



EEO Reprisal Fact Sheet



What Is Reprisal?

Reprisal is a form of retaliation that involves taking, threatening, or recommending taking an unfavorable personnel action (demote, separate, treat unfairly, etc.); or withholding, threatening, or recommending withholding a favorable personnel action, for making, preparing to make, or being perceived as engaged in the antiharassment process.¹

Why Should I Care About Reprisal?

- Individuals should be able to make a protected communication without the fear of reprisal.
- DoD Instruction 1020.04 holds leaders at all levels responsible for creating a climate that is free from reprisal against a DoD civilian employee because he or she has reported harassment, assisted in any inquiry about such allegations, or expressed opposition to harassment.

Who Can Be Impacted by Reprisal?

- Reprisal is a form of retaliation that impacts the individual, team, and organization.
- In individuals, it can lead to a decrease in health and increase in stress and anxiety.²
- Within units and the larger organization, it can lead to a decrease in work productivity and retention.³

Where Does Reprisal Occur and What Can It Look Like?

- Reprisal occurs within the workplace in the following ways:
 - Taking unfavorable personnel actions, including removal from position, adverse evaluation, demotion, or unfair treatment
 - Withholding favorable personnel actions, such as promotion or award, positive evaluation, desirable assignment, or career-enhancing training

When Does Reprisal Occur?

Reprisal occurs when reports of harassment are made, perceived to have been made, or are assisted in making that leads to an unfavorable personnel action being taken or threatened to be taken or favorable personnel action being withheld or threatened to be withheld.

How Can Reprisal Be Prevented?

- Primary Actions: Be aware of policies and create a positive reporting climate.
- Secondary Actions: Ensure reprisal reporting is efficient and provide resources to support targets.
- Tertiary Actions: Evaluate policies to meet the needs of the work environment.

For more information on reprisal, visit the DEOMI toolkit at <https://www.deomi.mil/Center-of-Excellence-Portal/Harassment-Prevention-and-Response-Civilian/#reprisal>

References

1. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. (2020, June 30). *Harassment Prevention and Responses for DoD civilian employees* (DoD Instruction 1020.04).
<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/102004p.pdf?ver=2020-06-30-115752-867>
2. Cortina, L. M., & Magley, V. J. (2003). Raising voice, risking retaliation: Events following interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 8*(4), 247. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.8.4.247>
3. Liu, X., Lu W., Liu, S., & Qin, C. (2023). Hatred out of love or love can be all-inclusive? Moderating effects of employee status and organizational affective commitment on the relationship between turnover intention and CWB. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 1–13.
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