

Our Purpose

This leaflet is intended to provide information about the Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) Policy and Complaint Process IAW AR 600-20, Chapter 6 within the U.S. Army. It is our policy to provide Equal Opportunity and fair treatment for Soldiers, family members and DA civilians without regard to ***Race, Color, Religion, Sex [to include gender identity and pregnancy], National Origin, Sexual Orientation, and Harassment which includes hazing, bullying, and other discriminatory harassment*** and to provide an environment free of unlawful discrimination.

This applies to: both on and off post, during duty and non-duty hours; Soldiers, civilian employees, and their families; and, working, living, and recreational environments (including both on- and off-post housing).

Individuals are encouraged to use the chain of command to address Equal Opportunity (EO) complaints. The chain of command, whether military or civilian, has the primary responsibility for developing and sustaining a healthy EO climate. This responsibility entails, but is not limited to, promoting positive programs that enhance unit cohesion, esprit, and morale; communicating matters with EO significance to unit personnel and higher headquarters; correcting discriminatory practices by conducting rapid, objective, and impartial inquiries to resolve complaints of discrimination; encouraging the surfacing of problems and preventing reprisal for those who complain; and taking appropriate action against those who violate Army Policy. Commanders will ensure that Soldiers are fully aware of procedures for obtaining resolution of complaints including those against members of the chain of command.

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against on one or more of the following "basis": ***Race, Color, Religion, Sex [to include gender identity and pregnancy], National Origin, Sexual Orientation, and Harassment, which includes hazing, bullying, and other discriminatory harassment***, you should discuss the concern with an Equal Opportunity Leader (EOL) and/or your Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA).

Differences between EOL and EOA

How can EOLs and EOAs assist you!

The EOL (Company/Battalion level) can:

- Explain the EO Complaint Process to you.
- Listen and help you identify your concerns.
- Review your case objectively.
- Discuss your concerns with those involved and with you.
- Attempt lowest level/unit level resolution.
- Answer your questions.

The GOAL of the EOL is to facilitate an INFORMAL resolution of the matter between the parties involved when possible and request assistance from the BDE EOA. NOTE: EOLs **CANNOT** take FORMAL EO Complaints.

The EOA (Brigade/Division level) can:

- Do all of aforementioned duties of an EOL.
- Take and Process **FORMAL** EO Complaints.

EOAs offer protected communication (which is not confidentiality) and information/concerns may be shared with those who have a legitimate need-to-know.

Individual Rights

Soldiers, family members and DA civilians have the right to:

- Present a complaint to the command without fear of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment.
- Communicate with the Commander concerning their complaint.
- Receive assistance when submitting a complaint.
- Receive guidance on the Army's Equal Opportunity complaint and appeals process.

Individual Responsibilities

Individuals are responsible to:

- While not required, it is recommended that the individual attempt to resolve a complaint by first informing the alleged offender that the Behavior MUST stop.
- Advising the commander of the specifics Unlawful Discrimination complaints and provide the Commander an opportunity to take appropriate action to rectify/solve the issue.
- Submit only legitimate complaints and exercise caution against unfounded or false allegations
- Soldiers who knowingly submit a false MEO complaint (a complaint containing information or allegations that the complainant knew to be false) may be punished under the UCMJ.

Types of MEO Complaints

The Anonymous Complaint

Complaints where the complainant remains unidentified may be handled as either an informal or a formal complaint and entered in MEO database, as such. The commander will determine if sufficient information is provided to proceed as either an informal or formal complaint.

The Informal Complaint

An Informal Complaint is any complaint that a Soldier or family member or DA civilian does not wish to file in writing. Informal complaints may be resolved directly by the individual, with help of another unit member, the commander or other person in the complainant's chain of command; are not subject to time suspense, nor is it reportable.

In some informal complaints, the person or agency receiving the complaint may be able to resolve the issue while maintaining the confidentiality of the complainant. **While maintenance of confidentiality should be attempted, it will neither be guaranteed nor promised to the complainant.**

The Formal Complaint

A Soldier, family member, or DA civilian files a formal complaint in writing on a **DA Form 7279 (Equal Opportunity Complaint Form)** and swears to the accuracy of the information. The complainant will specify the alleged concern, provide the names of the parties involved and witnesses describe the incident(s)/behavior(s), and indicate the date(s) of the occurrences(s). For EO Complaints, the complainant will also state the equal opportunity basis of the complaint (e.g. unlawful discrimination based upon *Race, Color, Religion, Sex [to include gender identity and pregnancy], National Origin, Sexual Orientation, and Harassment, which includes hazing, bullying, and other discriminatory harassment.*

Soldiers and family members have **60 calendar days from the date of the alleged incident in which to file a formal complaint.**

Processing of EO complaints through the unit chain of command is strongly encouraged; it will not serve as the only channel available to Soldiers to resolve complaints. Should the complainant feel uncomfortable in filing a complaint with his/her unit chain of command, or should the complaint be against a member of that chain of command, the following is a list of alternative agencies through which the issues may be identified for resolution.

- Someone in a higher echelon of the complainant's chain of command
- Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA)
- Inspector General (I.G.)
- Chaplain
- Provost Marshal
- Medical Agency Personnel
- Staff Judge Advocate
- Chief, Community Housing Referral and relocation Services Office (CHRRS)

Actions of the Commander

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the commander will ensure that the complainant has been sworn to the complaint. The commander will either conduct an investigation personally or immediately

appoint an investigating officer according to the provisions of AR 15-6. Depending on the magnitude of the complaint, the commander may deem it necessary to ask the next senior commander in the chain of command to appoint the investigating officer. The commander will establish and implement a plan to protect the complainant, any named witnesses, and alleged perpetrator from acts of reprisal.

Final Resolution

Complaints that are resolved at the brigade level may be appealed to the General Courts-Martial Conveying Authority. The only exception to this is where organizations have Memorandums of Understanding or Support that delegate Uniform Code of Military Justice authority to a local commander. Decisions at this level are final.

The 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) Command Teams, EO Office, and Unit EOA/EOLs will do everything we can to assist in resolving EO issues at the lowest level possible.

HELPFUL LINKS AND NUMBERS:

**FORT DRUM DIVISION EO PM
PHONE NUMBER: (315) 772-9174**

**24/7 MEO AND HARASSMENT HOTLINE
(FORT DRUM) (315) 772-6711**

**For Command Climate Surveys or
additional MEO Support
Please contact your BDE EOA and/or
visit the Defense Equal Opportunity
Management Institute (DEOMI) Website
at: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/>**

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