

Tonal noise detection with the optimus sound level meters

Cirrus Research plc
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Default method information added

Version 1.3

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Added information relating to BS 4142:2014 Annex C – Objective method for assessing the audibility of tones in sound: One-third octave method

Version 1.4

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Formatting updated. References to ISO 1996-2 Annex K added.

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1 Introduction

Tonal noise detection is a useful function for environmental noise measurements and can aid in the location and identification of problematic noise sources.

Noise sources that are tonal in nature or that have tonal content can often be more annoying or disturbing and so having the ability to detect and record tones can be very useful.

The CR:171C and CR:172C optimus sound level meters, which are Class 1 and Class 2 respectively, can use one of two different methods to detect and identify noise tones and these are outlined below.

The default method for the Tonal Noise Detection is the Cirrus Improved Method.

2 Tonal noise detection methods

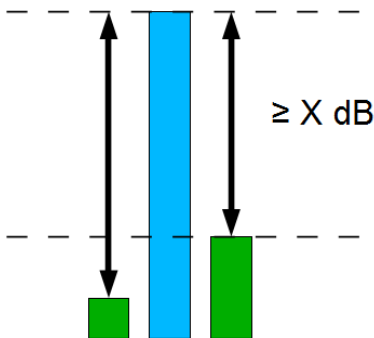
2.1 Method 1 - ISO 1996-2:2007 Annex D/ ISO 1996-2:2017 Annex K

In the ISO standard, the definition of a tone is that if a band is higher than its direct neighbours by an amount that is dependent upon frequency, it is highlighted.

The ISO method uses A-weighted bands.

The standard defines different levels of threshold depending upon the frequency of the 1:3 octave band and these are:

25Hz to 125Hz:	15dB
160Hz to 400Hz:	8dB
500Hz to 10kHz:	5dB



When a tone is detected using the ISO 1996-2:2007 Annex D/ ISO 1996-2:2017 Annex K method, it is highlighted in blue on the A weighted graphical screen and also the A weighted numeric screen.

The method is referred to in BS4142:2014 “Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound”. Annex C “Objective method for assessing the audibility of tones in sound: One-third octave method” refers to the use of 1:3 octave bands with the threshold levels defined above:

25Hz to 125Hz:	15dB
160Hz to 400Hz:	8dB
500Hz to 10kHz:	5dB

2.2 Method 2 – Cirrus improved method

There are several limitations with the Simplified Method described in ISO 1996-2:2007 Annex D/ ISO 1996-2:2017 Annex K.

These are:

1. The frequency bands used are limited to 25Hz to 10kHz
2. Only A-weighted data is used
3. Tones between bands may not be detected accurately

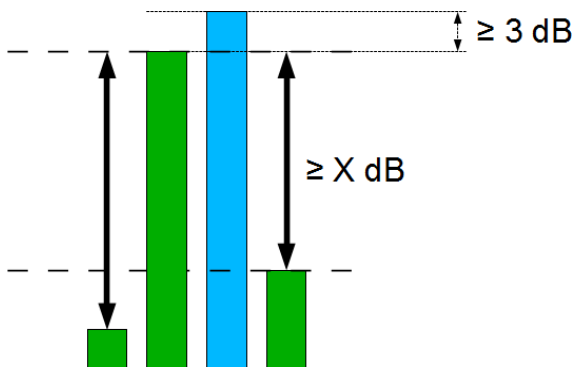
The Cirrus improved method takes the ISO method and expands upon it by:

1. Using all of the frequency bands available in the instrument (6.3Hz to 20kHz)
2. Detecting tones between bands
3. Using both A and Z weighted spectra
4. Allowing the thresholds for detection to be adjusted within the NoiseTools software

2.2.1 Detection of tones between bands

One of the problems with the ISO method is that in theory, a pure tone at the exact frequency between 2 bands will have its energy equally spread across them, making their value 3dB lower than the value a band would have had if the tone was at its centre frequency.

The Cirrus improved methods checks if 2 bands are within 3 dB, and if they are both higher than their neighbours by the defined thresholds. The highest of those 2 bands is defined as the tone.



When a tone is detected using the Cirrus improved method, the appropriate band is highlighted on both the A and Z weighted screens.

2.2.2 User defined thresholds

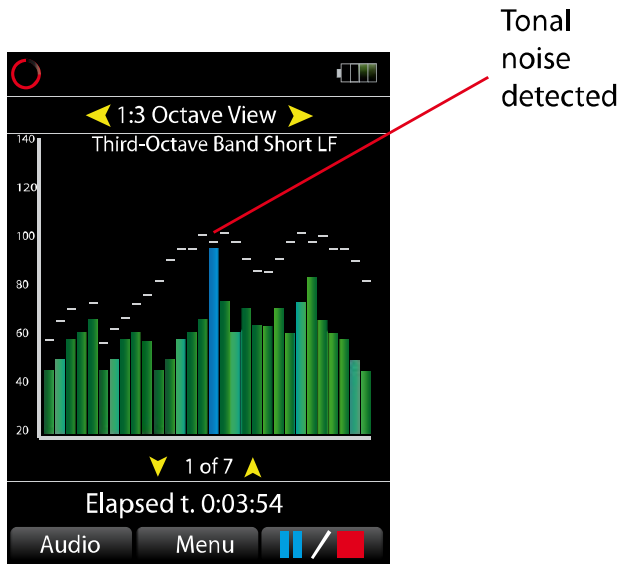
The threshold levels used for the Cirrus improved method can be adjusted within the NoiseTools software. The defaults values are :

6.3Hz to 20Hz :	18dB
25Hz to 125Hz :	15dB
160Hz to 400Hz :	8dB
500Hz to 10kHz :	6dB
12.5kHz to 20kHz :	6dB

2.3 Displaying the detected tones

When a tone is detected according to either the method 1 or 2 above, the optimus will display this in the 1:3 octave band screens.

In the graphical screens, the 1:3 band or bands are highlighted in blue. On the numeric screens, the value of the band or bands is highlighted in blue.



If the ISO method is used, the tonal noise detection will only be shown on the A-weighted screens (graphical and numeric). If the Cirrus improved method is used, the tonal noise detection is shown on both the Z and A weighted screens (graphical and numeric).

The method used can be changed within the NoiseTools software.

This can be set to use the ISO 1996-2:2007 Annex D/ ISO 1996-2:2017 Annex K Simplified Method by connecting the instrument to the

3 Triggering audio recording from tonal noise

The optimus green sound level meters feature an advanced audio recording system known as Acoustic Fingerprint.

This system allows audio recordings and alerts to be triggered from a combination of level and rate of change templates. In addition to these, the CR:171C and CR:172C instruments allow the tonal noise detection to be used as part of the Acoustic Fingerprint system.

This allows audio recordings and alerts to be triggered when a tonal noise is detected using either the ISO 1996-2:2007 method or the Cirrus improved method.

4 References

ISO 1996-2:2007 - Acoustics – Description, measurement and assessment of environmental noise
Part 2 : Determination of environmental noise levels

Annex D Objective method for assessing the audibility of tones in noise – Simplified method

ISO 1996-2:2017 – Description, measurement and assessment of environmental noise

Part 2 : Determination of sound pressure levels

Annex K Objective method for assessing the audibility of tones in noise — Survey method

Technical Note 28 - Recording Audio with the optimus green (CR:170) sound level meters

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