



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE OFFICE



Reporting Retaliation Within the SAPR Program

DoD encourages warfighters to report sexual assault as a means to better understand and access available recovery resources. While no one should ever have to fear retaliation for making a sexual assault report, help is available if it occurs. Warfighters can discuss their experiences with their Special Victims' Counsel¹ and/or their Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) to understand how to report retaliation and receive assistance.

What is retaliation?

Within the SAPR Program, retaliation includes certain actions or behaviors wrongfully taken or threatened against any person because they made a protected communication, such as a sexual assault report. Under DoD policy, retaliation includes reprisal, ostracism, maltreatment, and restriction (e.g., being prohibited or discouraged from making a crime report, talking to the DoD Inspector General (IG), or contacting Congress).

¹The Special Victims' Counsel Program (SVC) is called the SVC by the Army and the National Guard, the Victims' Legal Counsel (VLC) by the Navy and the USMC, and the Victims Counsel (VC) by the Air Force.

Understanding Retaliation

- Reprisal involves command withholding a favorable personnel action or administering an unfavorable personnel action to someone because they made or were perceived as having made a protected communication or disclosure. The DoD IG holds responsibility for investigating reprisal allegations.
- Ostracism involves wrongfully excluding a military member from social acceptance or membership, with the intent to inflict emotional distress, discourage reporting of a crime (or other protected communications), or otherwise hinder the administration of justice.
- Maltreatment involves cruel or oppressive treatment toward another person because of reporting or attempting to report a protected communication.

In addition to SAPR Program personnel, such as a SARC or SAPR Victim Advocate (VA), there are multiple personnel you can contact if you are experiencing retaliation. You may contact any of the following to seek assistance:

1. DoD IG*
2. Military Criminal Investigative Organization (MCIO)*, including Army Criminal Investigations Division (CID), Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), and Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI)
3. SVC/MLC/VC
4. DoD Safe Helpline
5. Your commanding officer
6. A commanding officer outside your chain of command
7. Victim and Witness Assistance Program (VWAP)

*Can take a retaliation report. Contact these personnel on your installation or connect with them through the DoD Safe Helpline for more information about reporting.

Note: Retaliation reports are not confidential like a Restricted Report of sexual assault. If you have confidentiality concerns, discuss those matters with your SVC/VLC/VC, SARC, or SAPR VA first. However, if you report to the DoD IG, your report is confidential, but you need to ask the DoD IG if the following investigation will be confidential or if your name will be revealed.

When reporting retaliation within the SAPR Program:

Retaliation reporting must be associated with the individual making such a report so that an authority can act upon it. As a result, retaliation reports cannot be kept confidential. However, contacting the DoD IG to make a reprisal complaint is a confidential process.

If you report in the SAPR Program, your commander will be contacted. However, as a victim, your consent is required to discuss the details of the retaliation report in the open forum of the Monthly Case Management Group meetings, unless there is an emergency safety concern.

Command will be notified of a retaliation report, unless you report directly to the DoD IG. Command will notify the local MCIO and Office of Special Trial Counsel (OSTC).

You may speak to a SARC, SAPR VA, or SVC/VLC/VC at any time before reporting retaliation. Or, you may go directly to the DoD IG to [report here](#).

For more information about Retaliation Reporting, review DoDI 6495.02, Volume 3, "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Retaliation Response for Adult Sexual Assault Cases."

To contact the DoD IG, visit the DoD Hotline for Whistleblower Reprisal Complaints at <https://www.dodig.mil/Components/Administrative-Investigations/Whistleblower-Reprisal-Investigations/Whistleblower-Reprisal/>.

For more information, please visit sapr.mil.

For confidential victim assistance, call or visit the DoD Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247 or safehelpline.org.