

What [Sailors/Marines] need to know about Support Services for Victims of Sexual Harassment

The Department of the Navy (DON) introduced a new policy broadening support services available to victims of sexual harassment on June 9.

Effective immediately, uniformed military personnel who experience sexual harassment will be eligible to receive the range of support options available to victims of sexual assault from the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program.

Here is what [Sailors/Marines] need to know:

- **What is sexual harassment?**
 - DoD policy defines sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
 - submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment;
 - submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
 - such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
 - Sexual harassment includes violations or attempts to commit sexual harassment under Article 134, UCMJ.

- **What services are now available for victims of sexual harassment through the SAPR program?**
 - Crisis intervention
 - Safety assessments
 - Counseling resources
 - Victim advocacy support
 - Discussion of reporting options

- **How can SARCs/SAPR VAs assist victims of sexual harassment?**
 - Sexual assault response coordinators (SARCs) and sexual assault prevention and response victim advocates (SAPR VAs) may assist sexual harassment victims to address immediate safety needs, explain available sexual assault or sexual harassment reporting options and recommend Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) program services that may be helpful.

- SARC or SAPR VAs will explain all available SAPR services to the Service member and then initiate a warm handoff to MEO personnel for resolution of sexual harassment complaint, if desired by the Service member.
 - If the Service member declines a warm hand off to MEO, the SARC or SAPR VA will not make a notification to MEO or the command.
 - If the SARC or SAPR VA assesses that there is a safety concern, safety issues identified will be referred to command for action and the MEO office for tracking.
- **What are the reporting options for sexual harassment?**
 - Service members may file formal or informal reports of sexual harassment through the MEO program.
 - A formal report starts an investigation overseen by next highest commander and may result in prosecution of the alleged offender.
 - An informal report does not initiate an investigation; however, the harassment is documented and provided to the chain of command.
 - In both instances, MEO personnel provide resolutions to prevent further harm to the victim, and SAPR personnel are available to provide supportive services.
- **What is the MEO program role in responding to a report of sexual harassment?**
 - MEO program takes and tracks formal and informal reports of sexual harassment.
 - MEO personnel may refer sexual harassment victims to a SARC or SAPR VA and to other optional available support services on and off installation.
 - If a sexual harassment victim discloses a sexual assault offense, MEO personnel shall refer the victim to a SARC. If a Service Member discloses a sexual assault to MEO personnel, with consent of the victim, a warm hand off to the SAPR program will occur in accordance with the 'No Wrong Door' policy, and the sexual assault disclosure will be handled in accordance with Department of Defense, DON, and Service policies.
- **Who can receive services in accordance with this policy?**
 - The policy applies to all victims of sexual harassment who are uniformed Service members within the DON, specifically: Active and Reserve Components to include cadets and midshipmen of the United States Naval Academy (USNA) and the Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS), as well as the Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps.

- While cyberharassment is a separate offense, victims of cyberharassment that is sexual in nature can also receive SAPR services and seek resolution through their local MEO.

The DON Policy Regarding Support Services for Victims of Sexual Harassment can be found here:

[https://media.defense.gov/2023/Jun/23/2003246946/-1/-1/0/SIGNED-DON%20CC1%20\(FINAL\)%20\(1\).PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2023/Jun/23/2003246946/-1/-1/0/SIGNED-DON%20CC1%20(FINAL)%20(1).PDF)