

# Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

## Program Foundation & Initiatives

### Program Foundation

The aim of the Department of Defense is to reduce, with the ultimate goal to eliminate, the crime of sexual assault from the Armed Forces. Our program is based on the following key tasks:

- Sustain multi-pronged approach – no single “silver bullet” solution
  - Requires sustained progress, persistence, innovation, and multi-disciplinary approach in prevention, investigation, accountability, victim assistance & assessment
- Expand prevention efforts to reinforce cultural imperatives of mutual respect and trust, team commitment, and professional values
- Recognize that sexual harassment is strongly correlated with sexual assault
- Ensure victim focus to help overcome vast underreporting
  - Every victim needs to be treated with respect, dignity, and sensitivity
  - Reporting is an essential bridge to victim care and accountability
- Sustain commitment to holding offenders appropriately accountable by improving investigative and accountability efforts through Special Victims Capability, UCMJ Panels, and comprehensive oversight actions
- Continue to educate frontline commanders and leaders at all levels and hold them accountable in establishing a culture of dignity and respect

### Secretary of Defense SAPR Initiatives

- **Sexual Assault Senior Leader Accountability and Engagement:** Secretary Hagel established and/or participates in a series of engagements with military, Congressional, and civilian leaders.
  - SECDEF Weekly Meeting: Secretary Hagel established weekly accountability and assessment meetings with senior DoD leaders from the Secretary’s staff and the Services.
  - White House Health of the Force Groups: Senior DoD leaders and Vice Chiefs of Staff of the Services participate in Coordinating and Working Group meetings to communicate DoD’s approach and address executive actions to combat sexual assault in the military.
  - Congressional Outreach: Senior DoD leaders are participating in extensive hearings, meetings and engagements on pending legislation and the development of proposals to address the crime of sexual assault.
- **Sexual Assault Accountability, Climate and Victim Advocacy Measures:** SECDEF directed implementation of the following initiatives as a way to enhance commander accountability, ensure appropriate command climate, improve victim response, and ensure safety:
  - Directed that all commanders be provided results of subordinates’ annual command climate surveys to improve insight into climate at every level of the chain of command.
  - Directed DoD component heads to direct visual inspections of all DoD workplaces, to include Military Service Academies, to ensure that facilities promote an environment of dignity and respect and are free from materials that create an offensive work environment.
  - Directed the Department to improve the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention and response programs in recruiting organizations, processing stations, and ROTC to ensure the awareness and safety of new and aspiring service members.
  - Directed Service Chiefs to develop methods to hold military commanders accountable for establishing command climates of dignity and respect, and incorporating sexual assault prevention and victim care principles in their commands.
  - Directed Service Secretaries to implement methods to improve victim treatment by their peers, co-workers, and chains of command, and to incorporate direct victim input.

- **Enhancing Administration of Military Justice:** SECDEF is committed to a comprehensive assessment of the military justice system, to include the Uniform Code of Military Justice as well as the systems used to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate adult sexual assault crimes.
  - UCMJ Response System Panel: Secretary Hagel recruited experts in their fields to serve on this Congressionally-mandated independent panel established under Sec 576 of the FY13 National Defense Authorization Act; he met with the Response Systems Panel in June during initial public meetings and previously requested the panel accelerate its work from 18 to 12 months.
  - Secretary Hagel directed the DoD Acting General Counsel to:
    - Develop a method to incorporate the rights afforded to victims through the Crime Victims' Rights Act into military justice practice.
    - Evaluate the Air Force Special Victims Counsel pilot program and other approaches to ensure that victims of sexual assault are provided the advice and counsel they need to understand their rights and to feel confident in the military justice system.
    - Develop a legislative proposal to advocate for appropriate changes to Article 60 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.
  
- **Enhancing Oversight, Investigative Quality, Pretrial Investigations, and Victim Support:** SECDEF directed implementation of the following measures to gain greater consistency of effort across the Services and enhance oversight, investigative quality, pretrial investigations, and victim support:
  - Directed Secretaries of the Military Departments to establish a special victim's advocacy program to provide legal advice and representation to victims of sexual assault.
  - Directed General Counsel to develop draft language for an Executive Order to provide victims the opportunity to provide input to the post-trial action phase of courts-martial.
  - Directed Secretaries of the Military Departments to develop and implement policy that would balance the interests of the victim and the accused when determining administrative reassignments or transfers.
  - Directed Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to ensure current policies prohibiting inappropriate relations between trainers and trainees and recruiters and recruits are consistent across the Services.
  - Directed Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to develop standardized policy that requires status reports of unrestricted sexual assault allegations and actions taken to the first general/flag officer within the chain of command, without delaying reporting to the relevant military criminal investigation organization.
  - Directed Secretaries of the Military Departments to mandate that judge advocates serve as investigating officers for all Art. 32 investigations on sexual assault offense cases.
  - Requested DoD IG plan to evaluate the adequacy of closed sexual assault investigations on a recurring basis.
  
- **Sexual Assault Stand-down:** SECDEF ordered a DoD-wide sexual assault prevention and response stand-down for the Active force and Reserve Component. Stand-downs addressed the following mandatory activities:
  - Active review of credentials and qualifications of current-serving recruiters, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, and Victim Advocates to ensure they meet applicable selection criteria and standards of conduct.
  - Refresher training for recruiters, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates on professional ethics, their critical responsibilities and standards, and the impact on mission readiness for standard violations.
  - Purposeful and direct commander and leader engagements with Service members and civilian employees on SAPR principles and the climate of dignity and respect necessary in every work place across the DoD.

- **Implementation of DoD-wide Sexual Assault Strategic Plan:** SECDEF published on 6 May and directed the military services to align their programs with a revised *Sexual Assault Prevention Response Strategic Plan*. By clearly defining priorities, objectives, and tasks, this plan -- and its effective implementation -- will help ensure that the DoD's ongoing initiatives to reduce and ultimately eliminate sexual assault are being closely tracked and achieving their purpose.

## **DoD Program Achievements**

- **Prevention**
  - Services launched a wide range of enhanced training programs using interactive and adult learning methods and emphasizing bystander intervention
  - Published revised DoD Sexual Assault Program policy, enhancing procedures and standardizing DoD SAPR efforts
  - Standardized SAPR core competencies and learning objectives are now being taught in DoD-wide pre-command and senior Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) training courses
  - Services are currently implementing standardized SAPR core competencies and learning objectives for SAPR training courses for basic training, victim advocates, and continuing professional military education
- **Investigations**
  - Published new DoD policy on sexual assault investigation standards, requiring that all sexual assault investigations are conducted by independent and professional Military Criminal Investigative Organizations (MCIO)
  - Each Service established a Special Victim Capability to provide effective, timely, and responsive worldwide victim support, as well as the capability to investigate and prosecute allegations of certain special victim offenses
- **Accountability**
  - Services and National Guard Bureau fielded specialized personnel and/or teams such as Complex Trial Teams, Special Victim Prosecutors and Trial Counsel Assistance programs to deliver enhanced capability in the prosecution of sexual assault cases
- **Victim Assistance**
  - Launched DoD Safe Helpline to give victims 24/7 global access to crisis support staff and expanded the Safe Helpline to include a moderated Safe HelpRoom to advance victim support services
  - Implemented Expedited Transfer Policy for victims making that request
  - Employed the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program which establishes a certification program for DoD Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) and Victim Advocates (VA) with National Organization for Victim Assistance
  - Expanding Service manning of full-time equivalent SARC and VA positions to all brigade or equivalent units, as directed in NDAA FY12
  - Conducting recurring Survivor Summits to ensure policy making is informed by the voices of victims
- **Assessment**
  - Established SAPR Integrated Process Team, comprised of senior OSD and Service SAPR program managers, as a standing body that meets regularly to review and advise on SAPR matters
  - Added sexual assault questions to DoD Command Climate Surveys and implementing policy to conduct assessments within 120 days for new commanders and annually thereafter, and to elevate the visibility of these surveys to the next higher commander in the chain of command
  - Fielded Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database as record system for sexual assault case management and data collection
  - Developing a set of metrics that can better assess SAPR performance and effectiveness on a regular basis