

Procedures for Processing Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) and Harassment Complaints

1. The MEO and Harassment complaint system addresses complaints that allege unlawful discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, (to include gender identity and pregnancy), or sexual orientation, and harassment which includes hazing, bullying, online misconduct, and discriminatory harassment. Prior to pursuing an MEO complaint, Soldiers, Cadets, and Family member should make attempts to solve concerns at the lowest possible level within an organization.

2. Types of Complaints:

a. Anonymous - complainant remains unidentified and may be handled as either a formal or informal complaint. The commander will determine if sufficient information is provided to proceed as either an informal or formal complaint. In the event there is not a sufficient amount of information to initiate an informal or formal complaint, the commander will at a minimum document the complaint in a Memorandum for Record and maintain a copy on file.

b. Informal - complainant does not wish to file a complaint in writing. An informal complaint can be resolved directly by the complainant addressing the offending party, a peer, the MEO professional, or another person in or outside the complainant's chain of command. Informal complaints should be resolved within 60 calendar days. Actions and resolution taken to resolve issues before involving the commander or MEO professional are not tracked in the MEO database nor are they reviewed by the MEO professional.

c. Formal - complaint is filed in writing and are sworn to by the complainant as to the accuracy of the information. Formal complaints are filed with the organization or unit's Military Equal Opportunity Advisor. Formal complaints follow specific procedures, are subject to regulatory timelines, and must include documentation of the actions taken.

3. Should a Soldier or Family member wish to initiate a formal complaint, they have 60-calendar days from the date of the alleged incident to file the formal complaint. This time limit is established to allow for prompt inquiry or investigation that ensures reasonable availability of witnesses, accurate recollection of specific events, and preservation of evidence relevant to the complaint and allegations. If a complaint is received more than 60-calendar days after the alleged incident, the commander may conduct an investigation into the allegations or appoint an investigating officer.

4. All members of this command will be protected from reprisal or retaliation for filing EO complaints. No management official or service member may take or threaten to take an unfavorable personnel action, or to withhold or threaten to withhold a favorable action, in reprisal against any person for filing a complaint. Should a person be threatened with such an act, or should an act of reprisal occur, it must be reported to the Office of the Inspector General.

5. Service Members who knowingly submit a false EO complaint (a complaint containing information or allegations that the complainant knew to be false) may be punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Enclosure