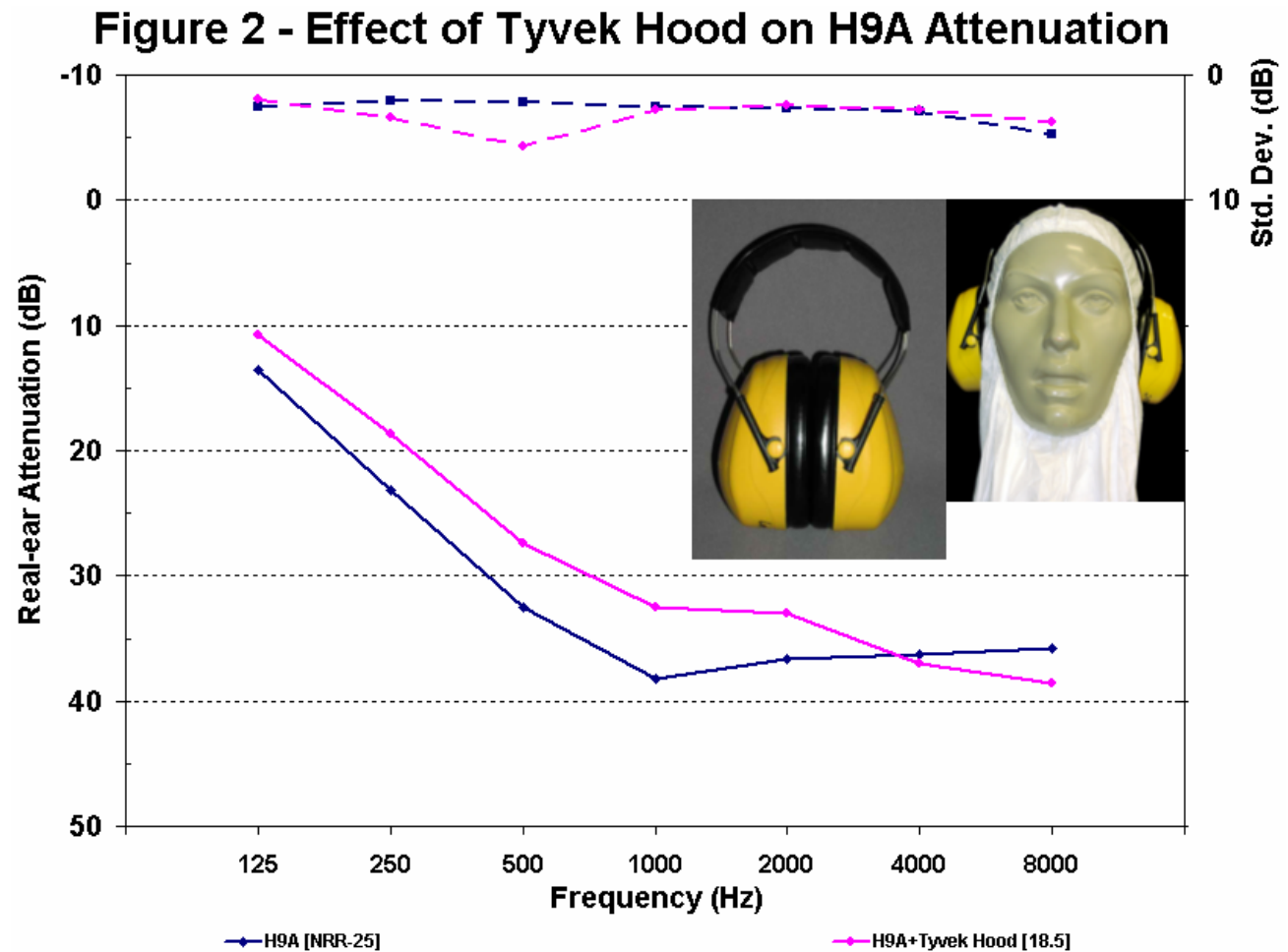
Table 1 – Effect of a Hairnet and a Hood on Earmuff Attenuation

Device(s) Tested	NRR	Effect of Hairnet (dB)	Device(s) Tested	NRR	Effect of Hood (dB)
Model 1000	21	-----	H9A	25	-----
Model 1000 + Hairnet	15	-6	H9A + Tyvek Hood	17	-8



Effect of Hairnet

When the hairnet was worn under the Model 1000 muff, the reduced seal of the cushions to the subject's head caused a decrease in the mean attenuation, by frequency, of from 3 to 8 dB. The effect of the hairnet on the computed NRR of the muff by 7 dB when the hairnet was added.



Effect of Hood

When the hood was worn under the muffs, the average attenuation decreased by 3 to 6 dB, by frequency and the NRR was 8 dB less. A paired two-sample for means *t*-test was run at all frequencies and demonstrated the differences between the two tests were statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level for all frequencies, except 4000 Hz. Thus, the interesting effect at 8 kHz, whereby the attenuation of the muff-with-hood exceeds that of the muff alone, is significant, but does not offset the overall degradation in attenuation that the hood creates.

CONCLUSIONS

In order for earmuffs to block out the most noise, the cushion of an earmuff must make contact with the flesh. Since different earmuffs were used for the two sets of tests in this study, and the tests were

conducted over a decade apart, a direct comparison of the effects of the hairnet vs. the hood is not possible. But it is clear that both of them affect performance negatively at all frequencies from 125 Hz to 2 kHz, with the negative effects of the hairnet extending on upwards to 8 kHz. Surprisingly, the hood appeared to provide some small increase in attenuation at the highest test frequency. In terms of the overall attenuation as measured by the NRR, the reduction from either of these obstructions was in the range of 6 to 8 dB.

Appendix I

Individual Subject Data from the Four REAT Tests

Test ID: 152022 Device: CSC Model 1000 Muff
 Date: 9/14/94 Samples: 1 Position: NA Comfort: 2.5
 Comments: See report #152023 for results of the same earmuff tested over a helmet.

Subj.	Trial	1/3 Octave-Band Frequency										125	Comf.	Bitr. Breadth	Head Height	NRR*
		125	250	500	1000	2000	3150	4000	6300	8000						
KJC	1	13	13	25	38	28	32	38	38	39	13		132	135	21.8	
	2	15	17	27	39	31	38	29	38	35	11					
	3	16	16	28	45	32	39	35	38	36	20	1				
DVF	1	17	18	28	37	33	38	36	42	44	18		136	126	25.9	
	2	13	19	31	39	36	39	35	40	43	15					
	3	17	17	30	38	36	39	35	40	44	17	4				
GWG	1	13	15	27	37	31	36	35	38	40	11		144	132	22.9	
	2	17	16	27	38	35	38	35	37	38	15					
	3	13	20	28	37	37	39	35	40	41	15	1				
BAK	1	20	21	29	37	31	38	42	45	23			150	143	23.6	
	2	18	18	28	38	39	42	42	45	21						
	3	18	16	26	35	32	37	38	43	44	18	3				
JRM	1	8	14	24	32	30	37	39	41	40	10		141	133	21.4	
	2	12	14	23	35	30	39	39	38	41	10					
	3	14	13	26	38	33	38	38	41	38	13	3				
DLP	1	10	13	23	32	31	35	38	38	39	9		145	149	21.6	
	2	14	16	22	32	32	30	37	42	37	11					
	3	12	15	21	35	31	39	37	44	43	13	5				
EAS	1	13	15	28	39	35	37	32	39	44	14		148	146	22.9	
	2	13	13	26	37	34	36	34	43	46	12					
	3	11	15	24	36	34	38	39	39	41	11	1				
TLS	1	14	22	24	33	35	32	37	42	40	13		132	130	22.4	
	2	12	17	25	36	32	37	39	41	40	14					
	3	10	17	25	37	29	40	38	43	41	11	3				
KKS	1	16	16	29	37	36	41	40	44	47	14		138	135	23.3	
	2	14	18	27	35	30	38	40	44	44	15					
	3	15	14	29	35	34	38	36	43	47	15	3				
RSS	1	11	11	24	38	32	36	33	40	42	13		136	133	19.9	
	2	12	18	25	39	39	40	35	40	45	14					
	3	12	16	29	41	35	40	37	42	42	14	1				
Mean		13.8	16.1	26.3	36.8	33.1	37.5	36.6	40.7	41.7	14.1	2.5	140.2	136.2	22.6	
sd(30)		2.7	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.1	3.2	3.3	----	----	----	----	
sd(10)		2.3	1.8	2.2	2.2	1.8	1.4	2.0	1.7	2.9		1.4	6.4	7.4	1.6	
Q-Value		24.4	19.7	24.5	31.4	26.3		30.8		37.0		Dimensions in mm.				

NRR (2sd) = 21.5 (1sd) = 24.1 (0sd) = 26.7

Band Force (N): Before: 12.0; After: 11.1 CSA Class: B NRR* - Individual 2sd NRR

Test ID: 152023 Device: CSC Model 1000 Muff w/ BC-42 Hairnet
 Date: 9/14/94 Samples: 1 Position: OTH Comfort: 3.1
 Comments: Hairnet worn by Hebrew Nat'l Meatpacking Co. employees. Mfg. not known; bouffant style, non-woven, white.
 For test, all of a subject's hair inside hairnet; hairnet worn over both ears, muff cups over hairnet.
 See report #152022 for the same earmuff tested w/o hairnet.

Subj.	Trial	1/3 Octave-Band Frequency										125	Comf.	Bitr. Breadth	Head Height	NRR*
		125	250	500	1000	2000	3150	4000	6300	8000						
KJC	1	5	10	15	32	24	29	33	33	34	6		132	135	13.6	
	2	5	5	18	27	23	29	27	30	31	2					
	3	8	10	19	35	28	33	34	37	34	6	1				
DVF	1	13	10	16	23	31	34	27	33	32	7		136	126	14.1	
	2	9	12	20	29	31	36	32	34	30	14					
	3	5	7	16	23	24	36	25	33	32	8	4				
GWG	1	8	9	18	28	17	34	29	30	30	4		144	132	13.2	
	2	12	10	21	30	25	41	35	33	35	7					
	3	6	11	19	26	29	36	28	30	32	8	1				
BAK	1	16	17	22	31	28	36	31	35	32	13		150	143	18.2	
	2	12	11	20	30	30	35	35	35	37	14					
	3	18	14	18	25	31	35	30	37	34	12	3				
JRM	1	8	14	22	30	25	36	32	35	35	7		141	133	15.6	
	2	8	9	17	29	26	38	38	36	37	6					
	3	12	10	25	33	33	37	35	39	40	14	4				
DLP	1	8	12	20	29	30	35	33	33	31	8		145	149	17.8	
	2	6	10	20	27	24	33	31	36	31	3					
	3	9	10	20	33	26	35	35	41	36	8	5				
EAS	1	4	8	17	26	32	34	27	32	30	8		148	146	14.9	
	2	6	13	26	32	33	32	30	36	37	9					
	3	9	10	20	30	31	31	32	34	33	8	0				
TLS	1	5	16	17	29	25	32	32	33	26	6		132	130	16.4	
	2	4	10	18	27	27	32	34	29	29	7					
	3	7	14	17	27	23	31	35	39	35	7	4				
KKS	1	18	17	23	32	31	40	35	39	43	15		138	135	19.4	
	2	10	15	22	32	26	39	37	39	38	10					
	3	11	12	24	34	31	34	37	39	39	39	5				
RSS	1	9	6	17	30	27	35	32	33	33	11		136	133	14.6	
	2	6	8	16	29	28	34	27	26	30	3					
	3	7	11	21	30	31	35	33	34	33	6	4				
Mean		8.8	11.0	19.5	29.3	27.7	34.6	32.0	34.4	33.6	9.2	3.1	140.2	136.2	15.8	
sd(30)		3.8	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.7	2.8	3.4	3.5	3.7	6.6	----	----	----	----	
sd(10)		3.2	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.6	3.0		1.8	6.4	7.4	2.1	
Q-Value		17.3	13.7	17.1	23.3	19.1		26.1		28.0			Dimensions in mm.			

NRR (2sd) = 14.8 (1sd) = 18.0 (0sd) = 21.2

Band Force (N): Before: 12.0; After: 11.1 CSA Class: B NRR* - Individual 2sd NRR

Test ID: 258A14 Device: H9A
 Date: 8/16/06 Samples: 2 Position: OTH Comfort: 1.9
 Comments: Part of 'Effect of glasses on muff attenuation' study. See 258A11, 258A12, 258A13, 258A15, 258A16 and 258A17 for related data.

Subj.	Trial	1/3 Octave-Band Frequency							Comf.	Bitr. Breadth	Head Height	NRR*
		125	250	500	1000	2000	4000	8000				
CWD	1	16	24	29	38	37	33	32		156	132	24.4
	2	13	22	32	39	36	33	37				
	3	10	19	30	37	35	36	30	2			
TJH	1	11	21	30	39	35	31	33		134	128	23.8
	2	8	18	29	38	40	32	34				
	3	12	22	28	37	39	34	34	2			
FDJ	1	14	22	35	38	35	39	39		148	109	25.5
	2	9	25	32	37	35	38	37				
	3	15	28	37	39	37	39	37	0			
BAK	1	16	24	34	39	35	41	38		150	143	27.8
	2	14	23	34	36	41	41	37				
	3	19	26	34	44	44	40	41	3			
BAL	1	16	23	34	38	35	34	34		133	112	27.0
	2	16	23	33	36	34	38	35				
	3	13	21	34	36	36	34	39	1			
MSMc	1	15	22	33	39	37	35	25		132	126	24.8
	2	13	23	31	35	36	32	28				
	3	14	21	31	37	39	32	25	4			
RTM	1	16	24	33	39	35	36	41		153	131	27.1
	2	12	22	32	39	36	38	43				
	3	16	24	37	47	39	38	42	2			
TLS	1	13	22	32	36	35	38	37		132	130	26.7
	2	13	25	34	42	38	35	32				
	3	16	26	33	37	36	38	35	1			
KMS	1	16	24	32	35	34	35	40		145	122	26.3
	2	13	23	31	38	30	37	42				
	3	12	26	33	39	34	40	40	2			
KJZ	1	9	23	31	37	38	36	33		160	142	26.1
	2	12	23	35	39	39	37	36				
	3	13	25	33	39	39	35	38	2			
Mean		13.6	23.2	32.5	38.2	36.6	36.2	35.8	1.9	144.3	127.5	26.0
sd(30)		2.5	2.0	2.1	2.5	2.7	3.0	4.7	----	----	----	----
sd(10)		1.8	1.5	1.8	1.4	2.0	2.7	4.6	1.1	10.8	11.1	1.3
Q-Value		24.6	27.7	31.4	33.2	30.1	29.3	27.4				

NRR (2sd)= 24.8 (1sd)= 27.6 (0sd)= 30.2

Band Force (N): #1 - 11.1, #2 - 10.9 CSA Class: A NRR* - Individual 2sd NRR

Test ID 258A17	Device: H9A + Dupont Tyvek Hoods		
Date: 8/16/06	Samples: 2	Position: OTH	Comfort: 3.8
Comments:	Part of 'Effect of glasses on muff attenuation' study. See 258A14, 258A15 & 258A16 for related data.		

Subj.	Trial	1/3 Octave-Band Frequency							Comf.	Bitr. Breadth	Head Height	NRR*
		125	250	500	1000	2000	4000	8000				
CWD	1	11	23	37	39	38	42	43		156	132	24.9
	2	10	24	35	40	39	39	39				
	3	10	19	30	33	35	37	42	4			
TJH	1	10	17	21	37	24	30	35		134	128	18.2
	2	7	13	22	31	29	30	31				
	3	10	17	20	33	33	35	35	5			
FDJ	1	13	17	21	27	31	37	43		148	109	17.3
	2	4	20	22	27	29	39	39				
	3	12	18	28	37	34	38	41	9			
BAK	1	15	22	35	28	32	41	39		150	143	22.8
	2	9	22	36	37	34	38	41				
	3	16	28	35	39	40	40	44	4			
BAL	1	14	16	22	30	34	36	35		133	112	21.3
	2	13	17	22	30	32	33	35				
	3	12	14	28	28	33	39	39	1			
MSMc	1	16	17	22	31	35	36	35		132	126	13.6
	2	4	9	14	25	28	31	33				
	3	10	12	19	31	30	32	31	6			
RTM	1	11	14	26	30	36	40	40		153	131	20.5
	2	11	24	31	37	33	37	45				
	3	10	17	29	40	32	35	39	3			
TLS	1	9	17	30	29	33	39	40		132	130	22.3
	2	11	19	26	37	33	39	33				
	3	13	21	27	30	33	39	35	1			
KMS	1	15	19	25	34	33	37	43		145	122	24.3
	2	14	21	30	32	33	43	45				
	3	11	22	29	31	31	40	45	3			
KJZ	1	3	17	34	25	32	34	37		160	142	17.9
	2	12	21	33	35	38	39	39				
	3	7	21	32	31	35	36	37	2			
Mean		10.7	18.6	27.4	32.5	33.1	37.0	38.6	3.8	144.3	127.5	20.3
sd(30)		3.3	4.0	6.0	4.4	3.3	3.3	4.1	----	----	----	----
sd(10)		2.0	3.4	5.7	2.8	2.5	2.8	3.8	2.4	10.8	11.1	3.6
Q-Value		20.1	19.1	18.7	23.7	25.2	29.4	31.5				

NRR	(2sd)=	18.5	(1sd)=	22.8	(0sd)=	26.9
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Band Force (N): #1 - 11.1, #2 - 10.9 CSA Class: A NRR* - Individual 2sd NRR