

Commanding Officer's Policy on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)

Sexual Assault is a crime that is not tolerated in the Marine Corps. *Sexual assault is not restricted to any gender, race, or age, and tears apart the fabric of our core values of "Honor, Courage and Commitment," while causing irreparable harm to our valuable assets: our Marines, Sailors and Civilians.*

The Department of Defense definition of sexual assault is very clear, describing sexual assault as "the intentional sexual contact, characterized by the use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent." Sexual assault can occur without regard to gender, spousal relations, or age of the victim. In 2011, there were 333 reports of sexual assault in the Marine Corps. However, it is estimated that 80 percent of all sexual assault victims never come forward to make a report. All Marines, Sailors and Civilians must be willing to speak out against sexual assault in order eliminate a crime that opposes everything that we stand for as Marines, Sailors, and Civilians!

Sexual assault has a *devastating* effect on its victims. Victims of sexual assault are *urged* to report the incident. Victims will be treated with sensitivity, decency, dignity, and respect. Uniformed Victim Advocates (UVAs), the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), and Chaplain are valuable resources and will provide confidentiality and help victims in the reporting process [unrestricted (full investigation) or restricted (no investigation)]. All victims will have full access to counseling and medical services.

Sexual assault not only affects the victim, but it also affects the unit's work environment, friends, and family members. *Our greatest asset in combating sexual assault is to have decisive and engaged leadership at every level.* It is every Marine's responsibility to take care of their fellow Marines; we cannot be a bystander when it comes to sexual assault. I also charge every Marine to challenge and stop those who use inappropriate language, vulgarity, innuendo, and any type of behavior – spoken or acted – that can contribute to the occurrence of sexual assault. And this includes correcting officers and Staff NCO's! I have your back 100% if you do this.

Sexual Assault is a complete and total contradiction of the core values we as Marines hold so dear. Eliminating sexual assault will take a dedicated effort by everyone on the 6th District team. It is only through our combined efforts that we will create an environment free from sexual assault to complete our mission of "Making Marines!"

If you or someone you know needs immediate assistance involving sexual assault, please call the 24 hour Sexual Assault Response Line at (843) 592-0646, or contact the 6th Marine Corps District Unit Victim Advocate, Major Mimi C. Seedall, (843) 228-3207, or Gunnery Sergeant Michelle Rushing, (843) 228-2896.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. J. Bowers". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

W. J. BOWERS
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding Officer