



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
**SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION
AND RESPONSE OFFICE**



DoD RETALIATION PREVENTION AND RESPONSE STRATEGY

JULY 2017

The development of a Department-wide strategy to address retaliation was directed by Secretary Carter in May 2015 and later by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act. The Department of Defense *Retaliation Prevention and Response Strategy: Regarding Sexual Assault and Harassment Reports (DoD RPRS)* addresses retaliation related to reports of sexual assault and complaints of sexual harassment.

Too often, military victims of sexual assault and complainants of sexual harassment disclose they were subjected to abusive behavior by their co-workers, exclusion by their peers, or disruption of their career. National experts indicate this is a challenge experienced by many organizations that encourage greater employee reporting of misconduct. As victims make the difficult choice to report sexual assault or sexual harassment, the Department is committed to eliminating retaliatory behavior, improving resources for reporters, and providing tools for commanders, supervisors, first responders, and peers to prevent and respond to retaliation against those who report violations. Ending retaliation is crucial to effectively addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military.

Summary

- The DoD RPRS provides support to individuals who experience retaliation after reporting sexual assault or sexual harassment. Acts of retaliation pose a serious threat to the continued reporting of crimes or misconduct, legitimacy of the military justice system, and the ability of reporters to obtain needed assistance.
- The DoD RPRS addresses retaliation against Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard Service members who allege they were sexually assaulted or harassed while performing Active Service or Inactive Duty training and report sexual assault or sexual harassment. It also applies to Service member bystanders/witnesses and first responders.
- The DoD RPRS aligns Departmental efforts in combatting retaliation and targets five issue areas:
 - Standardizing Definitions
 - Improving Data Collection and Analysis
 - Streamlining Investigation and Accountability Efforts
 - Strengthening Reporter Protections
 - Creating a Culture Intolerant of Retaliation
- The Department recently released the accompanying DoD Retaliation Prevention and Response Implementation Plan, which details how DoD and the Military Services, to include the National Guard Bureau (NGB), will execute tasks in the identified issue areas and institutionalize a comprehensive and consistent approach to retaliation prevention and response across the Department related to reports of sexual assault and complaints of sexual harassment.
- Moving forward, the Military Services will align their Service retaliation prevention and response strategic policies and plans with the DoD RPRS according to the associated implementation plan.