

BRANCHES

Hundreds of vets sue 3M over defective earplugs



3-M Building Maplewood MN (Acroterion/WikiCommons)

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Hundreds of lawsuits have been filed against government contractor 3M for selling defective combat earplugs to the U.S. military.

The lawsuits contend that the company knowingly sold the earplugs that were faulty, allowing loud sounds to permeate them without the individual being aware of it until it was too late, [according to Military Times](#).

The lawsuits request compensation for the malfunctioning earplugs that resulted in hearing loss, tinnitus and balance issues in many veterans after using 3M's Combat Arms earplugs during 2003-2015.



Military Times @MilitaryTimes
 Hundreds of vets are suing over these defective combat earplugs bit.ly/2SDPO10
 23 4:08 PM - Feb 17, 2019
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In July of last year, 3M settled a lawsuit of \$9.1 million with the Justice Department, Fox News [reported](#). However, they did not admit they were liable.

3M was accused of knowing that the earplugs were constructed too short, which allowed them to slip and otherwise failed to seal the ear canal from loud noises.

Roberto Garcia, a military vet said, "Dealing with the hearing loss, also the tinnitus, it can be very distracting and cause issues in family life and dating life. Once the tinnitus kicks in, the issue with that is it's extremely severe ringing."

Adam Moskowitz, who represents Garcia said, "The VA hospitals are underfunded, they're undermanned, they're not staffed properly, they're tax paid, and some people like Roberto have to wait two weeks to three weeks to even get an appointment."

"The main remedy is medical monitoring.... These are people who sacrifice their life for us. 3M made \$32 billion last year. You would think they would set up a fund so that Roberto doesn't have to wait three weeks," Moskowitz offered as a possible solution.

Some of the first lawsuits were filed in the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas, Waco Division, on behalf of the clients by two Houston-based law firms, Abraham, Watkins, Nichols, Sorrels, Agosto & Aziz and Bell, Rose & Cobos. More lawsuits have been filed in other states with additional firms.

Mo Aziz, an attorney representing the latter firm said, "Due to the widespread damage caused to veterans by 3M's actions, these cases are just the tip of the iceberg of lawsuits that will be filed in order to hold 3M accountable."

"The Department of Justice is committed to protecting the men and women serving in the United States military from defective products and fraudulent conduct. Government contractors who seek to profit at the expense of our military will face appropriate consequences," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Chad A. Readler of the Justice Department's Civil Division in a DOJ [statement](#).

"Today's settlement will ensure that those who do business with the government know that their actions will not go unnoticed. Properly made safety equipment, for use by our Soldiers, is vital to our military's readiness. Our agents will respond robustly to protect the safety of our military," Frank Robey, director of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command's Major Procurement Fraud Unit, said in July 2018.

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