



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

APR 30 2025

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department's response to section 1631 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 (Public Law 111-383), "Annual Report Regarding Sexual Assaults Involving Members of the Armed Forces and Improvement to Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program," as amended by section 537 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry NDAA for FY 2021 (Public Law 116-283), "Modifications of Annual Report Regarding Sexual Assaults Involving Members of the Armed Forces," which requires the Secretary of Defense to submit an annual report on sexual assaults involving members of the Armed Forces during the preceding year, is enclosed.

The *Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military (FY 2024 Annual Report)* presents statistics and analysis of reports of sexual assault and discusses policy and program improvements to the Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program. The numerical data and statistics contained in this report respond to reporting requirements outlined in the NDAA's for FYs 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2021.

The *FY 2024 Annual Report* highlights continued investments in the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response mission space that are crucial to maintaining a mission-ready fighting force. Key efforts discussed in the *FY 2024 Annual Report* focus on sexual assault prevention, warfighter assistance, and actions taken to ensure compliance with law and policy. In December 2023, the Offices of Special Trial Counsel took over prosecutorial decisions for allegations of sexual assault and other covered offenses involving accused military members. The Department also sustained efforts to strengthen and professionalize its Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce and Sexual Assault Response Workforces. The Department and Military Services also continued to implement the approved recommendations of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC). As of January 24, 2025, 31 approved IRC recommendations have been completed, and 45 are in progress.

The Department encourages greater reporting to connect our warfighters with recovery-oriented care and to hold alleged offenders appropriately accountable. In total, the Department received 8,195 reports of sexual assault involving Service members as victims and/or subjects in FY 2024, a decrease of 4 percent from the 8,515 reports received in FY 2023. A reporting rate

cannot be calculated this year because a prevalence survey for the active force was not required in FY 2024.

Thank you for your continued strong support for our Service members. I am sending similar letters to the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

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Jules W. Hurst III

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

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

The Honorable Mike D. Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

APR 30 2025

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Jules W. Hurst III

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



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

APR 30 2025

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Jules W. Hurst III

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

Enclosure:

As stated

cc:

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

The Honorable Mike Bost
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

APR 30 2025

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Jules W. Hurst III
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of
Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Mark Takano
Ranking Member



Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military

Fiscal Year 2024





*Department of Defense
Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military
Fiscal Year 2024*

The estimated cost of this report for the Department of Defense is approximately \$2,576,000 in Fiscal Year 2024-2025. This includes \$1,804,000 in expenses and \$772,000 in DoD labor.

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This Year's Findings:

- The Department received a total of 8,195 reports of sexual assault in 2024, which is a decrease of 320 reports over the 8,515 received in Fiscal Year 2023. Of the 8,195 reports, 5,169 were Unrestricted Reports of sexual assault, and 3,026 reports remained Restricted at the end of the year.
- The Department cannot fully interpret the above decrease because no prevalence survey was administered during Fiscal Year 2024. As required by law, the next iteration of the prevalence survey will be conducted in Fiscal Year 2025.
- In 2024, the Department had sufficient evidence to take disciplinary action in 2,128 cases of individuals investigated for an allegation of sexual assault.

Way Forward

- Field the *Workplace Experiences Survey of Military Members* in Fiscal Year 2025 to update prevalence rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment.
- Military Services and National Guard Bureau update policies to align with the Deputy Secretary of Defense July 2024 memorandum, "Updates to Department of Defense Policies to Enhance Support for Adult Sexual Assault Victims."
- Military Services and National Guard Bureau to continue work to reduce reliance upon collateral duty personnel within the Sexual Assault Response Workforce.

Full report is available at
www.SAPR.mil.

Executive Summary

Section 1631 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, as amended, requires the Department of Defense to provide an annual report on sexual assault involving members of the United States Armed Forces. The Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military satisfies that requirement.

Fiscal Year 2024 Sexual Assault Reporting Data

The Department encourages greater reporting to connect warfighters with restorative care and to hold alleged offenders appropriately accountable. To that end, the Department received a total of 8,195 reports of sexual assault involving Service members as victims and/or subjects in Fiscal Year 2024. This is a decrease of four percent from the 8,515 reports made in Fiscal Year 2023. The Department, however, cannot fully interpret this decrease because no prevalence survey was required to be administered this year. The Department of Defense will field the *Workplace Experiences Survey of Military Members* in Fiscal Year 2025.¹

Of the 8,195 reports, 5,169 were Unrestricted Reports of sexual assault, and 3,026 remained Restricted at the end of the year. Of the 8,195 reports, 6,973 were from Service members reporting an incident that occurred to them during military service. This reflects a one percent decrease from the 7,266 reports received in 2023.

The Military Departments reported case outcomes (dispositions) for 4,292 cases in Fiscal Year 2024. Of those 4,292 cases, Special Trial Counsel and military commanders had sufficient authority and/or jurisdiction to consider 3,233 cases for possible action against the accused. The evidence supported disciplinary action in 2,128 cases. Department authorities were precluded from action or respected victims' desire to not further participate in the justice process in 1,079 cases. Twenty-six cases (about one percent) were determined to be unfounded, meaning false or baseless.

¹ This survey was formerly known as the *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Military Members*. Prior to 2025, the Office of People Analytics research products used the term "gender" to describe men and women. These groups were defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for "male" or "female;" therefore, references to gender should be understood to mean "sex."

Preventing Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is a key target of the Department's integrated approach to primary prevention (i.e., stopping the crime before it occurs). Sexual assault and other harmful behaviors occur more often in military units with unhealthy command climates. As a result, the Department works to improve unit climate by promoting protective factors and reducing risk factors that give rise to behavior that detracts from unit readiness.

The May 2024 Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness memorandum, "Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Military," highlights and reinforces the importance of the work being done by the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce, which works to prevent multiple harmful behaviors including sexual assault, harassment, domestic abuse, child abuse, and suicide at military installations and ships around the world.

In accordance with the May 2024 memorandum, the Military Services and National Guard Bureau, in collaboration with the Department, developed outreach strategies outlining leadership responsibilities in completing the *Defense Organizational Climate Survey* and provided plans on how they achieved compliance with Command Climate Assessment policy requirements in Department of Defense Instruction 6400.11, "DoD Integrated Primary Prevention Policy for Prevention Workforce Leaders." Such actions by the Military Services and National Guard Bureau reinforce that maintaining a positive and healthy unit climate is essential to a mission-ready force.

Enhancing Warfighter Care and Support

The Department supports sexual assault recovery efforts that reinforce military readiness. In July 2024, the then-Deputy Secretary of Defense published the memorandum, "Updates to Department of Defense Policies to Enhance Support for Adult Sexual Assault Victims," updating numerous sexual assault prevention and response policies. Chief among the changes directed in the memorandum was the approval of the Sexual Assault Response Workforce model. In October 2024, the Military Services and National Guard Bureau provided to the Department their plans to implement the Sexual Assault Response Workforce model by Fiscal Year 2027. This includes reducing reliance on collateral duty personnel and strengthening the full-time Sexual Assault Response Workforce. The effort also removes Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Victim Advocates from the chain of command to improve their independence and warfighter reporting.

Recent Department study findings show that Service members who indicated experiencing sexual assault had poorer career trajectories and health outcomes than members who did not indicate experiencing sexual assault. The Department must promote the recovery, restoration, and resilience of warfighters and other members of the military community who have experienced sexual assault.

Special Victims' Counsel programs remain one of the highest rated, most used services offered to warfighters coping with an experience of sexual assault. However, Department-wide surveys have noted a decrease in satisfaction since 2018 associated with services provided to Service members, with victim satisfaction reaching a new low in 2023. Victims' Counsel score

significantly higher than other first responders on rates of burnout, compassion fatigue,² and vicarious trauma.³ In addition, Victims' Counsel are also less likely to indicate a desire to stay in their role than Sexual Assault Response Coordinators or Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Victim Advocates. Past experience and research show that personnel in high-demand and stressful positions often benefit from improved resourcing and preparation to better cope with the challenges of the mission. As a vital part of the Department's responsive care approach to victim care, the well-being of Special Victims' Counsel must be a focus of effort.

Ensuring Compliance with Policy and Law

Pursuant to Section 531 of the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 117-81), the Office of Special Trial Counsel within the Military Services reached full operational capacity on December 27, 2023, and are responsible for independently evaluating covered criminal offenses and prosecuting cases warranted by evidence, as appropriate. The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response-related covered offenses are Article 120 (rape and sexual assault, aggravated/abusive sexual contact) and Article 132 (retaliation) and Article 80 (attempts to commit a covered offense).

The Department implemented the CATCH Program in August 2019 to allow warfighters and others, who experienced sexual assault, the opportunity to anonymously submit suspect information to military criminal investigators to help the Department identify serial sex offenders. In July 2024, the then-Deputy Secretary of Defense published the memorandum, "Updates to Department of Defense Policies to Enhance Support for Adult Sexual Assault Victims," approving expanded eligibility of the CATCH Program to include Service members and their adult military dependents who did not file an official report of sexual assault but want to submit a CATCH entry. This change is beneficial for warfighters who have left military service without officially reporting their sexual assault to law enforcement or to a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator. The update also included eligibility for Department civilian employees when the suspect was a Service member.

In reference to Expedited Transfer, the Department improved its data validation procedures to capture locations, record reasons for non-transfer, track timelines between approval and departure dates, and document circumstances for transfers exceeding 30 calendar days.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office leadership focused on the implementation of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program in the expeditionary environment. Leadership from the Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office visited installations in Germany, Poland, and Romania to conduct listening sessions with relevant stakeholders. This trip provided insights on victim assistance delivery in contingency environments to ensure down-range support was being provided and also to inform modifications to the Sexual Assault Response Workforce.

² Compassion fatigue is a condition characterized by a gradual lessening of compassion over time. It often affects healthcare professionals, caregivers, or first responders, who are regularly exposed to the emotional and physical suffering of others.

³ Vicarious trauma is the experience of absorbing others' pain in their time of distress so deeply that it affects your own well-being.

Way Forward

The Department's commitment to restoring the warrior ethos is a critical part of maintaining a strong, mission-ready military. Restoring this ethos is about a commitment to the mission and is rooted in treating our warfighters with respect. When incidents of sexual assault occur, they undermine that ethos and erode unity within our military. By continuing to invest in sexual assault prevention and response efforts, the Department will restore that ethos – ensuring that if incidents of sexual assault occur, warfighters receive the necessary care to expedite recovery and reinforce resiliency, and that alleged offenders are held appropriately accountable. Focusing the sexual assault prevention and response mission on restoring the warrior ethos is vital for ensuring our Service members concentrate on readiness, lethality, and warfighting.

Introduction

The Department of Defense (DoD) is required by Section 1631 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 (FY11), as amended, to submit an Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military to the Committees on Armed Services and Veterans Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives.

Report Focus Areas

This report summarizes key data and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) efforts by the Department to prevent victimization and facilitate warfighter recovery. This year's report provides updates on the following focus areas:

- FY24 Sexual Assault Reporting Data;
- Preventing Sexual Assault;
- Enhancing Warfighter Care and Support; and
- Ensuring Compliance with Law and Policy

Report Contents and Appendices

The Department assesses progress with sexual assault⁴ via two primary metrics:

- **Estimated Prevalence:** Estimated total of Service members experiencing unwanted sexual contact⁵ (USC) during the prior year, as measured by scientific surveys. The desired state is to see such prevalence rates *decrease* over time.
- **Reporting rate:** Estimated percentage of Service members making Restricted or Unrestricted Report of sexual assault. The desired state is to see an *increase* in the rate that sexual assault is reported within the military population. The Department encourages greater reporting of sexual assault to connect victims with restorative care and to have the opportunity to hold alleged offenders appropriately accountable.

⁴ "Sexual assault" refers to a range of Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) offenses, including rape, sexual assault, aggravated sexual contact, abusive sexual contact, and attempts to commit these offenses.

⁵ "Unwanted sexual contact" refers to a range of sex-related offenses prohibited by the UCMJ, including completed or attempted oral, anal, or vaginal penetration by a body part or an object, and the unwanted touching of genitalia, buttocks, breasts, or inner thighs when the victim did not know or did not consent.

Both measures rely on results from the Department's *Workplace Experiences Survey of Military Members (WESM)*.⁶ This survey was last conducted in FY23 and by law is fielded biennially. No such survey was required or conducted in FY24. As a result, this report does not include a prevalence estimate or an estimated reporting rate for FY24. The Department will field the *WESM* in FY25 to a representative sample of military members.

This report contains information on sexual assault reports made during FY24 and also serves as the Department's assessment of the Military Services' and National Guard Bureau's (NGB) prevention and response efforts from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. The SAPR program addresses contact and penetrative sexual crimes by adults against adults, as defined in Articles 80, 120, and 125 of the UCMJ.

Additional accomplishments, activities, and outreach conducted by the Department can be found in Appendix A. Detailed statistical data and analysis is located in Appendices B, C, and D. A summary of data from the Department's Safe Helpline (SHL) is at Appendix E. Appendix F contains FY24 data concerning formal, informal, or anonymous sexual harassment complaints, which falls under the purview of the Office for Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity Policy (OCREOP). Appendices G and H contain data on sexual assault of a spouse or intimate partner and child sexual abuse, reported to the Family Advocacy Program (FAP). A list of acronyms used in this report is at Appendix I.

Report Enclosures

Enclosed with this report are the reports from the Department of the Army (Enclosure 1), Department of the Navy (Enclosure 2), Department of the Air Force (Enclosure 3), and the NGB (Enclosure 4).

Report Annexes

Annex 1: 2024 QuickCompass of Sexual Assault Response Personnel (QSAR) Survey: Overview Report

The Department's QSAR survey is administered triennially to assess the training, workload, resourcing, and job experiences of frontline staff executing SAPR programs within the Military Services (including Reserve Components). The goal of this survey is to evaluate how well individuals working in the sexual assault response mission space are functioning. Survey findings are used to help inform decisions about future training, resource allocation, and policy development to ensure Service members receive the necessary care to expedite recovery and reinforce resiliency.

Annex 2: The Relationship Between Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault and Career Outcomes among Active Duty Service Members: Executive Summary

Sexual harassment and sexual assault threaten military readiness via their potential impact on military members' career progression. Previous research on this topic has tended to rely solely on survey data reflecting Service members' self-reported experiences with these behaviors and career progression. Further, there has been limited research on the impact of these harmful behaviors on Service members' careers over longer periods of time. Using a combination of survey and administrative data, this study addressed this gap by examining the career trajectories of DoD active duty members over a five-year period after reporting experienced sexual harassment and/or sexual assault. In sum, the study found that Service members who

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indicated experiencing sexual assault experienced higher rates of separation, demotion, and derogatory clearance actions than Service members who did not indicate experiencing sexual assault.

Annex 3: The Relationship Between Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault and Mental-Health Related Outcomes among Active Duty Service Members: Executive Summary

Sexual harassment and sexual assault threaten military readiness via their potential impact on military members' mental health and well-being. Previous research on this topic has tended to rely solely on survey data reflecting Service members' self-reported experiences with these behaviors and mental health. Further, there has been limited research on the impact of these harmful behaviors on Service members' mental health over longer periods of time. Using a combination of survey and healthcare data, this study addressed this gap by examining the mental health-related outcomes of DoD active duty members over a five-year period after experiencing sexual harassment and/or sexual assault. In sum, the study found that Service members who indicated experiencing sexual assault experienced higher rates of mental health diagnosis, were more likely to have mental health medical encounters, and more likely to receive a mental health-related prescription than Service members who did not indicate experiencing sexual assault.

Annex 4: Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC): Implementation Update

In accordance with the April 2023 and May 2024 the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(P&R)) memoranda, "Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Military," the Department continues to implement actions related to the work performed by the IRC. As of January 24, 2025, 31 approved initiatives have been completed and 45 are in progress.

FY24 Sexual Assault Reporting Data

The Department encourages greater reporting to connect warfighters with care to aid in their recovery and to hold alleged offenders appropriately accountable. To that end, this section summarizes FY24 sexual assault reporting data.

Overall, reports of sexual assault decreased in FY24. The Department received a total of 8,195 reports of sexual assault involving Service members as either victims or subjects, which is a four percent decrease from reports made in FY23. However, the Department cannot fully interpret this decrease because no prevalence survey was administered this year. The Department will field the next *WESM* in FY25.

Reports of sexual assault are categorized as either Restricted or Unrestricted. Of the 8,195 reports received in FY24, 3,026 reports remained Restricted at the end of the year, about a two percent increase from the number remaining Restricted in FY23. Of the 3,026 Restricted Reports, 277 (nine percent) involved incidents that occurred prior to Service members' military service.

Of the 8,195 reports received in FY24, 5,169 reports were Unrestricted, a seven percent decrease from the number of Unrestricted Reports in FY23. Of these 5,196 Unrestricted Reports, 235 reports (five percent) involved incidents prior to military service. Figure 1 displays the trend in Unrestricted and Restricted reporting from FY11 to FY24.

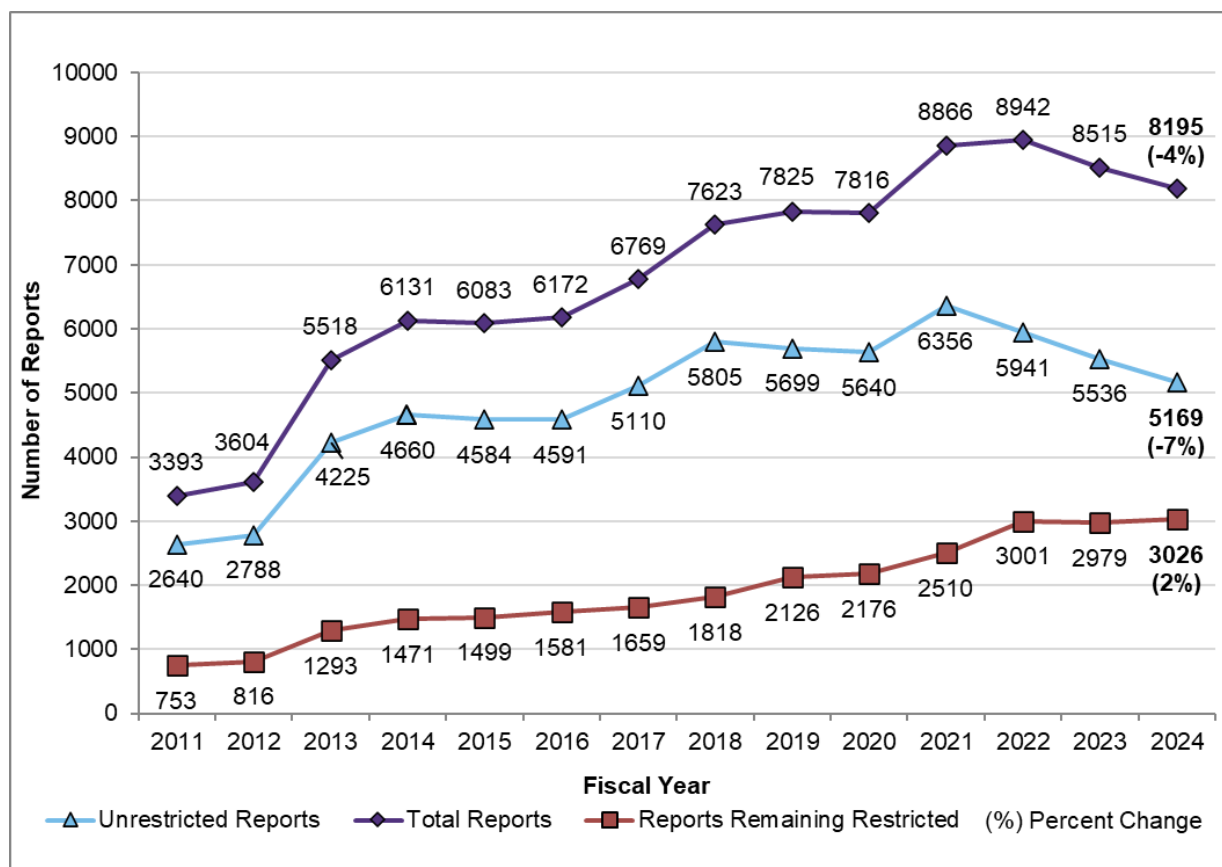


Figure 1. Reports of Sexual Assault Made to DoD, FY11 – FY24

Table 1 provides a breakdown of reports by who reported, type of report, and whether the report was for an event that occurred prior to military service. Equivalent tables by Service can be found in Appendix B: Statistical Data on Sexual Assault.

Table 1: Sexual Assault Reports by Victim and Military Status, FY24

	Unrestricted Reports	Restricted Reports	Total Reports
Total Reports of Sexual Assault	5,169	3,026	8,195
Reports Made by Service Members	4,521	2,964	7,485
<i>Service Member Reports for Incidents that Occurred Prior to Military Service</i>	235	277	512
<i>Service Member Reports for Incidents that Occurred During Military Service</i>	4,286	2,687	6,973
Reports Made by Non-Service Members	585	56	641
<i>DoD Civilian</i>	48	14	62
<i>DoD Contractor</i>	9	0	9
<i>Other U.S. Civilian</i>	482	42	524
<i>Foreign National/Military</i>	46	0	46
Relevant Data Not Available	63	6	69

The Department offers Service members the opportunity to make an Unrestricted or a Restricted Report of sexual assault. Less than one sixth of Service members making Restricted Reports converted to Unrestricted Reports to cooperate with a law enforcement investigation, which is about the same as observed in FY23. The Military Services initially received 3,596 Restricted Reports from Service members in FY24. Of the 3,596 Service members who made initial Restricted Reports, 570 (16 percent) chose to convert to an Unrestricted Report in FY24. These 570 converted Restricted Reports are now counted in the 5,169 Unrestricted Reports received in FY24. The other 3,026 reports remained Restricted at the end of the year.

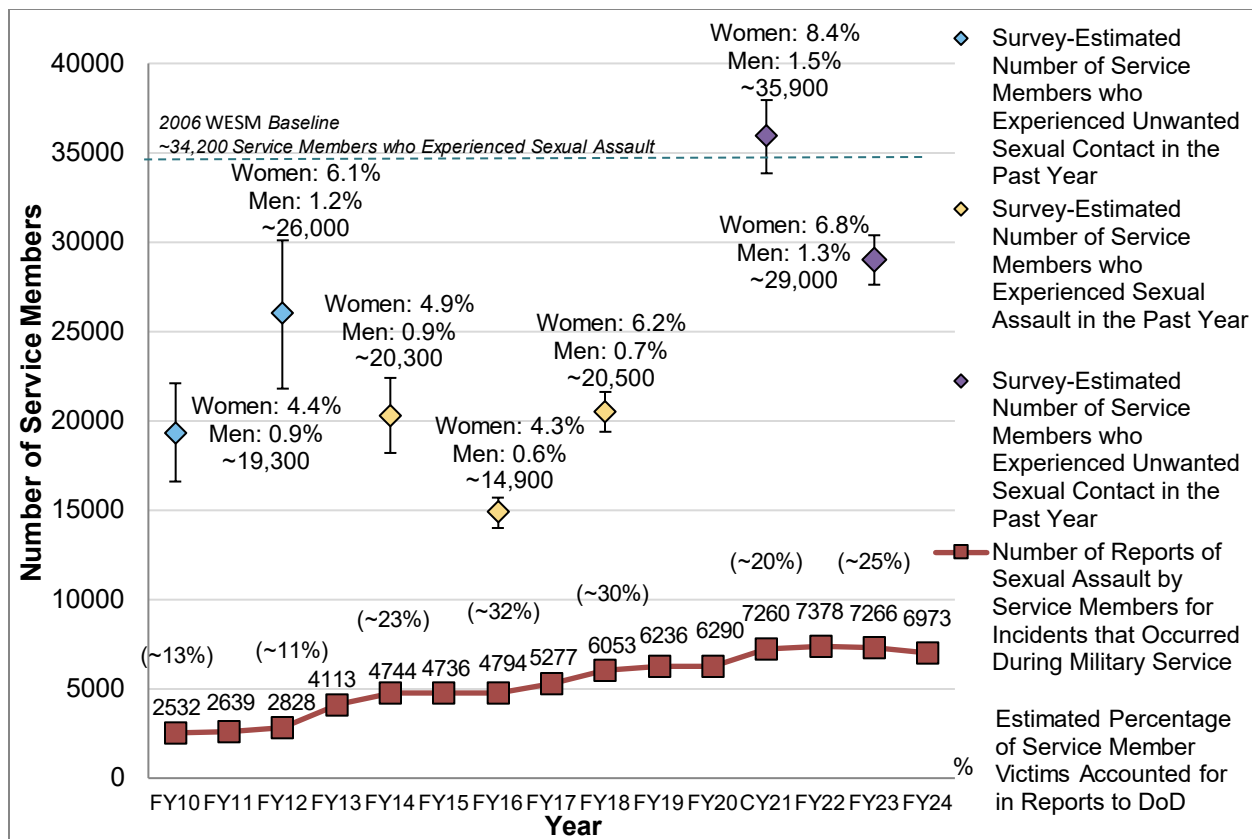


Figure 2. Estimated Number of Service Members Who Indicated an Experience of USC or Sexual Assault in the Past Year Compared to the Number of Service Members Who Made Reports of Sexual Assault for Incidents that Occurred During Military Service, FY11 – FY24

Figure 2 shows that, in FY23, approximately 6.8 percent of active duty women and 1.3 percent of active duty men indicated experiencing at least one past-year incident of USC. These rates correspond to about 29,000 Service members experiencing USC in the year prior to being surveyed. Of the 29,000 estimated victims in FY23, about 15,200 were women and 13,800 were men. Additionally, the percentage of victimized Service members choosing to report the crime (the sexual assault “reporting rate”) increased from 20 percent in Calendar Year 2021 (CY21) to 25 percent in FY23. The next prevalence survey will be administered in FY25. This year, 6,973 Service members made reports of sexual assault for an incident that occurred to them during military Service. This is down from the 7,266 that reported such an incident in FY23.

The Military Services had sufficient evidence to take disciplinary action in 66 percent of accused members’ cases. Every decision to take disciplinary action is based on evidence gathered during an independent investigation by a Military Criminal Investigative Organization (MCIO) and the preferences of the victim, to include their willingness to participate in the legal process. This year, the Military Services had sufficient evidence to take disciplinary action in 2,128 cases. Disciplinary action was not possible in 1,079 cases because there was insufficient evidence of any evidence to prosecute, or the the victimdesired not to participate in the military justice process, or because the statute of limitations expired. One percent of subject cases were unfounded, meaning they were false or baseless. False cases are allegations wherein evidence existed to find that the crime did not occur, or the accused did not commit the crime. Baseless cases are those allegations that were inappropriately reported as a sexual assault.

Preventing Sexual Assault

Sexual assault and other harmful behaviors occur less often in units with healthy climates. To that end, this section summarizes FY24 efforts to prevent sexual assault and other behaviors by building the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the prevention workforce.

Implementing the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW)

Required by Section 549B of the FY22 NDAA, the Department established the IPPW as part of the system created to prevent multiple harmful behaviors including sexual assault, harassment, domestic abuse, child abuse, and suicide. The IPPW works with leaders and other prevention stakeholders to assess and address the risk and protective factors that give rise to harmful behaviors.

The IPPW:

- 1) promotes the health of the military community;
- 2) partners with leaders to implement prevention activities;
- 3) evaluates potential options and advises leaders on data-driven decision making; and
- 4) collaborates with other program specialists and offices focused on harmful behaviors.

The May 2024 OUSD(P&R) memorandum, “Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Military,” highlights and reinforces the importance of the work being done by the IPPW at military installations and ships around the world.

Other activities accomplished in FY24 include launching the DoD Credentialing Program for Prevention Personnel (D-CPPP) in July 2023; more than 1,300 integrated primary prevention personnel are now credentialed. The D-CPPP is the first of its kind integrated prevention credential designed to standardize core knowledge and skill requirements and professionalize this workforce across the Department. To facilitate outreach and hiring in FY24, the Department conducted several outreach events and activities at universities and professional organizations and continued recruitment via a LinkedIn page.

Training the IPPW

In FY24, the Department provided numerous prevention-focused training and education opportunities to the prevention workforce throughout the DoD enterprise in alignment with the Department’s integrated primary prevention framework and goals outlined in the Prevention Plan of Action (PPoA) 2.0, DoD Instruction (DoDI) 6400.09, “DoD Policy on Integrated Primary Prevention of Self-Directed Harm and Prohibited Abuse or Harm,” and DoDI 6400.11, “DoD Integrated Primary Prevention Policy for Prevention Workforce and Leaders.”

The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Training and Education Center of Excellence (SAPRTEC) became operational in January 2023. SAPRTEC facilitates IPPW onboarding training and continuing education. SAPRTEC provides the IPPW with training in prevention of harmful behaviors including sexual assault, harassment, suicide, domestic abuse, and child abuse. Below are select prevention-focused education and training efforts that occurred in FY24.

- **Prevention Webinars:** SAPRTEC conducted 10 prevention webinars throughout FY24. Topics included adverse childhood experiences, substance misuse, comprehensive integrated primary prevention (CIPP) plans, instructional skills, collaborations, communicating with leaders, the D-CPPP credential, and evaluation. These webinars reached a total of 2,412 attendees throughout the year.

- **SPARX Connection:** In accordance with DoDI 6400.09, “DoD Policy on Integrated Primary Prevention of Self-Directed Harm and Prohibited Abuse or Harm,” SAPRTEC manages SPARX Connection—a community of practice that fosters collaboration and learning among DoD prevention professionals. During FY24, the community grew to over 3,000 members with participation from all Military Departments, the National Guard, and the Coast Guard. SPARX Connection members have access to prevention resources and webinars from a variety of policy areas, including child abuse and neglect, domestic abuse, harassment, sexual assault, and suicide. To further connections, SAPRTEC also held a virtual networking event for IPPW members across the Military Services in FY24.
- **Prevention Peer Learning Community (PLC):** SAPRTEC hosted four PLC sessions with select Army Integrated Prevention Advisory Group (I-PAG) Prevention Specialists. Throughout these engagements, PLC members discussed fostering collaborations, conducting Needs Assessments, Command Climate Assessments (CCAs), CIPP plans, and data informed actions.
- **DoD SPARX Knowledge Prevention of Harmful Behaviors in the Military:** This course covers the integrated primary prevention of suicide, sexual assault, sexual harassment, child abuse and neglect, and domestic abuse. The goal of this training is to establish a common base of knowledge, skills, and resources within the prevention workforce for selecting, implementing, and evaluating research-based prevention activities. Completing this course curriculum satisfies the IPPW SPARX Knowledge Part 2 training requirements.
 - **DoD SPARX Knowledge Prevention of Harmful Behaviors in the Military, JKO Version:** SAPRTEC conducted 14 sessions of the 10-day, 60-hour virtual instructor-led option of the Prevention of Harmful Behaviors in the Military course. In FY24, 459 participants completed this instructor-led option.
 - **DoD SPARX Knowledge Prevention of Harmful Behaviors in the Military, JKO Version:** In FY24, SAPRTEC launched a virtual, asynchronous version of the Prevention of Harmful Behaviors in the Military course. The full course curriculum consists of eleven subordinate, connected courses in JKO and a final assessment. In FY24, 196 participants completed this asynchronous option.
- **CCA and CIPP Plan Courses:** In FY24, SAPRTEC launched the CCA and CIPP plan courses in JKO to support requirements outlined within DoDI 6400.11, “DoD Integrated Primary Prevention Policy for Prevention Workforce and Leaders.” The **CIPP plan course** provides information and resources on developing a CIPP plan in accordance with DoDI 6400.11 requirements; in FY24, 2,403 participants completed this course. The **CCA course** provides an understanding of how to administer, interpret, and/or consult on CCAs, including administering and interpreting results of the *Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS)*; in FY24, 6,090 participants completed this course.

Facilitating Prevention Technical Assistance for the IPPW and the Military Departments

DoD technical assistance helps to bridge knowledge and skill gaps between training and execution of primary prevention activities. The Department hosts a center that provides technical assistance to build the skills and abilities of the IPPW to prevent harmful behaviors and evaluate implemented prevention activities.

The DoD Prevention Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) provides targeted support focused on integrated primary prevention planning, implementation, and evaluation of implemented prevention activities. The goals of this support are to help design effective prevention practices and to identify which prevention training programs achieve their desired outcomes. Areas of support for prevention planning and implementation include engaging key collaborators, assessing needs, setting goals, selecting prevention activities, implementing and adapting activities, and defining outcomes and planning for evaluation. Areas of support for evaluation include conducting evaluability assessments, designing evaluations, implementing and analyzing evaluations, and interpreting and disseminating findings. These center resources are available to anyone in DoD who needs support with primary prevention focused activities and evaluation for the prevention of harmful behaviors, which includes sexual assault, harassment, retaliation, suicide, and domestic and child abuse. Below are *select* prevention-focused technical assistance accomplishments that occurred in FY24.

- **Direct Technical Assistance Support:** These opportunities provided one-on-one feedback to prevention personnel who needed assistance with a specific prevention activity. Support was provided through phone calls, emails, virtual meetings, and the development of products. Activities this year included:
 - Providing on-demand primary prevention subject matter expert consultation and customized support through advice and guidance (e.g., Q&A, informal written recommendations), provision of draft content examples and resources (e.g., language suggestions, templates, literature, or resource links), and identification of needs for strategic prevention planning.
 - Providing targeted support through the provision of job-aid products (e.g., info papers, resource guides, how-to manuals, templates, checklists) to address identified knowledge, skill, or ability gaps and workforce product needs that were observed among prevention workforce personnel.
- **Group Technical Assistance Support:** These opportunities provided skill-building through group learning events and workshops that targeted a specific technical assistance need. Activities this year included:
 - Providing prevention-related group learning to individual Military Services/Components for targeted IPPW audiences to help address specific knowledge, skill, or ability gaps in prevention. These events provided up to four hours of group learning around one central prevention theme, hosted in-person across one to two days or virtually across one or multiple sessions.
 - Providing cross-Military Service in-person or virtual group workshops that focused on skill building through active participation exercises and problem-solving real-world challenges. These events provided up to three hours of instruction and topics were based upon needs identified through previous technical assistance engagements with the Military Services/Components.

Taking Action to Improve Unit Climate

One of the Department's tools for maintaining a positive unit climate is the *DEOCS*, which is a congressionally mandated unit-level climate survey that is required for all military commanders and DoD civilian organization leaders. The survey collects information on unit climate, harassment and discrimination, and other aspects of organizational climate.

In accordance with the May 2024 OUSD(P&R) memorandum, "Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Military," the Military Services and NGB, in

collaboration with the Department, developed outreach strategies outlining leadership responsibilities in completing the *DEOCS* and provided plans on how they achieved compliance with CCA policy requirements in DoDI 6400.11, “DoD Integrated Primary Prevention Policy for Prevention Workforce Leaders” in advance of the 2024 *DEOCS* fielding window of August 1 to November 30, 2024. A summary of Military Service and NGB actions is below.

Army: Army published guidance on achieving compliance with CCA policy requirements in DoDI 6400.11. It also provided details on the method of training completion for personnel involved in the CCA process, the level at which *DEOCS* and CIPP plans are to be completed, and which personnel will lead the CCA process at locations where the IPPW is not yet in place. Army took multiple steps to encourage participation in the CCA process, including issuing two memorandums launching the *DEOCS*, providing work time and facilities for survey completion, and encouraging survey participation.

Navy: Navy provided revisions to the CCA process to include additional information on the CCA timeline as well as CIPP plan submission deadlines. Navy initiated monthly office hours to provide updates and address questions related to the CCA process and CIPP plan development.

Marine Corps: Marine Corps provided Service-specific implementation guidance for the requirement. Marine Corps published a CCA administrative message in July 2024 encouraging leaders to actively promote maximum survey participation and provided opportunity for survey completion during working hours.

Air Force: Air Force implemented a strategic communication plan to market the *DEOCS* to the Total Force. Throughout the fielding window, leaders continued to disseminate additional messages and guidance.

NGB: NGB published *DEOCS* administration guidance for all personnel across the States in May and July 2024. Guidance highlighted the critical roles of Equal Opportunity and Equal Employment Opportunity Managers to ensure continuity and to facilitate knowledge transfer *DEOCS* administration processes. NGB collected monthly updates from the States to communicate their progress on marketing and completion of the *DEOCS*. Updates were compiled to provide NGB a comprehensive picture of *DEOCS* progress across the National Guard.

Enhancing Warfighter Care and Support

The Department supports sexual assault recovery efforts that reinforce military readiness and warfighter resiliency. To that end, this section summarizes FY24 efforts to enhance warfighter care and support.

July 2024 Deputy Secretary of Defense (DSD) Memorandum Updating the SAPR Program

On July 19, 2024, the then-DSD published the memorandum, “Updates to Department of Defense Policies to Enhance Support for Adult Sexual Assault Victims,” updating numerous SAPR policies: the Safe-to-Report policy (incorporating the role of the OSTC), convalescent leave for Restricted Reporters, CATCH a Serial Offender (CATCH) Program enhancements, and authorization of Restricted Reporting for DoD civilian employees in Components with SAPR Programs. He also approved the SARW model.

The memorandum also authorized use of new case management forms that serve as checklists to assist Commanders and SARCs to more effectively and efficiently manage their respective roles in overseeing sexual assault cases. The establishment of these new forms lessens the

preparation needed to attend and conduct monthly SAPR Case Management Groups (CMG), Quarterly CMGs (QCMG), and the High-Risk Response Team (HRRT) at military installations worldwide. The HRRT is responsible for developing action plans for warfighters whose safety is at risk.

The memorandum also supports certain policy requirements to be addressed with easy-to-follow checklists; this results in better managed services for warfighters, strict adherence to safety assessments for victims, and a more effective and efficient response system to promote recovery.

In addition, the memorandum was a collaboration with the DoD Inspector General (IG), who issued a corresponding change to DoDI 5505.18, “Investigation of Adult Sexual Assault in the Department of Defense,” at the same time SAPR policy was updated. This collaboration with the IG resulted in the creation of a “Law Enforcement (LE) Sexual Assault Victim Disclosure Exception,” which allows LE personnel to disclose a sexual assault in a personal conversation with another LE member without triggering an investigation. This protection of personal conversations among LE personnel promotes additional reporting, improved LE service access to expedite recovery, and the greater opportunity to hold alleged offenders appropriately accountable.

To improve dissemination of DSD memorandum policy updates, DoD SAPRO published concise documents in a dedicated resource webpage at www.sapr.mil/latest-policy-updates. Topic-specific handouts on each policy update are available to use as an initial briefing and as easy-to-find resources. In addition, DoD SAPRO developed a commander-specific handout to provide a summary overview of all policy updates.

Strengthening the SARW

The Department continued to emphasize its focus on professionalizing and strengthening the SARW in the May 2024 OUSDP(P&R), “Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Military,” and in the July 2024 DSD memorandum, “Updates to Department of Defense Policies to Enhance Support for Adult Sexual Assault Victims.”

SARW Model

Approved in the July 2024 DSD memorandum, the SARW model provides the framework for a DoD-wide, multi-level, sexual assault response functional community that responds to and advocates for victim needs, advises leaders at all levels on appropriate response strategies for individuals and systems, and encourages collaboration with other providers to support victims throughout the healing and military justice process.

The SARW model describes DoD’s plan to develop and implement a SARW that contains a mix of civilian and military personnel and provides guidance to support the structure and creation of new opportunities for promotion and advancement for the SARW.⁷ Table 2 breaks down the major elements of the SARW model and their alignment to the approved IRC recommendations.

Table 2: DoD SARW Model Elements

Major Element	Description
SARW personnel, including Sexual Assault Response	SAPR personnel will be full-time, Defense Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program (D-SAACP) certified, installation positions with work roles and functions to support all tenant commands within their installation command’s area of

⁷ For more information on the SARW model, see https://www.sapr.mil/sites/default/files/public/docs/policy/Approved_SARW_Model.pdf.

Coordinators (SARCs) and SAPR Victim Advocates (VAs), are required to be full-time, certified positions	responsibility. These personnel will report to a Principal SARC who will operationally report to the local installation commander and administratively report to a Supervisory SAPR Program Administrator at the operational installation management command, Regional Command, or Marine Corps Installations Command. <i>Aligns to approved IRC-recommendation 4.1.a (i.e., Move SARCs and SAPR VAs from the Command reporting structure)</i>
Sexual assault response will be provided by full-time SARCs and SAPR VAs	Victim assistance and case management will be primarily provided by full-time SARCs and SAPR VAs as uniformly as possible. Authorized personnel levels will sustain current and future workloads, resulting in a reduction in reliance on collateral duty and part-time SAPRCs and SAPR VAs over time wherever feasible. <i>Aligns to approved IRC recommendation 4.1.b (i.e., Eliminate collateral duty for SARCs and SAPR VAs)</i>
“No Wrong Door” Policy Implementation	SARCs and SAPR VAs will work closely with individuals seeking assistance and other providers external to the SARW to ensure people requiring assistance are referred to appropriate support services. <i>Aligns to approved IRC recommendation 4.3.a (i.e., Implement a “No Wrong Door” Policy)</i>
Professionalize, Strengthen, and Resource the SARW	In accordance with the memorandum, “Appointment of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Functional Community Manager for the Sexual Assault Response Workforce, signed February 23, 2024, OUSD(P&R) appointed the Executive Director, Office of Force Resiliency, OUSD(P&R), as the Office of the Secretary of Defense Functional Community Manager, in accordance with the guidance from Functional Community Managers in DoDI 1400.25, Volume 250, “DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Civilian Strategic Human Capital Planning (SHCP).” The Office of the Secretary of Defense Functional Community Manager will establish a governance structure to maintain the standard functions of the SARW as well as oversee workforce planning efforts and strategies. <i>Aligns to approved IRC recommendation C.2 (i.e., DoD must undertake a comprehensive approach to professionalizing, strengthening, and resourcing the workforce for SAPR across the board)</i>

The shift from a collateral duty (“part-time”) SARW to a full-time SARW has the potential to provide DoD with significant benefits, in terms of quality of support rendered to victims, efficiencies, and wartime focus. Currently, DoD credentials over 20,000 civilian and military personnel to be SARCs and SAPR VAs. While there may be a presumption that more responders are better, findings of the Fort Hood Independent Review Commission⁸ and the IRC⁹ does not bear that out. Both of these Commissions found that most collateral duty personnel were ill-prepared to administer victim assistance to fellow warfighters, given how complex the program had become. In fact, the Government Accountability Office noted that, by 2022, Congress had passed 249 statutory requirements impacting how DoD addresses

⁸ For more information on the Fort Hood Independent Review Commission, see: <https://www.army.mil/forthoodreview/#report>.

⁹ For more information on the IRC, see: <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2681145/independent-review-commission-recommendations-on-counteracting-sexual-assault-in-t/>.

prevention of and response to sexual assault incidents.¹⁰ As a result, victim assistance can no longer be administered effectively by collateral duty military personnel who receive, on average, only 40 hours training.

In addition, experience of collateral duty personnel falls far behind the full-time SARW. In the most recent survey of sexual assault responders,¹¹ full-time and “primary duty” SARCs and SAPR VAs assisted the largest number of victims, while collateral duty VAs assisted a median number of zero victims in the past year. As a result, efforts in FY24 focused on shifting the SARW to reliance on full-time personnel, as further described below. The shift from collateral duty to full-time personnel as directed in the FY24 DSD memorandum is expected to save, at a minimum, 620,000 hours of initial training, and 496,000 hours of continuing education for each two-year D-SAACP certification cycle. All training hours return to military commanders to improve mission readiness. Consistent with the approved SARW model, the remaining 3,400 collateral duty personnel will require training to full-time standards and render victim assistance in ships, submarines, and hard-to-fill/isolated locations.

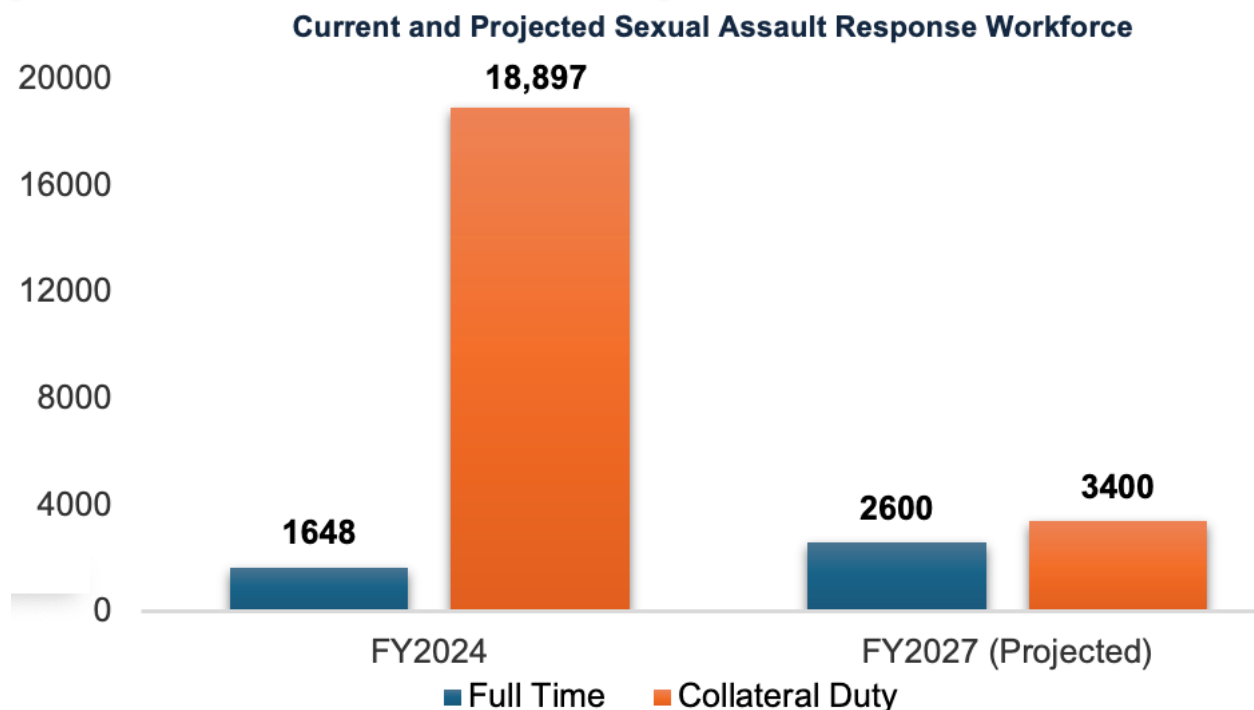


Figure 3. FY24 and FY27 SARW

Additional DoD Activities and Efforts Related to the SARW

In addition to developing and publishing the SARW model, the Department created standardized position descriptions (PDs) for key positions within the SARW organization structure. The Military Services and NGB have classified the PDs in accordance with their standards for classification policies for use in and by the Military Services’ hiring and staffing departments. Furthermore, in accordance with the memorandum, “Approval of a Temporary

¹⁰ For more information, see: <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-103973#:~:text=What%20GAO%20Found,and%20most%20remain%20in%20force.>

¹¹ A summary of the QSAR follows in this section. The survey document is attached to this report at Appendix 1.

Direct Hire Authority for Positions Designated as Department of Sexual Assault Response Workforce Positions,” signed August 21, 2024, the Department implemented a temporary Direct Hire Authority for the SARW to allow for more streamlined and responsive hiring.

Aimed at supporting a data-enriched and research-based process to adequately staff the SARW, DoD developed a staffing algorithm to support the Military Service and NGB ability to forecast SARW resourcing requirements for tactical level positions (i.e., SARC, Supervisory SARC, SAPR VA) located at the installation level worldwide. The algorithm takes into consideration a number of factors such as estimated USC prevalence rates, demographic and population data per installation location, sexual assault reporting history, and feedback from each Service to develop individualized models.

Training the SARW

In addition to providing training to the prevention workforce, SAPRTEC also facilitates training for the response workforce. Below are *select* response-focused education and training efforts that occurred in FY24.

- **Response Webinars:** SAPRTEC hosted two webinars for the SARW in FY24. Topics included CMGs and the July 2024 DSD memorandum directing changes to the SAPR program. These webinars reached a total of 1,187 attendees.
- **Launch of DoD Victim Advocates Learning, Innovating, and Networking Together (VALIANT):** SAPRTEC launched VALIANT, an online Community of Practice (CoP) for military SARCs, SAPR VAs, Program Managers, and other SAPR/SHARP personnel. Those who are a part of the CoP have access to webinars and self-paced courses, discussion boards, a resource library, and a member directory. The site grew to 1,122 members in FY24. For more information on VALIANT, see: <https://sapr.mil/Valiant>.
- **Encounter Skills Training:** SAPRTEC continued development and pilot delivery of the Encounter Skills curriculum. The curriculum supports the training and development of SARCs and SAPR VAs. The Encounter Skills curriculum satisfies FY11 NDAA, Section 1602 (Public Law 111-383,) and aims to standardize and deliver a core curriculum that enhances SARC and SAPR VA skills and proficiency.
- **DoD SAPRO Virtual Learning Event (VLE):** SAPRTEC conducted a two-day VLE for the SARW. Topics covered the IPPW, the Family Advocacy Program/SAPR process map, the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database (DSAID), coordinated care for Service members who are survivors of sexual assault, and SARW implementation. This event reached 490 attendees and provided continuing education credits free of charge to SARW members worldwide.
- **National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) Workshops:** SAPRTEC co-facilitated continuing education workshops about professional ethnics and collaboration for the SARW at the NOVA Annual Training Conference. This reached 713 attendees.
- **CATCH Courses:** In FY24, to ensure awareness and full utilization of the CATCH Program outlined in DoDI 6495.02, “Adult Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Program Procedures,” volume 1, paragraph 4, SAPRTEC launched two new course offerings in JKO. **CATCH01** is a 45-minute introductory course to provide DoD personnel with a basic overview and understanding of the program. It explains the eligibility requirements, that CATCH entries are anonymous, and that participation in the CATCH is completely voluntary highlighting that there are no adverse consequences for victims if they do not agree to participate or opt out of the CATCH Program after being contacted with information

of a potential “match.” **CATCH02** is designed specifically for SARCs, focusing on how to use the CATCH system to generate CATCH usernames and passwords for victim entry submissions and gaining the skills needed to make the required status updates in the CATCH system and DSAID. Both courses are one-time courses, so they do not increase the annual training burden on our warfighters.

- **DSAID Courses:** In FY24, SAPRTEC supported DSAID online training for the SARW, resulting in 1,664 completions.

Modernization of D-SAACP

In FY24, the Department began efforts to modernize the D-SAACP to improve DoD’s ability to efficiently handle large amounts of data and speed the credentialing process.

Providing a Quality Response

DoD SHL

The DoD SHL is the Department’s sole crisis support service specially dedicated to members of the DoD community affected by sexual assault. The service is confidential, anonymous, secure, and available around the clock worldwide. The availability of SHL ensures that all victims have a place to safely disclose their assault, express concerns, and obtain information. As such, this resource is often a first step in the reporting process for many victims and a key support for those who might not otherwise reach out for help through face-to-face military channels. The Department leverages SHL as an accessible point-of-entry for the military community that facilitates sexual assault reporting to SARCs and SAPR VAs.

In FY24, 21,947 users (14,152 online users and 7,795 phone users) contacted SHL for services. Of the 624 sessions in which an event was discussed and a user-victim relationship was disclosed, 83 percent of users were identified as victims. Some users called on behalf of victims to learn how they could support and help prevent re-victimization. Additional data on SHL can be found in Appendix E.

DoD Safe HelpRoom

The DoD Safe HelpRoom is an anonymous, moderated online group chat service available at all hours of the day. This resource allows individuals who have experienced sexual assault in the military to connect and support each other, minimizing geographic and other barriers victims may encounter when accessing in-person peer support. In FY24, 42 users attended 26 of the 101 scheduled sessions (26 percent); the other 75 scheduled sessions had no users. Of sessions that users joined, the number of users ranged from one to seven. The amount of time spent in a session ranged from less than one minute to one hour and 31 minutes (median = 4 minutes and 25 seconds).

Survey Findings on the Use and Experiences of Response Providers

The Department’s *QSAR* assesses the training, workload, resourcing, and job experiences of frontline staff executing SAPR Programs within the Military Service (including Reserve Components). All SARCs, SAPR VAs/Uniformed Victim Advocates (UVAs), Victims’ Counsel (VC) – which includes Special Victims’ Counsel (Army), Victims’ Legal Counsel (Navy and Marine Corps), Victims’ Counsel (Air Force), and Special Victims paralegals – are invited to take the survey. Findings from the 2024 *QSAR* are below.

Survey Results Show that Service Members are Satisfied with the Services they Receive

DoD aims to connect warfighters with the necessary care and support to expedite recovery and reinforce resiliency. The 2023 prevalence survey asked Service members which resources they

used and about their satisfaction. In FY23, of active duty women who indicated experiencing sexual assault and made a report, 92 percent indicated that they interacted with a SARC, with 64 percent indicating they were satisfied with the support they received. This is similar to the SARC usage (85 percent) and satisfaction (62 percent) ratings received in FY21. Moreover, 77 percent indicated using SAPR VA services, and 61 percent indicated their satisfaction with the care and support they received from SAPR VAs. The services of SVC were also highly used and rated. Other support service use and satisfaction ratings are included in Figure 4 below.

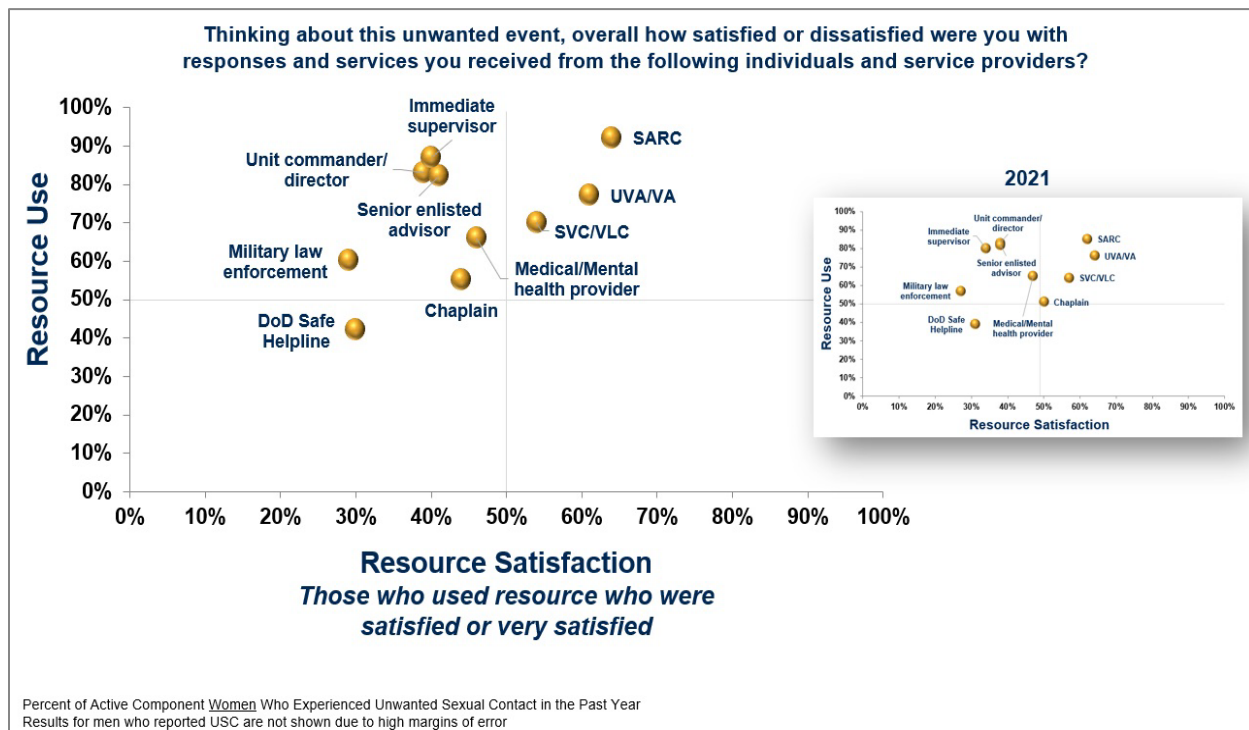


Figure 4. Satisfaction with Responses/Services Received

Responders Spend Time on a Variety of Responsibilities

Response personnel dedicate their time to a variety of duties. The 2024 QSAR found that, on average in a typical month, the most commonly endorsed activities varied by role. SARCs spent 32 percent of their time on SAPR Program duties and 24 percent of their time on direct victim assistance. VAs spent 45 percent of their time on military duties unrelated to their role and 18 percent of their time on trainings, while VCs spent 48 percent of time on VC-specific duties and 34 percent of their time on direct victim assistance. Additionally, respondents said that their SAPR/Sexual Harassment/Assault Prevention and Response (SHARP) duties were clearly communicated to them, helping them to efficiently conduct their jobs in supporting warfighters.

Responders Have Direct Access to and Support from Commanders

Collaborative working relationships between commanders and response personnel play an important role in efficiently and effectively responding to incidents of sexual assault. The 2024 QSAR found that respondents felt they had direct and unimpeded access to commanders (88 percent SARCs, 69 percent VAs, and 60 percent VCs) and support from commanders (84 percent SARCs, 76 percent VAs, and 52 percent VCs). However, VCs indicated significantly less access to commanders than SARCs and less perceived support and role importance from local commanders than SARCs and VAs. Most response personnel agreed they felt supported

by their commanders in various ways, although VCs reported feeling less supported, prioritized, and respected by their commanders compared to SARCs and/or VAs.

Complexity of the SAPR Program and the SAPR Subject Matter Contribute to Job Stress

Response personnel may experience a variety of factors that contribute to job stress. The 2024 QSAR found that the most endorsed contributor to job stress for SARCs was the increasing complexity of the SAPR Program (42 percent in 2024, statistically unchanged from 39 percent in 2021). Both VAs (up significantly from 13 percent in 2021 to 16 percent in 2024) and VCs (up from 56 percent in 2021 to 73 percent in 2024) endorsed the subject matter of their work as the main contributor to job stress.

Levels of Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, and Vicarious Trauma were Similar or Higher than Rates Last Measured in 2021

In addition to job stress, response personnel may also experience burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma. The 2024 QSAR found that response personnel reported high levels of burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma, which were similar or higher than in 2021. While SARCs most frequently experienced burnout (52 percent, statistically unchanged from 51 percent in 2021), they reported statistically significant increases in their experiences of compassion fatigue (39 percent in 2024 up from 32 percent in 2021) and vicarious trauma (32 percent in 2024 up from 23 percent in 2021). VAs also reported statistically significant increases in their experiences of burnout (40 percent in 2021 versus 46 percent in 2024), compassion fatigue (21 percent in 2021 versus 25 percent in 2024), and various trauma (10 percent in 2021 versus 14 percent in 2024), whereas VCs reported a statistically significant increase in vicarious trauma (36 percent in 2021 versus 61 percent in 2024).

Having resources ready and available to manage the dimensions of burnout is critical. The majority of response personnel indicated they had adequate knowledge and/or resources to handle burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma.

Time for Self-Care Remained High in 2024

It is important to manage job stress and the dimensions of burnout with self-care. Although the 2024 QSAR found that a high percentage of SARCs, VAs, and VCs reported they had time for self-care, VAs were the only group of responders to report a statistically significant decrease in time for self-care, down from 77 percent to 74 percent in 2024. Hobbies (71 percent) and exercise (71 percent) were the most used forms of self-care among response personnel.

Making time for self-care may impact resilience and retention. The 2024 QSAR found that SARCs, VAs, and VCs saw slight decreases in resilience from 2021 to 2024, with VAs reporting a significant decrease from 3.82 percent in 2021 to 3.47 percent in 2024.¹² Additionally, the 2024 QSAR asked about retention intentions; as shown in Figure 5, when asked about how likely response personnel would choose to stay in their SAPR/SHARP-related position if they had to decide whether to stay in that role, most SARCs (72 percent) and VAs (80 percent) indicated they were likely or very likely to stay in their SAPR role, but less than half of VCs (45 percent) reported they would stay.

¹² The resilience scale mean is out of five.

2024 QuickCompass of Sexual Assault Response Personnel (QSAR)

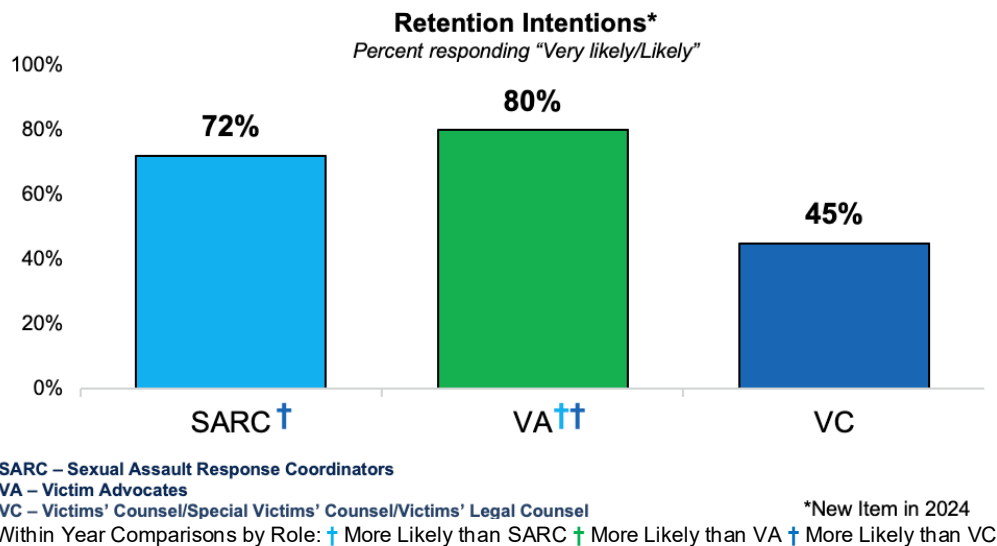


Figure 5. Retention Intention of First Responders

Decreasing Rates of Satisfaction for VC Support

The SVC programs remain one of the highest rated, most used services offered to warfighters coping with an experience of sexual assault. However, DoD-wide surveys have noted a decrease in satisfaction since 2018 associated with services provided to Service members (Figure 6 below), with victim satisfaction reaching a nadir in 2023. As noted previously, VCs score significantly higher than other first responders on rates of burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma. In addition, VCs are also less likely to indicate a desire to stay in their role than SARCs or SAPR VAs. Past experience and research show that personnel in high-demand and stressful positions often benefit from improved resourcing and preparation to better cope with the challenges of the mission.

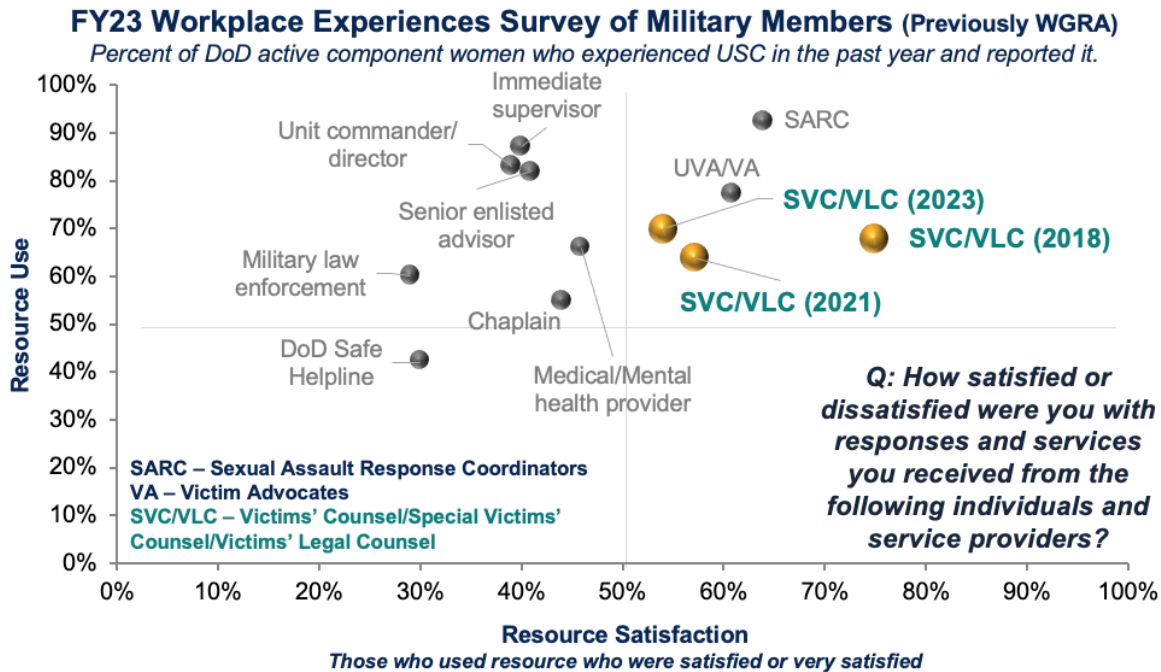


Figure 6. Satisfaction with VC Responses/Services Received

Survey Findings on the Experiences of Warfighter Victims of Sexual Assault

The Department's *Sexual Violence Support and Experiences Study (SVSES)* is a confidential and voluntary survey about Service members' experiences with the sexual assault response system and/or the military justice process, as well as their health, well-being, and career progression. Anyone who is currently serving in the U.S. Military¹³ (Active or Selected Reserve) and has indicated experiencing USC whether on a DoD survey or in an official report while serving is eligible to enter the study, regardless of whether they reported the experience to military authorities. Respondents are assigned to one of four reporting categories, depending on their reporting status and assumed potential exposure to available sexual assault resources and the military justice process: Unrestricted Report, Investigated,¹⁴ Restricted Report, and No Report.¹⁵

The SVSES opened on June 1, 2023, and is a continuously fielding survey. Service members may join at any time by completing an initial survey. Service members who complete an initial survey are invited to complete a follow-up survey every 90 days. Follow-up survey invitations continue every 90 days even if the respondent does not complete any given follow-up. Survey invitations continue until a respondent explicitly opts out of communications, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time. By the end of FY24, a total of 990 Service members completed the initial survey. Follow-up surveys began being sent in September 2024, and 520 Service members completed a follow-up survey by the end of FY24.

¹³ Members of the Coast Guard are eligible to join; however, the analyses referenced here focus solely on members serving in DoD.

¹⁴ The Investigated category refers to respondents who experienced one or more USC incidents and have never made an Unrestricted Report, but at least one incident was investigated.

¹⁵ The No Report category refers to respondents who experienced one or more USC incidents but have never had an incident investigated and have either never reported an incident or are unsure what type of report they made.

At the time of their initial survey, 50 percent of respondents were satisfied with their ability to have immediate and comprehensive medical and/or psychological treatment. However, 58 percent of respondents indicated that they thought they might need treatment for an emotional or behavioral health problem but chose not to seek treatment. Respondents reported the perceived barriers in Figure 7 below:

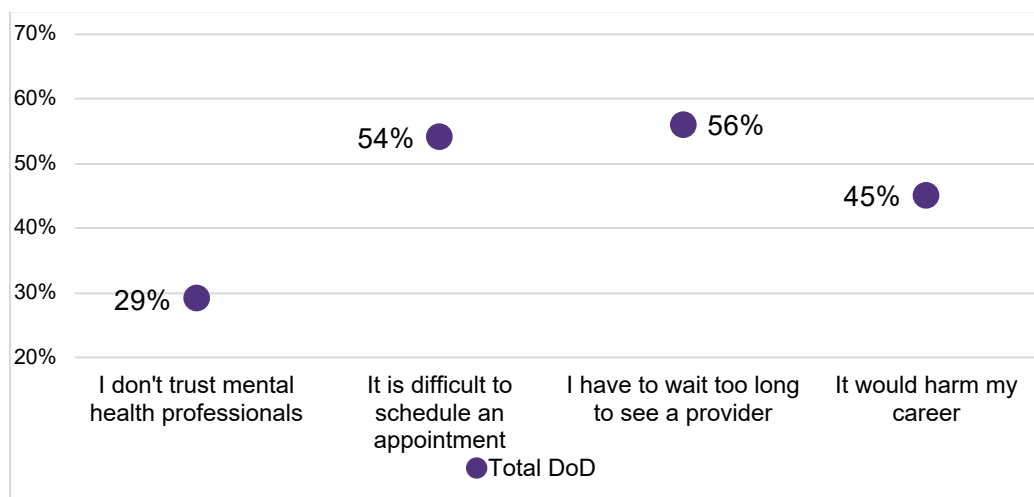


Figure 7. Reasons SVSES Respondents Did Not Access Mental Healthcare

Career and Health Outcomes of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault

Following the 2016 prevalence survey, the Department launched two five-year studies to better understand how the experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault impact warfighters. The first study examined the career trajectories of active duty members over a five year period after they indicated experiencing sexual harassment or sexual assault on the 2016 prevalence survey. Marrying survey data with administrative records allowed DoD to examine five career outcomes: separation from active duty service, characterization of service at separation, promotions, demotions, and derogatory clearance actions.

In the second study, marrying survey data with administrative records allowed DoD to examine three mental health-related outcomes over time, including mental health-related diagnoses, mental health-related encounters (i.e., utilization of health services), and mental health-related prescriptions. In sum, members who indicated experiencing sexual assault on the survey had poorer career and health outcomes than members who did not indicate having a sexual assault experience. Some of the key findings for warfighters experiencing sexual assault are as follows:

Compared to warfighters who did not indicate a past-year experience of sexual assault on the 2016 prevalence survey, warfighters who indicated a past-year experience of sexual assault:

- **Experienced the following Career Impacts:**
 - Up to 1.7 times more likely to separate from active duty;
 - Up to 2.2 times more likely to be demoted; and
 - Up to 2.4 times more likely to receive a derogatory clearance action.
- **Experienced the following Health Impacts:**
 - Up to 2.1 times more likely to receive a mental health diagnosis;
 - Up to 2.9 times more likely to have a mental health-related encounter; and
 - Up to 2.6 times more likely to receive a mental health-related prescription.

For more information on these studies, see Annexes 2 and 3 of this report.

Ensuring Compliance with Law and Policy

OSTCs Reached Full Operational Capacity¹⁶

Pursuant to the FY22 NDAA (Public Law 117-81), the OSTCs within the Military Services reached full operational capacity on December 27, 2023, and are responsible for independently evaluating covered criminal offenses and prosecuting cases warranted by evidence, as appropriate. The SAPR-related covered offenses are Article 120 (rape and sexual assault, aggravated/abusive sexual contact), Article 132 (retaliation) and Article 80, attempts to commit these offenses.

The OSTCs impact various aspects of SAPR policy included in DoDI 6495.02, “Adult Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Program Procedures,” volume 1, and DoDI 6495.02, “Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Retaliation Response for Adult Sexual Assault Cases,” volume 3. For example, when unit commanders receive an Unrestricted Report of an incident of either sexual assault or retaliation, they must immediately contact the appropriate MCIO in accordance with Section 1742 of Public Law 113-66 and DoDI 5505.18, “Investigation of Adult Sexual Assault in the Department of Defense,” and also notify the appropriate OSTC. Unit commanders cannot conduct internal, command-directed investigations on sexual assault or retaliation allegations (i.e., no referrals to appointed command investigators or inquiry officers) or otherwise restrict or delay contacting the MCIO or OSTC concerned while attempting to assess the credibility of the sexual assault allegation.

In addition, when there is an allegation of collateral misconduct against the victim, the OSTCs exercise authority over a Service member victim’s alleged collateral misconduct and must determine that such alleged collateral misconduct is “non-minor” before court-martial charges alleging collateral misconduct by a victim are preferred or referred. The OSTCs use the analytical framework, criteria, and standards established in the Safe-to-Report Policy (in accordance with Section 539A of NDAA FY21 (Public Law 116-283) and DoDI 6495.02, volume 1, “Adult Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Program Procedures,” to assess whether the alleged misconduct is minor or non-minor.

CATCH Program

CATCH Program Overview

The Department implemented the CATCH Program in August 2019 to allow warfighters and others, who experienced sexual assault, the opportunity to anonymously submit suspect information to military criminal investigators to help the DoD identify serial sex offenders. Military criminal investigators at CATCH Headquarters, not at the victim’s installation, analyze suspect information that victims anonymously submitted into the CATCH website. If they identify an entry that “matches” another entry or an open investigation, the investigators will notify SAPR personnel so they can notify the victims of the match.

¹⁶ This information is being included to document that the Department and Military Services complied with law requiring OSTC implementation.

July 2024 DSD Memorandum Expanding CATCH Program Eligibility

To make a CATCH entry, victims of sexual assault can contact a SARC or SAPR VA. The CATCH Program is open to 1) current Service members and their adult dependents, to include those assigned to the Military Service Academies and the Reserve and National Guard; 2) former Service members; 3) former Service members' adult dependents where the suspect is a Service member. Participation in the CATCH Program is voluntary and the victim may decline to participate in the program at any stage, even after being informed that there was a potential "match" to another entry in the CATCH system or to a law enforcement investigation.

In July 2024, the then-DSD published the memorandum, "Updates to Department of Defense Policies to Enhance Support for Adult Sexual Assault Victims," approving expanded eligibility of the CATCH Program to include Service members and their adult military dependents who did not file an official report of sexual assault but want to submit a CATCH entry. This change is beneficial for warfighters who have left military service without officially reporting their sexual assault to law enforcement or to a SARC.

The update also included eligibility for DoD civilian employees when the suspect was a Service member. For non-reporters, a new Defense Department (DD) Form (DD Form 2910-4) was authorized, and a new process was implemented through a SAPR-Related Inquiry (SRI) CATCH entry. Removing the reporting barrier allowed access to a new population that can now submit entries, which will result in more serial sex offenders being identified and held appropriately accountable.

The approved changes, including CATCH Program Procedures, CATCH Victim Info Sheet, Instructions for Victims Submitting an Entry into the CATCH System, SARC Talking Points, and the CATCH 101 slide deck, are available at www.sapr.mil/catch. Routine data analytics on the CATCH webpage reflect that SARCs use the SARC Talking Points and download the CATCH Victim Info Sheet and Instructions for Victims Submitting an Entry often to provide to victims.

FY24 CATCH Program Update

In FY24, the CATCH Program received 690 submissions from victims who had previously filed a Restricted Report or Unrestricted Report across the Military Services and NGB. This number also includes sexual assault victims who did not officially report but did want to submit a CATCH entry, which is facilitated through the SRI CATCH DD Form 2910-4. CATCH submissions resulted in 46 matches during FY24. Since its launch in August 2019, the CATCH Program has received 2,999 total victim submissions, resulting in 155 matches as of September 30, 2024.

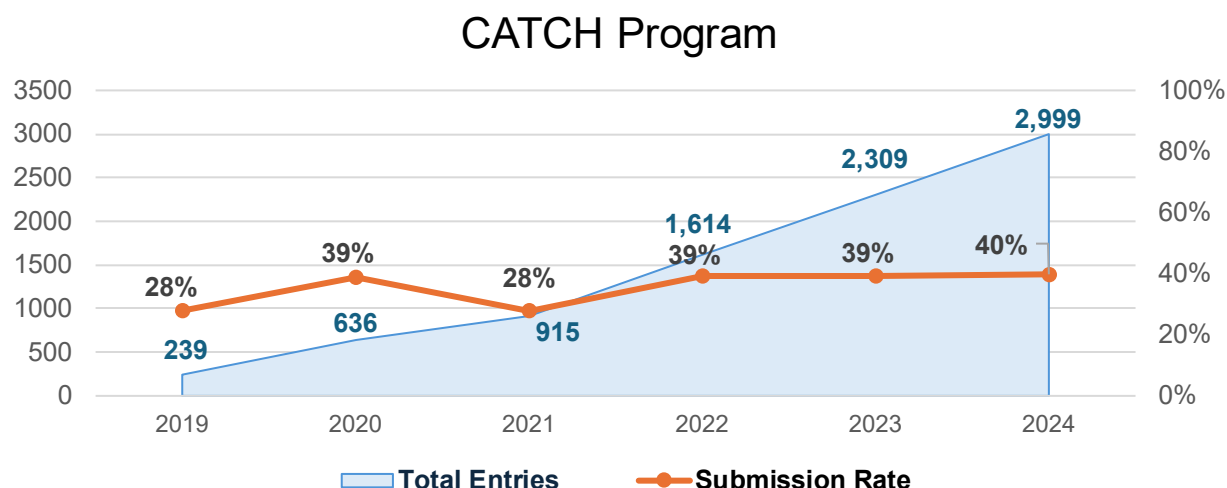


Figure 8. CATCH System Entries and Rate of Submission by Participants

As noted in Figure 8, only about one-third of individuals who request a CATCH system password from a SARC go on to make an entry into the CATCH system. The Department is currently working with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), the CATCH System Executive Agent, to determine what substantive improvements could be made to the system to encourage greater system participation. In addition, given that nearly 3,000 entries have been made, DoD and NCIS are reviewing procedures and data processing capabilities to identify what automation might be used, if any, to improve entries and assist MCIO agents in searching and matching of entries within the CATCH database.

Delivering Warfighter Assistance in Expeditionary and Wartime Environments

In November 2023, DoD SAPRO leadership visited installations in Germany, Poland, and Romania to conduct listening sessions with relevant stakeholders. This trip provided insights on victim assistance delivery in contingency environments to ensure down-range support was being provided and also to support modifications to the SARW model described previously. In November and December 2023, DoD SAPRO leaders also met with Combatant Command (CCMD) leadership from European Command (EUCOM), Africa Command (AFRICOM), and Indonesia-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) to discuss their responsibilities to work with their combatant command support agents (CCSA) to provide victim assistance during exercise, contingency, and wartime operations within their Areas of Responsibility. DoD SAPRO also met with leadership within the Joint Chiefs of Staff to further discuss CCMD responsibilities and capabilities required within DoD Directive 6495.01, “DoD SAPR Program.”

DoD SAPRO conducted similar listening sessions with various stakeholder groups in coordination with Health Affairs and Defense Health Agency at installations in Hawaii and Japan to explore the barriers experienced by Service members in seeking mental health care services within the Military Health System after a sexual assault to identify key recommendations to mitigate barriers and encourage help seeking. Visits are also scheduled for locations within the continental U.S. during FY25.



Dr. Nate Galbreath, Director of DoD SAPRO, and staff visited soldiers, SHARP representatives, and wellness facilities on November 8, 2023, at Turin and Powidz, Poland. DoD SAPRO was on tour to multiple forward operating sites, engaging in dialogue with key leaders to address specific challenges and solutions related to U.S. Army SHARP and to assess wellness facilities for deployed soldiers serving in the areas of Operation Atlantic Resolve. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. Karen Sampson)

Improving Warfighter Expedited Transfers

As recommended by the DoD IG, DoD SAPRO developed improved data validation procedures to capture locations, record reasons for non-transfer, track timelines between approval and departure dates, and document circumstances for transfers exceeding 30 calendar days.

**Expedited Transfers for warfighters continue to be approved at a high rate
– over 98% of requests are approved**

Transfer Type	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Change in Duty Location	89	80	125	82	88	90
<i>Number Denied</i>	5	3	5	6	5	1
Change in Installation	810	820	880	781	673	568
<i>Number Denied</i>	24	20	27	23	20	12
Total Approved	870	877	973	834	736	645

Figure 9. Expedited Transfers, FY19 to FY24

Figure 9 references expedited transfers; in FY24, DoD SAPRO pulled data regarding the expedited transfer status for victims of sexual assault from DSAID and sent out validations to the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and National Guard. The validations included cases reported between March and August 2024 in which command had approved an expedited transfer to another installation, but the date of the permanent change of station (PCS) had either not been entered into DSAID or had taken longer than the 12-week target described in the DODIG-2024-081 report, “Review of the DoD’s Implementation of Expedited Transfer Policy Requirements.” The Services reviewed the cases, either confirming the date or making the necessary changes in DSAID and returned the files to DoD SAPRO.

The Services provided DoD SAPRO with a variety of reasons why cases had delayed or missing PCS dates. Out of the 59 victims presented, the most frequent reasons for delay in expedited transfers included Service data entry delay or error, administrative delay, and transfer date occurring after the date of the data pull. To address delays in expedited transfers, DoD SAPRO is implementing enhanced validations with the Services to ensure timeliness and introducing DSAID change requests to improve oversight. These include incorporating primary SARC location codes and recording reasons for non-transfer in DSAID, tracking timelines between approval and departure dates, and documenting circumstances in CMG meeting minutes for transfers exceeding 30 calendar days. Breaking down these explanations allows DoD SAPRO to focus on process-related reasons for delay. Validating the completion of expedited transfers for victims of sexual assault is an essential component of ensuring that victims have access to appropriate interventions.

Way Forward

The warfighter ethos values respect for one’s comrades in arms and gives no quarter to sexual assault, sexual harassment, or any other behavior that detracts from the mission. Rather, the Department emphasizes building trust and unity to make the fighting force as lethal and as effective as possible. Sexual assault occurs less often in military units with healthy command climates. As a result, DoD is taking steps to restore the military to one that is based on meritocracy, accountability, standards, and readiness. Eliminating sexual assault is vital to accomplishing that mission and maintaining the enthusiasm and excitement we have seen from young Americans who want to join the world’s finest fighting force. We owe it to our nation’s sons and daughters to do all we can to promote a ready and modern Force that is prepared to achieve our Nation’s military objectives.