



SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE OFFICE



Commander Fact Sheet: About the Catch a Serial Offender (CATCH) Program

The CATCH program provides a secure, anonymous database for adult victims of sexual assault to submit suspect information. CATCH is specifically designed for individuals who have filed Restricted Reports, Unrestricted Reports where the suspect's identity is not reported to law enforcement or uncovered during the investigation, or where the victim decides not to report and the SARC facilitates a CATCH entry through a SAPR-Related Inquiry (SRI) CATCH entry. Sexual assault victims in both the SAPR Program and the Family Advocacy Program are eligible for CATCH; however, sexual harassment complainants are not eligible.

Information submitted to the CATCH database is exclusively reviewed by specially assigned investigators from the Services' Military Criminal Investigation Organizations (MCIOs) at CATCH Headquarters (not at the local field offices in the installations or bases). These investigators cross-reference entries against other Department Law Enforcement databases to identify potential serial offenders.



Key Privacy and Operational Parameters

Anonymity

No personally identifiable information (PII) about the victim is collected within CATCH entries. The victim's identity is only disclosed to law enforcement if the victim explicitly consents to participate in an investigation following a match notification.

Entry Lifecycle

Victims who elect to participate may be contacted about potential matches for up to 10 years.

Victim Autonomy

Victims retain the right to opt out of the CATCH Program at any time, even after being contacted with a match. There shall be no adverse consequences for the victim if they do not agree to participate.

Note: Even though the web address to submit a CATCH entry is an NCIS web address, CATCH entries are fully anonymous and there is no way to track an IP address to identify the victim. NCIS operates the CATCH database; however, it is open to all Services.

For comprehensive program details, visit www.sapr.mil/catch. You can also take a 45-minute, introductory CATCH 101 course through [JKO - Course Number: "CATCH01"](#).

Victim Action Options Upon Notification of a Match

If a potential match is identified within the CATCH database, the victim will be notified by SAPR personnel (not by investigators) and presented with the following options.

Victim Reporting Option	Participation Options
If filed a Restricted Report...	If the victim wants to participate in the investigation, they must convert the report to an Unrestricted Report.
If filed an Unrestricted Report...	If the victim wants to participate in the investigation, they must notify the MCIO.
If filed an SRI CATCH entry...	If the victim wants to participate in the investigation, they must file an Unrestricted Report or file a report directly with law enforcement.
If not participating and/or is opting out of CATCH...	Victims may choose not to participate in the investigation at any time, even before being notified of a match. Per CATCH policy, there will be no adverse consequences for the victim if the victim does not agree to participate after being notified of a match. If victims choose not to participate, they will be asked if they consent to being contacted if there are any future matches.



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Catch Program Eligibility

The CATCH Program is available to the following victims:

Eligible Personnel	Clarifications / Conditions
Service members and Military Service Academy cadets/midshipmen	Includes active-duty and reserve components under Department jurisdiction.
Adult dependents	Adult dependents of current Service members.
Former Service members and their adult dependents	Former Service members and their adult dependents, if the suspect was a Service member.
Department Civilian employees	Eligible only when the suspect is a Service member.

Commander Responsibilities

Commanders play a critical role in the successful implementation of the CATCH Program in support of the warfighter.

Responsibility	Details
Promote Awareness	Guarantee that all command personnel are thoroughly briefed on and aware of the CATCH Program, the associated eligibility, and the requirement to see a SARC to submit a CATCH entry.
Have Reasonable Expectations for Timeframe to Identify a "Match"	CATCH data is not currently assessed for matches by an algorithm. Entries have to be assessed manually by agents at CATCH MCIO Headquarters. Consequently, a match will not happen immediately.
Share Eligibility for SVC/LC/VC	To help answer legal questions about the CATCH Program, the SARC or SAPR VA will offer a referral to the Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel/Victims' Counsel (SVC/LC/VC), so the victim can discuss any issues before deciding to submit a CATCH entry and after being notified of a match.
Confirm Privacy Protections for Victims and Suspects	- Victims: CATCH entries do not trigger a safety exception for Restricted Reports. No victim PII is collected in CATCH entries. - Suspects: CATCH entry information about a suspect shall not be used by promotion boards or for any other administrative or disciplinary purposes. MCIOs or commanders in the field cannot contact CATCH headquarters to request a search in the CATCH system for a suspect name. - FOIA Exception Section 550 of FY2020 NDAA: Victim disclosures under the CATCH Program shall be withheld from public disclosure under paragraph (b)(3) of section 552 of title 5, USC ("Freedom of Information Act").
Remember Discovery Responsibilities of Trial Counsel	After a match, if the victim participates in the investigation and if the ensuing MCIO investigation results in criminal charges, the victim's original CATCH entry may be subject to the discovery process.

Frequently Asked Question

Question: As a commander, I am responsible for both victims and suspects and have concerns about potential repercussions on individuals who have false reports filed against them. Could a victim filing a false report in the CATCH system impact the suspect?

Guidance: There are protections for suspects identified in DoDI 5505.18, "Investigation of Adult Sexual Assault in the Department of Defense," including:

1. The CATCH database is protected. CATCH Program information received by an MCIO will be cataloged on a centralized, restricted NCIS server. The CATCH Program website will be sequestered from unauthorized users to protect the integrity of the data. MCIOs or commanders in the field cannot contact CATCH headquarters to request a search in the CATCH system for a suspect name.
2. The suspect is presumed innocent. Website procedures developed to implement the CATCH Program will preserve the presumption of innocence for suspects. It may not be used for any purpose related to the suspect's assignment, training, or advancement unless the victim who submitted the CATCH Entry decides to participate in the investigation and an MCIO initiates an investigation.
3. CATCH entries are not retained indefinitely. Information will be retained for 10 years from the date of the input or the last date of any query data.

For more information about the CATCH Program, please visit www.sapr.mil/catch.
For confidential victim assistance, call or visit the Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247 or safehelpline.org.