

Domestic Abuse: Military Reporting Options

Safety Alert: Computer use can be monitored and it is impossible to completely clear your browser history. If you are afraid your internet usage is being monitored, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 or 800-787-3224 en Español.

Deciding whether to report domestic abuse can be difficult. If you are experiencing abuse in your relationship, it is normal to feel alone, afraid and unsure about asking for help. Knowing your reporting options can help you decide what to do next.

The Defense Department's Family Advocacy Program is committed to supporting service members and their families impacted by domestic abuse.

Keep in Mind:

- If you are using a shared computer at home, or believe someone is monitoring your internet usage, consider viewing this information from a public setting, such as a library.
- Browser histories may not be private. Therefore, it is a good idea to delete this website from your browser history after viewing the material.
- [This guide](#) offers tips on how to clear your browser and be safe online.

You have options to decide if, how and when to report domestic abuse in the military, with some exceptions. Knowledge is power, and understanding your reporting options for domestic abuse can help you decide how to proceed.

Restricted or confidential reporting option

With a restricted report, military law enforcement and command will not be notified.

Three groups of professionals may keep information about domestic abuse confidential under the restricted reporting option:

- [Domestic abuse victim advocates](#)
- FAP clinicians

- Health care providers*

Making a restricted report means:

- Law enforcement is not notified.
- Command is not involved.
- You have access to the full range of FAP services, including counseling and support from a domestic abuse victim advocate. They will work with you to develop a safety plan and identify your next steps, including pursuing options both within and outside the military system.

Victims are also entitled to the protections of privileged communication with a chaplain.

Disclosing domestic abuse to a chaplain is not the same as making a report and will not connect you to FAP services.

Victim Advocate Locator

Use the Victim Advocacy Search Tool to find the domestic abuse victim advocate closest to you.

SEARCH NOW

Because victim safety is a priority, you cannot use the restricted reporting option if you are in immediate risk of serious harm. And the restricted reporting option does not apply to child abuse cases, which are required by law to be reported to law enforcement and child protective services.

* Some state-specific laws may require medical providers to report known or suspected incidents of domestic abuse to law enforcement regardless of a victim's preferences. Contact your local FAP or legal assistance office to learn more.

Unrestricted or non-confidential reporting option

When an unrestricted report is made, FAP will notify both law enforcement and the service member's military command.

Making an unrestricted report means:

- Law enforcement will conduct an investigation of the incident, which includes contacting the alleged abuser.

- Command will be notified.
- Victims can seek a Military or Civilian Protective Order.
- Victims have access to the full range of FAP services, including counseling and support from a domestic abuse victim advocate. They will work with victims to develop a safety plan and identify next steps.
- Victims have access to legal services on military installations.
- Victims can receive assistance when applying for transitional compensation, if applicable.

Support for Victims

If you are a victim and are concerned that your spouse or partner may find out that you are seeking help for abuse, contact a domestic abuse victim advocate or your health care provider. They can help you consider what type of report is best for you; if, when and/or how to make a report and can assist you in accessing additional services.

Victims may also decide to seek help outside the military, where stricter confidentiality rules may apply pursuant to federal, state and local laws and policies. Shelters and agencies in your area can help you consider your options. Contact FAP, where a domestic abuse victim advocate can connect you to civilian or community-based resources, or visit the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) website.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, visit [MilitaryINSTALLATIONS](#) to locate the closest FAP office, or go to the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) website or call 800-799-7233. Call 911 if you are in immediate danger. If you are on a military installation, call your military law enforcement office.

Source: [Report Domestic Violence in the Military • Military OneSource](#)

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