



Harassment



Behavior that is unwelcome or offensive to a REASONABLE PERSON, whether oral, written, or physical, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

- Offensive jokes
- Epithets (labels)
- Ridicule or mockery
- Insults or put-downs
- Displays of offensive objects or imagery
- Stereotyping
- Intimidating acts
- Veiled threats of violence
- Threatening or provoking remarks
- Racial or other slurs
- Derogatory remarks about a person's accent
- Displays of racially offensive symbols.

Activities or actions undertaken for a proper military or governmental purpose, such as combat survival training, are not considered harassment.



Reasonable Person Standard



- Determines whether a behavior meets the legal standard for unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment.
- Requires the hypothetical exposure of a reasonable person (third party) to the same set of facts and circumstances.
- If, to that third party, the behavior is offensive, then the objective test is met.
- Considers the complainant's perspective.
- Does not rely on stereotyped notions of acceptable behavior.

Harassment is not limited to superior-subordinate relationships. They may occur between peers or, under certain circumstances, may involve actions directed toward senior personnel by those junior in rank, grade, or position to them.



Types of Harassment



- Discriminatory harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Hazing
- Bullying
- Stalking (must be reported to the criminal investigative organization)
- Online Misconduct
- Other Acts of Misconduct (reprisal / retaliation / other actions that violate dignity and respect)

Means of Harassment

- Oral
- Written
- Physical
- In-person
- Via electronic communications (including social media)
- Wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images

Harassment is prohibited in all circumstances and environments, including off-duty and “unofficial” unit functions and settings.



What May Indicate Problems?



- Anti-locution type behaviors: Individually targeted “jokes.” Jokes that appear to target certain members.
- Avoidance behaviors: Members appearing to avoid other members.
- Excluding behaviors: You observe several people sitting together and not inviting others who are not in their clique. Polarization, where individuals/groups exclude others who do not look like them.
- Arguments: Verbal and physical altercations targeting specific members, especially those considered outsiders.
- Complaints: Anonymous, informal, or formal complaints of harassment in the workplace.

Effects of Harassment

- Individual:
 - Stress and Anxiety
 - Absenteeism
 - Sick
 - Lack of Commitment
 - Low performance
- Victim:
 - Poor Emotional/Mental Health
 - Low Self-Esteem
 - Low Morale
 - Suicidal Behavior
- Organizational:
 - Decreased Productivity
 - Negative Impact on Recruitment/Retention Goals
 - Reduced Positive Public Image
 - Jeopardizes Combat Readiness
 - Weakens Trust within the Ranks
 - Erodes Unit Cohesion



Strategies to Consider



- Express intolerance for all forms of harassment.
- Develop a comprehensive anti-harassment policy.
- Ensure all Soldiers know their EOLs and EOA.
- Assure Soldiers there will be no retaliation or reprisal for asking questions or sharing concerns.
- Respond to harassment questions/concerns promptly.
- Inform all Soldiers of the harassment complaint process.
- Conduct thorough annual and ad hoc training on harassment.
- Be visible and vocal about maintaining professionalism.
- Supervisors spend more time with subordinates.
- Build a positive and respectful work environment.
- Leaders remain committed and engaged to preventing harassment.
- Conduct continuous evaluation of harassment prevention practices.