

I have been sexually assaulted. What should I do?

If you have been sexually assaulted or think you have been:

- Go to a safe location away from the attacker.
- Contact your local Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), Victim Advocate (VA) or healthcare provider. You may also contact your chain of command or law enforcement (military or civilian), however if you do, an investigation will occur and you will not have the option of making a Restricted Report (see below).
- Seek medical care as soon as possible. Even if you do not have any visible physical injuries, you may be at risk of becoming pregnant or acquiring a sexually transmitted disease.
 - Ask the healthcare provider to conduct a sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE) to preserve forensic evidence.
 - If you suspect you had been drugged, request that a urine sample be collected.
- Preserve all evidence of the assault. Do not bathe, wash your hands or brush your teeth. Do not clean or straighten up the crime scene.
- Write down, tape or record by any other means all the details you can recall about the assault and your assailant.

Reporting Options: Restricted / Unrestricted Reporting

Restricted Reporting

This option is for victims of sexual assault who wish to confidentially disclose the crime to specifically identified individuals and receive medical treatment and counseling without triggering the official investigative process. Service members who are sexually assaulted and desire restricted reporting under this policy must report the assault to a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), Victim Advocate (VA), a healthcare provider or chaplain. This policy on restricted reporting is in addition to the current protections afforded privileged communications with a chaplain, and does not alter or affect those protections. Healthcare providers will initiate the appropriate care and treatment, and report the sexual assault to the SARC in lieu of reporting the assault to law enforcement or the command. Upon notification of a reported sexual assault, the SARC will immediately assign an advocate to the victim. The assigned Victim Advocate will provide accurate information on the process of restricted and/or unrestricted reporting.

At the victim's discretion/request an appropriately trained healthcare provider shall conduct a sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE), which may include the collection of evidence. In the absence of a Department of Defense provider, the Service member will be referred to an appropriate civilian facility for the SAFE.

Who May Make A Restricted Report

Restricted reporting is available at this time only to military personnel of the Armed Forces and the Coast Guard. Military personnel include members on active duty and members of the Reserve component (Reserve and National Guard) provided they are performing federal duty (active duty training or inactive duty training and members of the National Guard in Federal (Title 10) status). Members of the Reserve Component not performing Federal duty are not eligible. Retired members of any component are not eligible. Dependents are not eligible. Department of Defense civilian employees are not eligible.

Considerations when Electing a Restricted Report

- You receive appropriate medical treatment, advocacy, and counseling.
- Provides some personal space and time to consider your options and to begin the healing process.
- Empowers you to seek relevant information and support to make more informed decisions about participating in the criminal investigation.
 - You control the release and management of your personal information.
 - You decide whether and when to move forward with initiating an investigation.

Limitations

- Your assailant remains unpunished and capable of assaulting other victims.
 - You cannot receive a military protective order.
- You will continue to have contact with your assailant, if he/she is in your organization or billeted with you.
- Evidence from the crime scene where the assault occurred will be lost, and the official investigation, should you switch to an unrestricted report, will likely encounter significant obstacles.
- You will not be able to discuss the assault with anyone, to include your friends, without imposing an obligation on them to report the crime. The only exceptions would be chaplains, designated healthcare providers, your assigned victim advocate, and the sexual assault response coordinator.
- You will be ineligible to invoke the collateral misconduct provision of the Department's sexual assault policy in the event that your command learns that you had been engaged in some form of misconduct at the time you were assaulted.

Unrestricted Reporting

This option is for victims of sexual assault who desire medical treatment, counseling and an official investigation of the crime. When selecting unrestricted reporting, you should use current reporting channels, e.g. chain of command, law enforcement or report the incident to the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), or request healthcare providers to notify law enforcement. Upon notification of a reported sexual assault, the SARC will immediately assign a Victim Advocate (VA). At the victim's discretion/request, the healthcare provider shall conduct a sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE), which may include the collection of evidence.

Details regarding the incident will be limited to only those personnel who have a legitimate need to know.

Role of the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

The Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) is considered the center of gravity when it comes to ensuring that victims of sexual assault receive appropriate and responsive care. They serve as the single point of contact to coordinate sexual assault victim care. The term Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) is a standardized term utilized throughout the Department of Defense and the Services to facilitate communication and transparency regarding sexual assault response capability.

Role of the Victim Advocate

The Victim Advocate (VA) provides essential support and care to the victim to include providing non-clinical information on available options and resources to assist the victim in making informed decisions as they progress through resolution and healing. The VA maintains communications and contact with victim as needed for continued victim support.