



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAY 16 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
CHIEFS OF THE MILITARY SERVICES
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DIRECTORS OF DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the
Military

Preventing and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment are essential to taking care of our people and cultivating the workforce we need. Building a safe and supportive environment for the Total Workforce demands that all leaders set the example for acceptable behavior, support the recovery of Service members, and act decisively to combat problematic behaviors. DoD must promote a culture that represents our core military values and advances military readiness. Our initiatives to implement the approved recommendations from the Secretary of Defense's Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC-SAM) have been key elements to countering sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other harmful behaviors.

This year's *Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military* highlights the Department's progress in reducing and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment in our formations. In addition, the *2023 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey* found that rates of unwanted sexual contact decreased significantly for active duty women and trended downward for active duty men. The survey also found significant decreases in sexual harassment rates for active duty women and men. Further, 25 percent of Service members chose to report their incident of sexual assault, up from 20 percent in Fiscal Year 2021. While these are steps in the right direction, we need to maintain focus to sustain this momentum into the forthcoming years.

Therefore, I am directing the following actions:

- **Sustain the implementation of the approved IRC recommendations:** I am directing the Secretaries of the Military Departments and Chief of the National Guard Bureau (CNGB) to continue to expediently implement the approved IRC-SAM recommendations in their areas of responsibility, as directed in the Secretary's September 2021 Roadmap and follow-on implementation guidance. This must remain a top priority. Document your progress and challenges at least quarterly via the Advana IRC Implementation Tracking Platform to the DoD Sexual Assault and Prevention Response Office (SAPRO).

- **Complete Command Climate Assessments and Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention plans to promote healthy, ready workplaces:**
 - I am directing that the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the CNGB develop outreach strategies outlining leadership responsibilities in completing the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) during the annual fielding window of August 1 to November 30, 2024. Service members’ input is absolutely key to the establishment and maintenance of positive day-to-day working environments. Therefore, outreach strategies shall include activities that encourage Service members to voluntarily participate in taking the DEOCS, as well as other follow-up activities. Provide your DEOCS outreach strategies to the Office of Force Resiliency with DoD SAPRO copied by July 31, 2024.
 - Additionally, I am directing that Components provide plans detailing how they will achieve compliance with the Command Climate Assessment (CCA) policy requirements in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6400.11, “DoD Integrated Primary Prevention Policy for Prevention Workforce and Leaders,” in advance of the 2024 DEOCS annual fielding window. Plans must include the level at which DEOCS and Comprehensive Integrated Prevention Plans are to be completed, method for tracking completion of required training for personnel involved in the CCA process, and which personnel will lead the CCA process in locations where the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce is not yet in place. The Secretaries of the Military Departments and the CNGB will provide these plans to the Office of Force Resiliency with DoD SAPRO copied by July 31, 2024.
- **Continue actions to hire skilled professionals to build out the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW):** To meet approved IRC-SAM recommendation requirements, DoD created the IPPW to prevent multiple harmful behaviors—including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic abuse, child abuse, and suicide. The IPPW works with leaders to build healthy climates and create environments free from abuse and harm. Currently, we are making steady progress in the hiring of this dedicated prevention workforce. I am directing the Secretaries of the Military Departments and CNGB to maintain the hiring momentum of this important workforce to get them in the field as quickly as possible.
- **Sustain efforts to professionalize and strengthen the Sexual Assault Response Workforce (SARW):** Several IRC-SAM recommendations drive critical changes to the SARW. The SARW is a DoD-wide, multi-level, functional community that responds to and advocates for victim needs and advises leaders at all levels on appropriate response strategies. I am directing the Secretaries of the Military Departments and CNGB to expeditiously meet the IRC-SAM milestones to develop, field, and sustain this highly skilled, specialized workforce to ensure our Service members receive high quality victim assistance and advocacy.

- **Implement policy updates in initial and annual Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) training:** When the authorizing Deputy Secretary of Defense (DSD) memorandum is signed, to fully execute the DSD-mandated SAPR policy updates to DoDI 6495.02, Volumes 1 and 3, and the new Law Enforcement Victim Disclosure Exception in DoDI 5505.18, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the CNGB, and those DoD Component heads with SAPR Programs will report to DoD SAPRO by November 15, 2024 to confirm the inclusion of these policy updates in initial and annual SAPR training.

While this year's progress is promising, we have more to do if we are to fully turn the tide against the problematic behaviors that impact our readiness. We must persevere. Our Nation demands that we take care of our Service members, and with your help, we will accomplish this mission.



Ashish S. Vazirani

Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of
Defense for Personnel and Readiness