

Retaliation Fact Sheet

What is Retaliation?

Retaliation is illegal, impermissible, or hostile action taken by a Service member's chain of command, peers, or coworkers because they made or are suspected or having made a protected communication in accordance with DoDD 7050.66.¹

Why is Retaliation A Concern for the DoD?

- Retaliation "jeopardizes combat readiness and mission accomplishment, weakens trust within the ranks, and erodes unit cohesion."¹
- Rates of retaliation across the U.S. workforce have consistently increased over the last 20 years.^{2,3}

Who Can Be Impacted By Retaliation?

Anyone can be the target or perpetrator of retaliation regardless of their group status; however, some individuals may be more likely to be targeted.^{11, 12}

Where can Retaliation Take Place?

In the workplace:

- Negative performance evals
- Denial of training opportunities
- Exclusion from team members
- Additional unnecessary job tasks

When Does Retaliation Occur?

The Target:

- * Reports, plans to report, or is suspected of reporting a criminal offense,
- * Makes or plans to make a protected communication,
- * Expresses support for equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policies or initiatives, or *
- Stands up against or intervenes to stop a harassment incident or prohibited activity.

The Perpetrator(s):

- * Takes or threatens to take adverse personnel or social action against the target,
- * Withholds or threatens to withhold favorable personnel or social action against the target, or
- * Directly or indirectly discourages the target from engaging in equal opportunity or investigation processes.

How Can Retaliation Be Prevented or Mitigated?

- Empower leaders to recognize and intervene against retaliatory behaviors and be accountable for modeling and reinforcing a culture that is intolerant of retaliation.^{4, 15, 16}
- Offer training and education that provides all members information on anti-retaliation policies.^{8, 17}
- Empower bystanders to intervene if they witness retaliatory behaviors⁵

Examples of Retaliatory Actions^{4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9}

- Negative performance evaluations
- Exclusion
- Discouraging the Target from making official reports
- Bullying
- Verbal abuse/name calling
- Denial of training opportunities

Retaliation References

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