

## Sexual Harassment 2007

*er*The standing order to the US Coast Guard is: Honor, Respect, Devotion to Duty. These core values apply to every element to our mission and apply with emphasis to sexual harassment prevention.

The way we do everything has changed over time; how we train, how we function, and how we integrate into CG Forces.

Society has changed as well and we have come to a new understanding of how our behavior impacts others.

*er*How we present ourselves must always be with an intent to uphold the highest ethical and moral standards.

Our individual conduct reflects on every member of Team Coast Guard, and so we must remain committed to treating each other and the public we serve with absolute respect.

*er*We are a diverse community of members, Auxiliarists, Active Duty, Reserve and Civilian but we work together as one Team with a single mission.

That mission is supported by encouraging each other and enabling each of us to achieve our greatest potential.

*er*As we all seek greater standards of professionalism, we have become increasingly committed to the goals we share and to the team effort.

All of this has increased our pride in the organization and challenged us to work harder to reach those goals.

Serving with pride, we must work together to remove obstacles to our mission.

*er*And so as an organization we will not tolerate sexual harassment.

The objectives of this awareness exercise are to

Understand what sexual harassment is

What it looks like

Why it matters

Know who is responsible and how to report it

*er*To truly understand the negative effects of sexual harassment and why it must be eliminated we have to understand its scope.

*er*In or out of uniform our "working environment" includes conduct on or off duty, 24 hours a day.

Behavior that may seem inoffensive or innocent can be inadvertently harassing or contribute to a hostile work environment.

Behavior that may once have been acceptable is no longer.

Some physical contact that may seem natural may not be welcome. Jokes, teasing, gossip, sarcasm may all have an impact intended or unintended that creates an unacceptable environment.

*er*The impact of your action, the perception of others is the key to understanding harassment.

*er*You should consider how your conduct would be perceived from the perspective of a typical adult of average intelligence in the same position or situation. This is called the "Reasonable Person Standard" It's not foolproof and is somewhat arbitrary but it's a start.

*er*TEA involves explicit or implicit threats of adverse action if the person does not submit, or favorable actions if they do. Tangible Employment Action sexual harassment occurs when a subordinate receives an employment or advancement benefit in return for submitting to an unwelcome sexual advance, or denial of a tangible employment benefit as a result of refusing a sexual advance.

*er*Hostile Work Environment is where unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance.

Creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Here a radio program that coworkers listen to every morning is offensive to a female coworker.

*er*In this case, she asks them to turn it off because she finds it crude and the content offensive. This seemed to bewilder the men, as they had no intent to offend her. If they agree to her request, this should end this incident. But if they continue, this may become a hostile environment.

Can you think of a situation that might create a hostile work environment?  
Suggestive material...offensive language...

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*er*Sex Discrimination is any behavior that denies equal treatment because of a person's gender.

*er*Sexual Orientation is considered a private and personal matter. It is a separate basis for discrimination.

This discrimination is based on sexual orientation and is prohibited in the workforce. Discrimination against civilian employees based on sexual orientation is prohibited by Executive Order.

While that prohibition does not apply to members of the uniformed service, the Coast Guard adheres to the following policy for its military members:

Don't Ask • Don't Tell Don't Pursue; and Don't Harass

At no time will a member be asked or required to reveal their sexual orientation.

Harassment based on any actual or perceived sexual orientation is prohibited.

*er* Do you know what sexual harassment looks like? Sexual harassment can be verbal or non-verbal behavior. It can come from anyone; man, woman, civilian, or military, and even from visitors.

Visitors? Give vendor example. (I had a vendor that was making suggestive comments to me over the phone whenever I placed an order. I ignored it at first, asked him to stop, then reported him to my purchasing department. His contract was terminated)

*er* Verbal behavior can be any sexual harassing behavior that is spoken or can be heard. It can also include sexual innuendo, telling lies, and spreading rumors.

*er* There are two types of non-verbal behavior: Physical and Visual.

Physical harassment occurs when you use your body to physically intimidate someone.

When you lean over them, stand too close, block, or touch someone you can make others feel threatened.

*er* The second type of non-verbal behavior is visual.

Visual behavior includes any action or visual display that could offend or intimidate someone.

Winking, licking lips, making sexual gestures with your hands, elevator eyes or displaying suggestive pictures are examples of the type of visual behavior that is unacceptable.

You may not feel that these are offensive; however, it is important to remember the impact on others is what is important.

*er* Sexual Assault is not a matter to be handled in the Civil Rights/Equal Opportunity arena - it is a criminal matter that will be handled under the Uniform Code of Military Justice or by Civil Authorities as appropriate.

The Coast Guard will not tolerate any instance of rape or sexual assault.

Personnel who commit acts of sexual assault will be dealt with swiftly and punished severely under the UCMJ or the Criminal court system. Sexual assault violates every fiber of the core values instilled in each and every Coast Guard man and woman. There is no room in our Coast Guard for those who commit acts of sexual assault. There are significant emotional and legal issues involved in every case of sexual assault which must be dealt with sensitivity and with attention to detail. COMDTINST 1754.10B provides

commands, CGIS, medical and support personnel with additional guidance in dealing with cases of sexual assault.

*er*The cost of sexual harassment does not just fall on the individuals directly involved. The Coast Guard pays a price when sexual harassment occurs. Any one of these impacts can be detrimental to the Coast Guard's reputation and jeopardize our missions.

*er*Sexual harassment must be eliminated from the Coast Guard workplace. In order to do this, everyone has a responsibility.

What your responsibilities are and how you would respond to sexual harassment will be addressed in this section by answering the following questions: Who's affected? What are your responsibilities? and What can you do?

*er*The psychological effects on an individual being harassed can be devastating. Some psychological effects are: depression, anxiety, shame, and guilt. In most cases these are not obvious to the observer. Sexual harassment can be the root cause of many health related complaints. Some symptoms that are often seen are: headache lethargy insomnia, and panic attacks.

*er*The psychological and health related effects an individual experiences can impact their career in several different ways. These effects can be severe enough to cause a decrease in job satisfaction drop in work performance absenteeism withdrawal from work, and high employee turnover.

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*er*Employees and members who believe they are victims of sexual harassment have the right to file discrimination complaints.

The informal complaint process must be exhausted before a formal complaint can be filed.

Both civilian and military must begin the complaint process within 45 days of the last occurrence of harassment.

Military members begin the complaint process through their chain of command.

Their civilian counterparts begin the process with either the Equal Opportunity Advisor or the Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor.

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*er* Auxiliary members should report the incident up the chain of leadership as appropriate. Optionally, members may contact the Civil Rights Counselor at the District Level.

*er* What can you do to prevent sexual harassment?

The first step to preventing sexual harassment is raising your awareness.

You must always be sensitive to the personal interactions that occur around your work environment.

*er* If you are proactive and address a situation before it gets out of hand, you can stop a potential sexual harassment incident before it escalates.

If you think your behavior might be inappropriate try to imagine what someone you care about would think of the situation.

Think about and ask yourself how you would feel if someone treated them this way?

*er* Always strive to be approachable and receptive.

Maintaining such an environment that encourages open communication will go a long way in preventing sexual harassment.

Always keep in mind that cultural differences, even within the United States, can contribute to varied perceptions of what is and is not appropriate behavior.

*er* Now that you have answered the following questions: Who does it affect? What are your responsibilities? What can you do to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace?

You are prepared to help prevent sexual harassment so that Team Coast Guard can focus on our mission.