



Commanding General's Policy on Sexual Assault Prevention & Response



Marines, sailors, and civilians trust each other with their lives and well-being. Perpetrators of sexual assault violate this trust, erode our faith in one another, and undermine the effectiveness and values of our institution. It is my responsibility to ensure that this crime is dealt with appropriately, victims are treated with dignity and respect, and all Marines, sailors, and civilians learn to identify offender behavior, and can prevent it.

The Department of Defense defines sexual assault as intentional sexual contact, characterized using force, physical threat of force or abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent. This crime does not only occur against women. According to the Department's most recent workplace and gender survey, 50 percent of the reported military sexual assault victims are male.



We have a three-fold responsibility. First, it is of paramount importance to identify and prohibit unprofessional conduct. Unprofessional behavior sets the conditions that enable sexual assault. Sexist behaviors, sexual harassment, and sexual assault are cancers in our Corps that we will not tolerate or ignore. Much of your training in this area focuses on how to intervene to stop inappropriate behavior, which is vital to preventing sexual assault. Protect each other by adopting a buddy system and be attentive to predatory behavior. Be respectful in your relationships by obtaining consent, asking, and checking with partners before and during any sexual activity.

Second, it is incumbent upon us to recognize the proper protocol for responding to sexual assault allegations. MCO 1752.5C contains guidance for identifying, reporting, and addressing sexual assault. Leaders must be familiar with the Commander's Protocol for Responding to Allegations of Sexual Assault that can be found in Appendix C. *If you are a victim of sexual assault, report it immediately to your unit's Sexual Assault Prevention Response Victim Advocate (SAPR-VA), chaplain, and/or a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC).* All have confidentiality and can help you with your decision to make a restricted or unrestricted report. It takes courage for any person to report a crime against him or herself. Victims should know their reports will be confidential and they will be treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

Finally, we need to update our understanding of the causes of sexual assault. This command will not tolerate the myth or outdated belief that victims' behaviors lead to assaults. Unfortunately, this antiquated thinking blames victims for a crime perpetrated against them. Sexual assault is an act of violence, and no victim does anything to deserve a violent attack.

Bottom line: treat everyone with dignity and respect.

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