



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



**FACT SHEET: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FISCAL YEAR 2021  
ANNUAL REPORT ON SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE MILITARY**  
*SEPTEMBER 1, 2022*

**Background:**

- Congress requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to provide an annual report on sexual assault involving members of the Military Departments.

**Top Line Results:**

- The DoD Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military shows in stark detail what our prior activities and the Independent Review Commission (IRC) on Sexual Assault in the military have already documented: Sexual assault and sexual harassment remain persistent and corrosive problems.
  - Over 8 percent of active-duty women and about 1.5 percent of active-duty men indicated experiencing some form of unwanted sexual contact in the year before the survey was conducted.
  - In 2021, survey results also found that Service women experienced more sexual harassment, and men and women alike experienced greater workplace hostility than findings from 2018. Service member sexual assault reports increased by 13 percent in 2021 compared to 2020, yet the overall rate of those who experienced sexual assault and came forward to report has decreased.
- This year's Annual Report also provides FY21 reporting data and case dispositions.
  - This year, DoD received a total of 8,866 reports of sexual assault, an increase of 1,050 reports from the 7,816 reports received in FY20.
    - This increase in reporting was driven by increases from the Army having a 25.6 percent increase from FY20; the Navy having a 9.2 percent increase from FY20; the Marine Corps having a 1.7 percent increase from FY20; and the Air Force having a 2.4 percent increase from FY20.
  - Survey and reporting data indicate that about 20 percent of surveyed active-duty Service members who indicated experiencing unwanted sexual contact reported their incident to a DoD authority.
- That being said, FY21 was also a time of unprecedented action, planning, and resourcing – all aimed at having lasting and enduring impacts towards restoring the confidence, safety, and respect of our men and women in uniform and our nation. Upon being confirmed by the Senate in January 2021, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin made addressing sexual assault a top priority. Secretary Austin directed proactive steps early in 2021 including:
  - Assessing compliance to determine the current state of sexual assault prevention and response capabilities within the military.
  - Evaluating specific risk and protective factors for sexual assault at 20 military installations and identifying additional tools and resources needed to mitigate risk.
  - Laying the building blocks to develop a workforce dedicated to the prevention of interpersonal violence and self-harm.

- Launching the IRC and directing the implementation of the IRC's recommendations wherever possible to drive needed change in accountability, prevention, culture and climate, and victim care and support.

## **Way Forward**

- The Department is investing significant resources to fuel needed change.
- The President's FY23 Budget request includes \$940 million for sexual assault prevention and response programs, to include \$479 million and more than 2,400 personnel to implement the recommendations of the IRC.
- Prevention is key: Sexual assault is less prevalent in military units where sexual harassment, workplace hostility, and gender discrimination occur less often.
  - Initial actions directed by the Secretary have focused on establishing a professionalized, full-time prevention workforce to support leaders' ability to promote command climates that do not tolerate sexual assault and other harmful behaviors.
  - The Department is implementing the prevention workforce using a standardized approach.
- Continuing and future Department efforts include:
  - Fielding the Prevention Workforce to support command's ability to identify and reduce risks that give rise to sexual assault and other readiness impacting behaviors.
  - Readyng the Services' Office of Special Trial Counsel to prosecute alleged covered offenses, including sexual assault, beginning on December 27, 2023, to restore trust in the military justice process.
  - Enhancing the Sexual Assault Response Workforce through reforms geared towards better assisting victim recovery.
  - Conducting new On-Site Installation Evaluations to further identify and address climate challenges and provide command with needed assistance.
  - Requiring a Force Wide Assessment to maximize the opportunity to hear every voice and provide an updated assessment of command climate and prevalence in 2023.
- While cultural change of this magnitude takes time, the Department is building accountability and transparency into the process to ensure this change is enduring. Taken together, the efforts will set the right conditions to reduce and eliminate unwanted sexual contact, sexual assault, and sexual harassment in the Military Departments.
- The Department's most senior leaders remain sharply focused on solving this problem. To this end, all leaders will continue to work to restore the unity and cohesion that empower the U.S. military and our national defense. Sexual violence will not be tolerated, condoned, or ignored within our ranks.