Research Report

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Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Coast Guard

Holistic Study and Analysis

HSOAC
HOMELAND SECURITY
OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS CENTER

AN FFRDC OPERATED BY RAND UNDER CONTRACT WITH DHS

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About This Report

In support of the Fiscal Year 2024 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, Congress issued a Joint Explanatory Statement directing the following:

> The Secretary shall charter an independent and impartial review of the Coast Guard's efforts to reduce and respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment. The review shall be conducted by a non-Department of Homeland Security entity and shall evaluate past and present climate and culture, preventative measures, accountability, transparency, victim support, and awareness; identify and evaluate completed and ongoing efforts and reforms undertaken to improve these areas; and make recommendations for additional efforts and reforms that should be undertaken to close remaining gaps. The recommendations shall identify if and how they differ from those in the November 2023 Accountability and Transparency Review Team Report, as well as cost estimates and any statutory or administrative changes necessary for implementation.

In response, the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC) was tasked with conducting a "Holistic Study and Analysis for Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Coast Guard." This report summarizes the findings from this project. The information contained in this report can be used by the U.S. Coast Guard to increase the service's awareness of the culture and conduct of members with respect to sexual assault and sexual harassment. The findings should be of interest to Congress, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), sexual assault and sexual harassment practitioners, current and former members of the Coast Guard, and service members across all branches.

Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center

This work was conducted within the RAND Homeland Security Research Division (HSRD), which operates HSOAC. HSOAC is a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) that provides the government with independent and objective analyses and advice in core areas important to DHS in support of policy development, decisionmaking, alternative approaches, and new ideas on issues of significance. HSOAC also works with and supports other federal, state, local, tribal, and public- and private-sector organizations that make up the homeland security enterprise. HSOAC's research is undertaken by mutual consent with DHS and organized as a set of discrete tasks.

The results presented in this publication do not necessarily reflect official DHS opinion or policy.

For more information on HSOAC, visit www.rand.org/hsoac. For more information on this publication, see www.rand.org/t/RRA3545-1.

Funding

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296, § 305, as codified at 6 U.S.C. § 185) authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, to establish one or more FFRDCs to provide independent analysis of homeland security issues. RAND operates HSOAC as an FFRDC for DHS under contract 70RSAT22D00000001.

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Summary

Issue

Sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH) pose persistent threats to the safety, trust, and mission effectiveness of the U.S. Coast Guard. A series of investigations and internal reviews raised serious questions about whether the service's prevention, response, and accountability systems are adequate. One of these investigations included Operation Fouled Anchor, which documented decades of unreported and mishandled sexual assault cases at the Coast Guard Academy. In response, Congress directed the Department of Homeland Security to commission an independent and impartial review of the Coast Guard's SASH efforts. RAND's Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center conducted this study to provide a systematic assessment of the Coast Guard's SASH policies, programs, and institutional practices.

Approach

The study drew on multiple methods: a review of Coast Guard policy documents and directives issued between 2002 and 2024; an analysis of administrative reporting data through the end of 2025, as well as survey responses conducted by the Department of Defense between 2016 and 2021; a review of the empirical prevention and response literature; and interviews with Coast Guard commanders and support personnel. Together, these methods allowed the research team to assess both how SASH policy is designed and how requirements are carried out across the service. As with any multi-method study, this work carries methodological limitations related to data completeness, survey response, and the scope of qualitative sampling.

Key Findings

The Coast Guard's SASH efforts are constrained less by an absence of programs than by how those programs are structured, integrated, and resourced. Seven priority issues emerged. The most foundational concerns involve policy architecture and data. SASH-related policy is distributed across three distinct directives governing the Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery (SAPRR) Program (Commandant Instruction [COMDTINST] 1754.10F), the Family Advocacy Program (COMDTINST 1752.1), and the Anti-Harassment Program (COMDTINST 5350.6), with no single integrating framework. Data on SASH incidents are similarly fragmented across multiple tracking systems with differing definitions and reporting standards, which limits the Coast Guard's ability to assess trends, evaluate what is working, and identify where risk is concentrated.

Prevention and leadership present related challenges. The Coast Guard's prevention activity is largely training-centric, with success measured by course completion rates rather than demonstrated changes in behavior or risk. Training content does not consistently reflect what the research literature identifies as effective practice, and higher-risk operational environments do not always receive targeted attention. Leadership behavior emerged from stakeholder interviews as the most important factor shaping unit climate, reporting behavior, and prevention outcomes, yet current policy provides little concrete guidance on what leaders are expected to do and offers limited accountability when they fall short.[1]

[1] Stakeholders include Coast Guard personnel assigned to develop, implement, or support SASH policies. A list of stakeholders is included in Table A.4. Stakeholders were asked not to discuss whether they had any personal experiences with sexual assault or harassment but rather to provide input based on their professional experiences in their specific role.

The response and support system faces ongoing challenges. Survivors and stakeholders expressed continued concern about long investigative timelines, limited visibility into case status, and inconsistent communication. Shortages of Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Victim Advocate Program Specialists, and Family Advocacy Specialists, combined with large geographic areas of responsibility, constrain the system's capacity for both proactive prevention and sustained victim support.

Quantitatively, official sexual assault reporting rates have been relatively stable in recent years, but survey-based estimates of prevalence consistently exceed official report counts, indicating that underreporting remains a significant concern. Junior enlisted personnel and women face the highest risk of both sexual assault and sexual harassment. SASH exposure is also associated with elevated rates of premature separation from the service.

Recommendations

This report presents policy options for each of the seven identified priority issues. These policy options are framed as choices rather than directives, and decisionmakers should consider feasibility, resource availability, and the state of ongoing Accountability and Transparency Review implementation when selecting among these options to achieve the Coast Guard's stated approach outlined in its *Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery Strategic Plan* (U.S. Coast Guard, 2026). The priority issues and policy options are as follows:

- **Priority issue 1.** Fragmented policy architecture limits coherence, clarity of authority, and accountability. One option (1A) would be to establish a single authoritative instruction consolidating SASH prevention, response, recovery, and accountability; another option (1B) would retain the existing program-specific instructions while introducing a formal governance body to coordinate them and track implementation.
- **Priority issue 2.** Prevention is treated primarily as training compliance rather than as a sustained capability. One option (2A) would reframe prevention as an enterprise capability with measurable outcome targets; another option (2B) would require individual programs to articulate how their activities reduce risk.
- **Priority issue 3.** Variable training quality, consistency, and focus limit prevention effectiveness. One option (3A) would establish a tiered model based on unit risk, and a second option (3B) would build risk-based triggers into existing policy.
- **Priority issue 4.** Commanders are expected to foster safe and accountable unit climates, but policy provides limited behavioral specificity and no structured accountability mechanisms for how those expectations are met in practice. One option (4A) is to articulate specific behavioral expectations for leaders in policy and (4B) to reinforce those expectations through professional development and evaluation.
- **Priority issue 5.** Response systems have improved, but trust remains fragile due to communication, transparency, and timeline challenges. One option (5A) is to standardize communication practices across the response system, and a second option (5B) would focus on reducing investigative timelines through process improvements.
- **Priority issue 6.** Resource constraints create a reactive system with limited capacity for prevention and sustained engagement. One option (6A) would assign new billets or assignments based on risk and geographic access, while a second option (6B) would expand capacity through augmentation strategies.
- **Priority issue 7.** Data fragmentation and governance challenges limit evaluation, oversight, and organizational learning. One option (7A) would move toward an integrated data environment, while a second option (7B), in a more near-term step, would clarify data stewardship and improve interoperability across existing systems.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction and SASH Program Architecture

Sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH) threaten the safety, trust, and cohesion essential to mission readiness in the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). In recent years, investigations, internal reviews, and high-profile reports have highlighted systemic challenges in how the service prevents, responds to, and accounts for these behaviors. Most notably, Operation Fouled Anchor documented long-standing failures to properly report and investigate sexual assault cases at the Coast Guard Academy between 1988 and 2006. Subsequent reporting data and climate assessments have indicated that concerns related to sexual harassment and other harmful behaviors persist across the workforce. Together, these developments raised fundamental questions about the adequacy, consistency, governance, and oversight of the Coast Guard's SASH prevention and response systems.

In response, Congress directed the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to commission an independent review of the Coast Guard's approach to SASH. RAND's Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC), a federally funded research and development center, conducted this study to provide an impartial, evidence-informed assessment of the service's policies, programs, and institutional practices related to SASH. Separately, the Coast Guard conducted its own Accountability and Transparency Review (ATR), commissioned by the Commandant in July 2023, which produced 33 recommended actions to address harmful behaviors and strengthen accountability across the service. In this report, we examine Coast Guard efforts in light of those findings and recommendations while also identifying areas of progress, persistent gaps, and opportunities for structural improvement.

The purpose of the overall project is to evaluate the Coast Guard's prevention and response strategies, victim support services to support recovery efforts, and accountability mechanisms for SASH. We assess the Coast Guard's policies, how responsibilities are distributed across programs, and how requirements are executed in practice across a geographically dispersed workforce. Particular attention is given to transparency, command involvement, and the extent to which current systems prevent sexual assault and harassment and support both survivor needs and institutional accountability. To inform this assessment, we employed a mixed-methods approach that integrated policy and document review, analysis of administrative and reporting data, a review of relevant empirical literature, and interviews with key stakeholders. These methods were used to examine both formal policy design and how requirements are implemented across the service. Methodological details are provided in Appendix A.

The report's findings provide a useful and credible picture of Coast Guard SASH prevention and response efforts but also reflect the limits of the available evidence. The administrative, survey, interview, document, and literature sources each offer important insights, though they capture different parts of the picture and are not comprehensive. Overall, the results should be read as informative and directional, with appropriate caution where data are incomplete or not directly comparable. Appendix A provides a detailed explanation of limitations.

This chapter establishes the foundational context for the analyses that follow by mapping the Coast Guard's policy and workforce architecture for SASH prevention, response, and recovery. We describe how responsibility is divided across three primary programs—the Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and

Recovery (SAPRR) Program, the Anti-Harassment Program Office (AHPO), and the Family Advocacy Program (FAP)—and how reporting and response pathways differ based on offense type and the relationship between the victim and the alleged offender. The chapter also examines how these parallel systems rely on distinct practitioner workforces, case-management tools, and confidentiality rules, shaping victim experience, practitioner workload, and command visibility.

In subsequent chapters, we build on this foundation by assessing the Coast Guard's policies, reporting patterns, risk environment, and implementation experience. In Chapter 2, we evaluate the alignment of Coast Guard policies with evidence-based practices in prevention, response, and recovery. In Chapter 3, we examine SASH reporting and incident trends. In Chapter 4, we analyze prevalence, trends, and risk using data from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)-administered Workplace and Gender Relations Survey (WGR).[1] In Chapter 5, we present stakeholder perspectives on prevention, response, accountability, and victim support, drawing from structured interviews. In Chapter 6, we synthesize the findings and present recommendations for strengthening the Coast Guard's SASH policies and programs. Supporting analyses and methodological details are provided in the appendixes.

SASH Program Architecture

In this section, we review the Coast Guard's policy framework and workforce infrastructure for preventing, responding to, and supporting recovery from SASH. Multiple directives—including the SAPRR Program Manual, the AHPO Manual, and the FAP Instruction—establish distinct systems of care and accountability.

SAPRR Program Provides the Primary, Structured System for Sexual Assault Prevention and Victim Support

The SAPRR Program Manual, Commandant Instruction (COMDTINST) 1754.10F, establishes the Coast Guard's primary structure for preventing sexual assault, facilitating secure and confidential reporting, and coordinating victim support across the service (COMDTINST 1754.10F, 2023). The instruction applies broadly to active-duty and reserve members, former Coast Guard members, Public Health Service officers assigned to the service, DoD personnel detailed to Coast Guard units, Coast Guard civilian employees, and adult dependents of active-duty members. The overarching objective is to eliminate sexual assault by cultivating a culture of prevention supported by annual training requirements, prevention-informed awareness initiatives, and leadership responsibility for maintaining safe command climates.

The manual outlines expectations across prevention, reporting, response, recovery, and coordination with accountability systems. Prevention efforts emphasize command climate awareness, bystander intervention initiatives, and use of such programs as the CATCH a Serial Offender program, consistent with DoD Integrated Primary Prevention policy. Reporting pathways distinguish between restricted and unrestricted reports, each offering different forms of confidentiality, care, and command involvement. Victims who choose a restricted report may access confidential advocacy and medical services without prompting an investigation, while an unrestricted report initiates a formal inquiry by the Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS), convenes a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), and enables safety measures, such as Military Protective Orders or expedited transfers.

Response requirements are clearly defined and procedurally structured, requiring coordinated action among legal, medical, investigative, and advocacy personnel, including SAPRR Sexual Assault Response

[1] Executive Order 14347, signed September 5, 2025, authorized the use of Department of War as a secondary name for the Department of Defense. This publication refers to the secretary and department by their current statutory names under Public Law 81-216, National Security Act Amendments of 1949.

Coordinators (SARCs) and Victim Advocate Program Specialists (VAPS). The CIT plays a central coordinating role, ensuring the victim's safety, clarifying next steps, and synchronizing command involvement. Recovery provisions emphasize access to medical and mental health services, legal support, and administrative relief, though guidance in this area is less prescriptive than in prevention and response, reflecting reliance on external service providers with their own governing policies. Accountability, although identified as a core expectation, is not fully developed in the SAPRR manual; instead, enforcement mechanisms primarily reside in the Uniform Code of Military Justice and other sections of the Manual for Courts-Martial, service military justice regulations, and instructions guiding military separations. The SAPRR instruction therefore provides the framework for prevention and victim care, while other legal and administrative systems govern accountability and adjudication. Broadly, SAPRR functions as the Coast Guard's most fully articulated sexual assault response system, with clear prevention and victim-support mechanisms but limited internal authority over adjudication outcomes.

FAP Delivers a Clinically Focused, Resource-Intensive Response to Sexual Assault in Intimate Partner Contexts

FAP, governed by COMDTINST 1752.1A, is the Coast Guard's primary system for addressing domestic abuse and maltreatment between family members and intimate partners, including sexual assault. Although FAP shares certain prevention and victim-support goals with SAPRR, it is structurally distinct and operates under different reporting, case management, and accountability processes. When a sexual assault occurs within a qualifying family or intimate partner relationship, FAP—not SAPRR—assumes primary responsibility for case management and victim services, reflecting a jurisdictional distinction based on the relationship between the victim and the offender. *Intimate partner* is an expansive term intended to be inclusive of all relationships defined by emotional closeness, dating behavior, shared households, and perceived commitment, as well as individuals who were formerly connected in such a way (e.g., divorced spouses; COMDTINST 1752.1A, 2025).

FAP cases are managed by Family Advocacy Specialists (FAS), who must hold clinical licensure and who provide evidence-based, trauma-informed interventions. FAS responsibilities extend far beyond sexual assault, covering domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, psychosocial assessment, safety planning, treatment coordination, and participation in multiple multidisciplinary teams. Moreover, when a sexual assault case against an intimate partner is included in an FAS's caseload, it usually occurs in a complex context in which the offender is also using other forms of abuse against the victim (e.g., psychological, physical), the abuse is repeated over time, and the couple shares finances or children.

As with SARCs and VAPS, FAS are challenged by the large geographic area for which they are responsible. In addition to being available to provide support, there are mandatory training requirements that they must accomplish for their prevention and response roles (COMDTINST 1752.1A, 2025, p. 30). This includes training for designated Multi-Disciplinary Team members, which includes any member who is part of the Family Advocacy Committee, Fatality Review Committee, High-Risk for Violence Response Team, Child Sexual Maltreatment Response Team, or Incident Determination Committee.[2] These responsibilities are often carried by a single specialist, constraining the time available for clinical care and contributing to capacity limitations within the FAP system. Overall, FAP represents the Coast Guard's most clinically intensive response model, which operates under distinct reporting rules and capacity constraints that complicate integration with SAPRR processes.

[2] According to COMDTINST 1752.1A, 2025, p. 30, "The FAS will provide FAP training as required and requested to those with roles and responsibilities in Chapter 1 and Appendix E, as well as the total workforce including volunteers (auxiliary, ombudsman) and those serving in collateral duties such as victim advocates, and those serving the other resiliency collateral duty programs as needed."

AHPO Governs Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Through a Command-Driven Administrative Process

AHPO, governed primarily by COMDTINST 5350.6 (series), *Harassing Behavior Prevention, Response, and Accountability*, was established in 2023 to manage the Coast Guard's principal administrative framework for preventing and responding to sexual harassment and other prohibited harassing behaviors.[3] The instruction applies to active-duty and reserve members and Coast Guard civilian employees and, in certain circumstances, extends to contractors and others operating in Coast Guard workplaces. It is complementary to the *Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual*, COMDTINST M5350.4E, which governs procedures related to equal employment opportunity and equal opportunity (EO) complaints of discriminatory harassment under civil rights laws and policies. Its overarching objective is to prevent and eliminate harassing behavior by promoting professional work environments, reinforcing Coast Guard Core Values, and ensuring command responsibility for maintaining climates free from harassment.

Allegations of or suspected sexual harassment must be reported to CGIS for determination of serious criminal conduct and further adjudication. Response procedures from 2023 to January 2025 were governed under COMDTINST 5350.6, which was less prescriptive and afforded commanders substantial discretion in determining investigative methods, interim measures, and corrective actions if CGIS determined a command-convened investigation was appropriate. This structure reinforced AHPO's role as an administrative response mechanism rather than a criminal investigative system. Since January 2025, if an allegation is determined to be a substantiated claim, the incident must be forwarded to OCP for review. Furthermore, the updated policy highlighted that sexual harassment claims shall be resolved through formal processes, including investigation, without restrictions on reporting timelines.

Support and recovery provisions within the AHPO framework are comparatively limited and less formalized than those under SAPRR or FAP. Although the instruction emphasizes protection against retaliation and encourages supportive command climates, it does not establish dedicated victim advocacy roles, coordinated response teams, or protected reporting pathways. AHPO representatives provide administrative support by advising complainants on reporting options, facilitating complaint processing, and monitoring compliance with anti-harassment policy; however, they do not function as confidential victim advocates and do not provide coordinated, trauma-informed care (TIC). As a result, AHPO primarily governs prevention and administrative response, while disciplinary action against offenders and victim recovery depend on parallel personnel, legal, or support systems outside the instruction. This design positions AHPO as a command-centric accountability mechanism rather than a victim-centered response system, a distinction that has implications for confidentiality, reporting behavior, and survivor support.

Program Comparison

Although SAPRR, AHPO, and FAP all address sexual assault or sexual harassment, they operate as separate systems with distinct authorities, reporting rules, practitioner roles, accountability mechanisms, and data infrastructures. These structural differences shape how incidents are disclosed, documented, and managed, and they directly affect victim experience, practitioner workload, and command visibility. The lack of interoperability across the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database (DSAID), Coast Guard Central Reg-

[3] COMDTINST 5350.6 was implemented in February 2023 in an effort to consolidate Coast Guard policies regarding harassing behavior (sexual harassment, harassment, retaliation, bullying, and hazing) under one instruction managed by the newly established AHPO. The instruction was revised in November 2025 (COMDTINST 5350.6A) to update policy and procedures relating to the response, processing, and resolution of reports of harassing behavior, including that sexual harassment cases be forwarded to the Office of the Chief Prosecutor (OCP) for review. It also mandated a formal investigation for reports of sexual harassment.

istry (CGCR), and EO tracking systems—combined with differing confidentiality standards and response models—contributes to fragmentation, complicates oversight, and limits the Coast Guard's ability to maintain an enterprise-wide picture of SASH prevalence, reporting patterns, case progression, trends, and organizational outcomes.

Table 1.1 synthesizes these distinctions across core dimensions that shape how cases are reported, managed, and experienced. Rather than reflecting programmatic deficiencies, the differences shown here illustrate how the Coast Guard has developed parallel systems to address distinct categories of harm—often with limited interoperability.

These policy distinctions have direct implications for how prevention and response are staffed and delivered across the Coast Guard, shaping practitioner workload, geographic coverage, and the feasibility of consistent implementation.

Workforce Execution

The Coast Guard's SASH policies are implemented through four distinct practitioner groups—SARCs, VAPS, FAS, and AHPO representatives—each aligned with different policy authorities and scopes of responsibility. Because SAPRR, AHPO, and FAP rely on separate workforces with different credentialing requirements and geographic coverage, staffing levels and distribution play a central role in determining how consistently policy requirements can be executed in practice.

This section provides an analysis of the number of personnel assigned to the full-time positions of SARCs, VAPS, and FAS who are focused on sexual assault. Sexual harassment investigations are conducted by personnel who have completed anti-harassment training within the past three years, and with the exception of a small contingent of AHPO personnel at the program office in Coast Guard headquarters, there are no permanently assigned full-time positions (investigating officers serve on a collateral duty basis at their unit). The Coast Guard employs three categories of full-time sexual assault support personnel—SARCs, VAPS, and FAS—and their distribution varies by region largely as a function of the number of Coast Guard members assigned to the region. Table 1.2 lists the number of authorized SARC, VAPS, and FAS billets for each district as of September 2025, including the unfilled billets, and highlights the number of personnel supported per authorized billet. Staffing levels affect consistent implementation, timely support to victims, staff well-being, prevention efforts, and the ability to respond when demand increases.

Workload pressures for SARCs, VAPS, and FAS are intensified by the large geographic areas that specialists must cover. Long distances between their office locations and duty stations in their district increased challenges in supporting personnel, particularly those assigned to remote locations. In many districts, a single specialist is responsible for all cases and prevention activities, creating minimal redundancy and limited surge capacity. Specialists also carry substantial mandatory training obligations, including training for multiple multidisciplinary teams, and FAS personnel shoulder additional responsibilities related to child maltreatment, domestic abuse, and high-risk case management. Collectively, these factors reduce the time available for direct victim care, increase travel demands, and constrain the system's ability to manage increases in reporting volume or case complexity.[4]

[4] The workload for FAS personnel was further increased in May 2025 due to an expansion of the definition of *intimate partner* that incorporated a significantly larger number of personnel.

TABLE 1.1

SAPRR, FAP, and AHPO Program Comparison

Dimension	SAPRR (COMDTINST 1754.10F)	AHPO (COMDTINST 5350.6)	FAP (COMDTINST 1752.1A)
Primary scope	Sexual assault involving non-intimate partners (e.g., coworkers, supervisors, peers)	Sexual harassment and other prohibited harassing behaviors in the workplace	Domestic abuse and maltreatment involving family members or intimate partners, including sexual assault
Characterization	Sexual assault response and victim support framework	Administrative or employment-based misconduct	Clinical, protective, and coordinated community response framework
Oversight and administration	USCG Headquarters (CG-WFS-3); District Health, Safety, and Work-Life divisions	USCG Headquarters (CG-WFS-5); unit commanders	USCG Headquarters (CG-WFS-1; base commanding officers (COs)
Congressional reporting[a]	Mandated annual reports	Mandated annual reports	Mandated annual reports
Primary practitioners	SARCs and VAPS	CGIS and designated investigating officers, with oversight by AHPO case managers	FAS
Practitioner credentials	Advocacy and response training; D-SAACP or NACP credentials required; clinical licensure not required	Policy and EO training; not clinical, not advocacy-based	Licensed clinical professionals
Training requirements	SAPRR-specific training for SARCs, VAPS, commanders, and workforce	EO and anti-harassment training for staff and commanders	Extensive clinical and multidisciplinary training requirements
Who the practitioner supports	Victim only	Command and investigative process; does not provide victim advocacy or clinical support	Victim, offender, child witnesses, family system
Case management system	DSAID, including restricted and unrestricted reports; case management not shared with other programs without client's consent	CGIS/EO/AHPO tracking systems; not integrated with DSAID or CGCR	CGCR for cases meeting IDC criteria; restricted reports are not entered into CGCR and are maintained separately by FAS
Multidisciplinary bodies	CIT (command, advocacy, legal, medical)	No standing multidisciplinary team comparable to CIT or IDC	IDC; Family Advocacy Committee; High-Risk for Violence Response Team; Child Sexual Maltreatment Response Team; Fatality Review Committee
Reporting options	Restricted and unrestricted reporting; Confide-in-Another policy; Form CG-6095	No restricted reporting; anonymous complaints permitted, with confidentiality limited by requirements; Form CG-5354A	Sexual assault involving intimate partners must be reported to FAP; restricted reporting is available for victims under limited conditions; Confide-in-Another policy; Form CG-1754A
Confidentiality protections	Strong confidentiality protections for restricted reports; collateral misconduct may be deferred	Limited confidentiality; disclosures typically trigger administrative action	Different confidentiality rules; mandatory reporting applies in certain circumstances (e.g., child abuse, substance abuse)
Prevention emphasis	Sexual assault prevention, bystander intervention, command climate	Workplace professionalism, compliance, and anti-harassment training	Broad prevention mission addressing family functioning, relationship dynamics, and maltreatment risk factors

Table 1.1—Continued

Dimension	SAPRR (COMDTINST 1754.10F)	AHPO (COMDTINST 5350.6)	FAP (COMDTINST 1752.1A)
Initial response structure	CIT convened within 24 hours focused on victim safety and next steps for unrestricted or third-party reports	CGIS notification for incident substantiation determination. Command-managed response guided by EO and AHPO procedures for noncriminal offenses. OCP adjudication for criminal offenses (post–January 2025).	Risk assessment and safety planning coordinated by FAS; IDC establishes next steps, clinical case staff meetings, and command-led protective actions
Victim advocacy model	Uniformed or civilian SARCs, VAPS, and VVAs assigned to districts/units	None	Community-based Domestic Abuse Victim Advocates may be used; no assigned unit-level advocates
Recovery emphasis	Medical, counseling, referrals, and leave authorizations; victim support only	None	Evidence-based trauma-informed interventions; psychosocial clinical assessments for victim and offender
Offender intervention	Not within SARC scope	Administrative corrective action only; punitive action available outside the program if conduct violates the UCMJ	Clinical assessment and intervention planning may include offender
Accountability mechanisms	Disciplinary and criminal adjudication occurs outside the program: UCMJ, command action, and coordination with civil law enforcement as applicable	Administrative discipline, UCMJ, and personnel actions for harassment cases; substantiated sexual harassment cases result in separation from the service and possible UCMJ action	Disciplinary and criminal action occurs outside the program: UCMJ, command action, and coordination with civilian or family courts as applicable
Geographic coverage	SARCs often cover large regions	EO staff are often centralized; variable unit-level presence	FAS serve large geographic areas and manage multiple responsibilities

NOTE: D-SAACP = Defense Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program; IDC = Incident Determination Committee; NACP = National Advocate Credentialing Program; UCMJ = Uniform Code of Military Justice; VVA = Volunteer Victim Advocate.

[a] U.S. Code, Title 14, Section 5112 requires the Commandant to submit a report on SASH involving members of the Coast Guard each year. However, the USCG FAP office reported that congressional reports are not required and have not historically provided statistics.

TABLE 1.2

Number of Filled and Authorized Support Positions and Ratio of Personnel Supported per Authorized Position

	SARC		VAPS		FAS	
District	Fill/Auth[a]	Ratio	Fill/Auth	Ratio	Fill/Auth	Ratio
Northeast	2/2	4,700	1/2	4,700	0/2	3,600
East	3/3	5,200	2/2	7,800	4/4	2,400
Southeast	1/2	3,800	1/1	7,700	3/3	2,000
Heartland	1/1	8,200	1/1	8,200	2/3	2,000
Great Lakes	1/1	2,800	1/1	2,800	1/1	2,000
Southwest	1/2	3,100	1/2	3,100	1/3	1,600
Northwest	0/1	3,200	1/1	3,200	1/1	2,600
Oceania	1/1	2,200	1/1	2,200	1/1	1,900
Arctic	1/1	2,100	1/1	2,100	1/1	1,900

SOURCE: Data supplied by USCG (September 2025). Personnel are assigned to districts based on their geographic location (e.g., training centers, areas, and headquarters). Values have been rounded to the nearest 100 and assume positions have been filled to authorization levels.

[a] The first number is the total billets filled; the second number is the number of billets authorized. The ratio is the approximate number of personnel that each billet is expected to support.

Enterprise-Level SASH Policy Fragmentation

The Coast Guard's approach to SASH is not governed by a single, integrated policy framework. Instead, prevention, response, recovery, and accountability requirements are distributed across multiple directives, program offices, and document types. As demonstrated in the preceding sections, this fragmentation shapes both policy execution and workforce demand. At the enterprise level, it also creates challenges for consistency, oversight, and accountability that extend beyond any individual program.

With respect to sexual assault, specifically, the guidance is split into two main directives: the SAPRR Program Manual (COMDTINST 1754.10F) and the FAP Instruction (COMDTINST 1752.1A), which together create overlapping but distinct systems for managing sexual assault cases. SAPRR provides the overarching framework for sexual assault prevention and response across the service; however, SAPRR policy explicitly directs that sexual assaults allegedly committed by a victim's family member, intimate partner, or caregiver are subject to the FAP Instruction. As a result, sexual assaults occurring in domestic or intimate-partner contexts are governed by FAP procedures rather than managed within the standard SAPRR framework. This relationship-based differentiation introduces parallel processes and coordination requirements that contribute to a fragmented response architecture rather than a single, unified sexual assault response system.

Sexual harassment prevention and response is also governed by multiple policy documents, and complaints are managed through AHPO under COMDTINST 5350.6A, *Harassing Behavior Prevention, Response, and Accountability* (with EO and equal employment opportunity discriminatory harassment handled through separate procedures under the Civil Rights Manual—COMDTINST M5350.4E). Understanding distinctions among AHPO, SAPRR, and FAP is critical because they govern different processes, reporting mechanisms, and forms of support. Moreover, they are staffed by distinct workforces.

No Single Authoritative Policy Source Exists

Our review revealed several structural and conceptual challenges within the Coast Guard's SASH policy environment. First, there is no single authoritative source for policy guidance. Instead, documents are dispersed across multiple formats and issuers, including COMDTINSTs; Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs); Personnel Service Center Instructions (PSCINSTs); Deputy Commandant for Mission Support Instructions (DCMSINSTs); and localized unit instructions. No overarching doctrine governs the issuance or consistency of these policies. Many documents repeated substantively similar content—often in abbreviated, reissued, or reformatted forms—rather than consolidating guidance into a single, authoritative source. For example, the establishment, scope, reporting pathways, and investigative timelines of AHPO are described across multiple ALCOAST messages, program updates, solicitations, and one-pagers and in COMDTINST 5350.6 itself, with each document restating core elements while adding incremental clarifications. During periods when changes were announced as "amplifying guidance" pending incorporation into a future instruction revision, commands were required to interpret overlapping documents simultaneously. Combined with temporal layering of policy updates, this causes inefficiency and could cause confusion in interpreting the policy landscape.

Additionally, several documents lacked essential information, such as promulgation dates or clear attribution. For instance, the Anti-Harassment and Hate Incident (AHHI) Investigation Guide, SAPRR fact sheets, and the Self-Paced e-Learning (SPeL) design document did not include issuance dates or identifiable authorship. In many instances, the target audience or implementation intent of the guidance was also unclear. These omissions make it difficult for commands and practitioners to determine whether guidance is current, authoritative, or mandatory, increasing the risk of inconsistent application across units and undermining accountability in prevention and response efforts. The absence of a single, authoritative source complicates

implementation by requiring commands and practitioners to interpret overlapping guidance simultaneously, increasing the risk of inconsistent application across units.

Externally Mandated Requirements Are Implemented in Parallel, Reinforcing Fragmentation

The Coast Guard's SASH policy infrastructure is also shaped by external requirements originating from DHS and DoD. Key obligations derive from DoD directives governing SASH prevention, response, and integrated primary prevention (e.g., Department of Defense Instructions 6495.02, 6400.09, and 6400.11), as well as DHS-wide expectations related to workforce climate, accountability, and employee protections. The Coast Guard has adopted several of these requirements, including alignment with DoD climate assessment practices through the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS; e.g., ALCOAST 290/24) and incorporation of DoD prevention frameworks within SAPRR policy and training (COMDTINST 1754.10F). However, Coast Guard–specific implementation is dispersed across multiple program offices and policy documents—such as SAPRR (COMDTINST 1754.10F), FAP (COMDTINST 1752.1A), anti-harassment policy managed through AHPO (COMDTINST 5350.6) and EO complaints managed through the Civil Rights Office (COMDTINST M5350.4E), and related command climate and accountability guidance—without a single integrating framework that clearly links external mandates to end-to-end Coast Guard execution. Thus, externally mandated requirements are often implemented in parallel rather than as a coordinated system, reinforcing the fragmentation observed in both workforce roles and policy.

Inconsistent Framing and Uneven Detail Across Policies Create Confusion

There were also notable inconsistencies in how key terms, such as SASH, were framed and contextualized across documents. Although formal definitions were generally consistent with statutory and DoD guidance, some materials blurred administrative and criminal constructs by discussing SASH jointly under the SASH construct without clearly delineating differences in legal standards, reporting pathways, and response processes between harassment and assault. This inconsistency in framing increased the risk of confusion regarding responsibilities, reporting obligations, and thresholds. To address this inconsistency, we provide sponsor-approved standard definitions in Appendix A.

Although sexual assault and harassment are referenced with similar frequency across the document set, sexual assault is addressed with greater procedural specificity and programmatic emphasis. Sexual assault is governed by a dedicated prevention, response, and recovery framework with clearly articulated reporting pathways, investigative authorities, and accountability mechanisms, whereas sexual harassment is more commonly embedded within broader anti-harassment or anti-discrimination policies, resulting in less detailed operational guidance. These inconsistencies increase the likelihood of misunderstanding reporting options, thresholds, or obligations, particularly in cases that fall near program boundaries.

Summary

These enterprise-level dynamics reveal a SASH policy environment characterized by distributed authority without centralized integration. Although individual programs address distinct forms of harm, the absence of a unifying framework limits the Coast Guard's ability to monitor implementation, assess outcomes across programs, and ensure consistent experiences for victims and practitioners. In the following chapters, we build on this analysis to examine how these structural features influence prevention effectiveness, response quality, and accountability in practice.

CHAPTER 2

Policy Alignment with Best Practices

SASH prevention policies are most effective when they reflect established evidence-based practices drawn from the prevention literature. These practices emphasize approaches that strengthen protective norms, develop practical intervention skills, and reinforce leadership accountability for maintaining safe organizational climates. For the purposes of this analysis, *prevention best practices* refer to program characteristics consistently identified in empirical research as contributing to reductions in harmful behaviors and improvements in prevention outcomes. Appendix B provides a robust overview of evidence-based programs.

In this chapter, we evaluate how Coast Guard policy governing sexual assault, intimate partner sexual assault, and sexual harassment prevention aligns with these evidence-based prevention practices. The analysis focuses on explicit requirements contained in Coast Guard policy documents rather than how those policies may be implemented in practice. Specifically, we examine the SAPRR Program Manual (COMDTINST 1754.10F), the FAP Instruction (COMDTINST 1752.1A), and Coast Guard anti-harassment policies administered through AHPO (COMDTINST 5350.6A).

Prevention Policy Alignment

We compared the policy frameworks against nine prevention best-practice criteria:

- universal and targeted prevention coverage
- theory-driven or evidence-based design
- skill-building and bystander or intervention competencies
- interactive or active-learning instruction methods
- sufficient dosage and reinforcement
- tailoring to audience and operational context
- facilitator credibility and preparation
- leadership reinforcement and climate expectations
- measurement, evaluation, and implementation fidelity (Table 2.1).

We rated a policy as *strongly aligned* when the criterion was explicitly required, clearly specified, and broadly applicable; *partially aligned* when it was referenced or required but limited, underspecified, or narrowly applied; and *not aligned* or *not specified* when it was absent or only implicit. The ratings assess policy content as written and do not indicate whether requirements were consistently implemented or produced the intended outcomes.

TABLE 2.1

Best Practices Compared with Core Coast Guard Policy on Sexual Assault

Best Practice Criterion	Sexual Assault (SAPRR, COMDTINST 1754.10F)	Intimate Partner Sexual Assault (FAP, COMDTINST 1752.1A)	Sexual Harassment (COMDTINSTs 5350.6A, M5350.4D, and M5350.4E)
1. Universal and targeted prevention coverage	● Universal prevention required. Annual SAPRR training is mandated for all Coast Guard members, establishing a universal prevention baseline.	◆ Prevention is encouraged, not universalized. Primary prevention includes awareness campaigns and local programs, but no Coast Guard–wide annual prevention curriculum is required except for that targeting Coast Guard members under SAPRR.	● Annual Sexual Harassment Prevention (SHP) training is required for all Coast Guard personnel (universal).
2. Theory-driven or evidence-based design	◆ Conceptually aligned but not required. Prevention language reflects integrated primary prevention concepts but does not require use of evidence-based or theory-driven curricula.	◆ Conceptual prevention framework present. Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention are distinguished, but evidence-based curriculum requirements are not specified.	■ No conceptual framework present or requirement for evidence-based design.
3. Skill-building and bystander or intervention competencies	◆ Limited to responder cadre. Bystander intervention proficiency is required for SARCs, but workforce-wide training emphasizes awareness rather than skill rehearsal.	■ Not specified. Prevention focuses on identification, reporting, and treatment; no mandate for skill-based prevention or intervention training before intimate partner abuse occurs.	■ Not specified.
4. Interactive or active-learning instruction methods	◆ Partially constrained. In-person training is emphasized in some contexts, but interactive methods (e.g., role-play, scenario-based exercises) are not required.	■ Not specified. Prevention activities are described as communication and outreach; interactive instructional methods are not required.	■ Not specified.
5. Sufficient dosage and reinforcement	■ Not specified. Annual completion is required, but no minimum duration, session length, or multi-dose/booster structure is defined.	■ Not specified. Prevention efforts do not include defined dosage, session length, or reinforcement requirements.	◆ Annual training required but no specified session length, reinforcement, or booster structure.
6. Tailoring to audience and operational context	● Explicit tailoring by role and grade. Training requirements include grade-appropriate and professional military education–linked content.	◆ Implicit tailoring. Secondary prevention references family and deployment context, but tailoring is not articulated as a training standard.	■ Not specified.
7. Facilitator credibility and preparation	● SARCs and Victim Advocates must meet national credentialing standards.	■ Facilitator standards for prevention delivery are not clearly specified.	■ Not specified.

Table 2.1—Continued

Best Practice Criterion	Sexual Assault (SAPRR, COMDTINST 1754.10F)	Intimate Partner Sexual Assault (FAP, COMDTINST 1752.1A)	Sexual Harassment (COMDTINSTs 5350.6A, M5350.4D, and M5350.4E)
8. Leadership reinforcement and climate expectations	● Explicit leadership responsibility. Command climate, prevention culture, and leadership engagement are clearly assigned.	◆ Broad leadership expectations. Policy promotes respect and accountability in home life, but reinforcement mechanisms are less operationalized.	● Explicit leadership responsibility for command climate and accountability expectations when leaders' actions or inaction contributes to the perception of lack of commitment to addressing harassing behavior.
9. Measurement, evaluation, and implementation fidelity	◆ Some structural elements are present. Inspection, reporting, and prevention frameworks exist, but prevention outcome metrics and training fidelity standards are not specified and are not compared against a reduction in sexual violence.	◆ Administrative tracking emphasized. Case review and reporting processes are well developed, but prevention effectiveness and implementation fidelity are not systematically measured.	■ Not specified.

● Strongly aligned: Explicitly required, clearly specified, broadly applicable.

◆ Partially aligned: Referenced or required, but limited, underspecified, or narrowly applied.

■ Not aligned or not specified: Absent or only implicit.

SOURCES: Authors' analysis of COMDTINST 1754.10F, 2023; COMDTINST 1752.1A, 2025; and COMDTINST 5350.6A, 2025.

NOTE: Scores reflect the presence of explicit, directive policy requirements for prevention training and implementation. Requirements applicable only to specialist responder cadres (e.g., SARCs) were not treated as workforce-wide prevention mandates.

Coast Guard SASH Policy Provides a Strong Foundation Through Universal Training, Leadership Expectations, and Defined Accountability Structures

Coast Guard policy demonstrates several areas of strength. Most notably, SASH prevention is universalized through mandatory annual SAPRR and SHP training for all members, establishing prevention as an institutional responsibility. Leadership roles and command climate expectations are clearly articulated. The service has also invested in a credentialed prevention infrastructure.

Although not fully reflected in Table 2.1, which focuses on prevention trainings, there are additional strengths in sexual harassment prevention policy. Visible leadership commitment to a culture of respect is one pillar of sexual harassment prevention, and Coast Guard policy provides clear guidance that leaders "are expected to cultivate a climate of dignity, respect, trust, and zero tolerance for harassing behavior" and to lead through example by promptly stopping harassing behavior and preventing future incidents (COMDTINST 5350.6A, 2025, p. 1-2). The second important organizational condition for sexual harassment prevention is to also hold employees accountable for maintaining standards. COMDTINST 5350.6A (2025, p. 1-1) explicitly states that "maintaining a work environment free of harassing behavior is an all-hands responsibility." Every member is expected to treat others with dignity and respect and to intervene and report harassing behavior and its precursors. Finally, workplaces with clear and consistent accountability for sexual harassment tend to have a lower risk of sexual harassment. Coast Guard policy documents describe at least two reporting channels, investigative procedures that occur for all sexual harassment reports, and the expectation of confidentiality to the extent possible.

Gaps in Skill-Based Prevention, Training Specificity, and Outcome Measurement Limit the Effectiveness of SASH Policy

Despite these strengths, several gaps related to best practices are evident. Policy emphasizes awareness, reporting, and response more than skill-based prevention. Interactive instructional methods, minimum session length, multidose structures, and reinforcement mechanisms are not consistently required. As a result, policy permits wide variation in training intensity and format, including reliance on brief or passive approaches that research suggests are less effective.

Prevention policy addressing intimate partner SASH is particularly underdeveloped. Although FAP articulates a comprehensive response and treatment framework, it does not establish universal prevention requirements, skill-building standards, or clear instructional expectations. Prevention in this domain relies primarily on awareness and post-incident services rather than proactive, structured programming.

Sexual harassment policy on harassment behavior prevention does not provide any guidance on the form of prevention training. In many ways, this is not inconsistent with the state of the research on sexual harassment. Although the general principles outlined in Table 2.1 apply broadly across prevention efforts, there is not yet a specific program or curriculum that has been shown empirically to reduce the risk of sexual harassment in a workforce; therefore, it may be premature to require a universal or targeted prevention program to be implemented. Finally, policy does not consistently specify prevention outcome metrics or implementation fidelity standards, relying on completion percentages and limiting the Coast Guard's ability to assess effectiveness over time.

Of course, policy requirements alone do not determine prevention effectiveness; how training is designed and delivered also matters. Consult Appendix B for an examination of the alignment between the training materials for Coast Guard SASH prevention trainings and best practices.

Integrated Primary Prevention

The Coast Guard initiated its Integrated Primary Prevention (IPP) program in summer 2024, as directed by the Commandant in 2023 (Fagan, 2023).[1] The program is structured around the DoD IPP program and focused on mitigating self-harm and other abusive or harmful acts. The DoD program is partially based off of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) framework for targeted efforts to prevent sexual violence (Department of Defense Instruction 6400.09, 2025). The policy is designed to address both sexual harassment and sexual assault. As of April 2025, the Coast Guard's IPP program was billeted for 22 full-time employees but only consisted of one full-time program manager. The remaining support members consisted of collateral duty active-duty volunteer Resilience Coordinators. The purpose of the volunteers is to focus on wellness and provide access for members seeking help to get information or find experts. The volunteers do not receive any training in sexual harassment prevention, and that is not the primary focus. Because of the recency of this program, we were unable to analyze whether programs were based in evidence or would contribute to a reduction in sexual harassment or assault.

Response and Recovery

Our assessment of SASH response and recovery policies revealed significant strengths but also notable gaps. Reporting and response policies vary in their alignment with best practices, particularly where leadership practices and centralized reporting tools are concerned. In theory, policies fully align with the need for a centralized confidential disclosure system and with leadership's role supporting victims who report. There are overlaps between response and recovery policies and implementation. Generally, response measures involve near-term actions that ensure the safety and support of the victim—including reporting, medical, legal, and advocacy—and recovery measures involve actions that contribute to the long-term wellness and empowerment of a victim, including medical, behavioral care, legal services, and administrative support.

Appropriate response and recovery programs focus on survivor autonomy, choice, and safety. TIC provides a blueprint for response and recovery systems by validating survivors' experiences and reducing the risk of retraumatization. TIC assumes that trauma affects how people perceive safety, trust, and control. Core TIC principles include safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, and empowerment (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). These are essential not just for therapeutic interactions but also for shaping how organizations train responders, collect disclosures, and make decisions about case handling.

Victims should be able to choose whether and when they disclose or report an instance of SASH (Lanthier, Du Mont, and Mason, 2018). Confidentiality is a core component enabling reporting and effective responses (Wolters et al., 2023). Resources should be centralized in a single website or app and accessible through multiple formal and informal avenues (Matthews and Farris, 2022). All responders and leaders who interact with victims should be supportive and trained on the stigmas, needs, and ways to interact with victims (Matthews et al., 2018). Vetted scripts may aid responders in avoiding negative reactions that may inadvertently upset victims (Bogen et al., 2019). Responder trainings that include simulated victim interviews show beneficial effects on trauma-informed practices, victim reporting behavior, and responder attitudes (e.g., rape myth acceptance and victim responsibility; McQueen and Murphy-Oikonen, 2025).

[1] The IPP program is modeled after a similar DoD program to build population-level protective factors and a culture of prevention that stops harmful behaviors as part of a system.

TIC in response and recovery programs emphasizes avoiding retraumatization and creating empowering environments (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). This means acknowledging the survivor's experience, avoiding judgmental responses, and supporting the victim's control over how and when information is shared. TIC emphasizes the importance of individualized care, in which the survivor's values, needs, and preferences shape the course of recovery (American Psychological Association, 2018e). This model offers flexible pathways for engagement and healing, rather than imposing one-size-fits-all approaches. It also provides a foundation for restorative practices when survivors seek accountability without formal prosecution (Burns and Sinko, 2023).

Gap Analysis Between Coast Guard Policy and Best Practices in SASH Response

A review of the literature related to response showed that effective leadership is central to encouraging disclosure of SASH and supporting victims by cultivating a safe and supportive environment (Lanthier, Du Mont, and Mason, 2018; Matthews and Farris, 2022). Policies such as COMDTINSTs 1754.10F, 5350.6, and 5520.5 fully align with best practices with respect to leadership's role in ensuring the consistency and confidentiality of reports. If leaders follow the policy, it is reasonable to expect that reporting will be managed in a reliable and predictable manner; at the same time, that does not necessarily guarantee that victims will feel safe and supported during the process.

Victims' uncertainty and confusion about how or where to report can be common barriers to reporting (Wegrzyn et al., 2023), which may be partially ameliorated by streamlining processes, centralizing information access, and providing welcoming responses from any entry point (Bogen et al., 2019; Matthews and Farris, 2022). In the Coast Guard, victim uncertainty about how and where to report SASH seems to be partially addressed through websites, helplines, and "open door" referral policies. Sexual harassment reporting may be a point of particular confusion because a significant policy change was only recently enacted. As of February 2023, all alleged incidents of sexual harassment must be forwarded to CGIS for determination on opening a criminal investigation (COMDTINST 5350.6, 2023). This reporting process is a departure from the previous policy, which allowed sexual harassment complaints to be resolved at the lowest possible level.

During and after the reporting process, victim support should be confidential, individualized, trauma-informed, and survivor-centered (Burns and Sinko, 2023; Miles et al., 2024; O'Doherty et al., 2023). Sexual assault policy provides a clear description of victim response and recovery supports, but this information is missing in sexual harassment policy documents. Documents such as COMDTINST 1754.10F clearly define the roles of providers within SAPRR CITs, showing full alignment with some Sexual Assault Response Team principles and partial alignment with others, including protocols, resources, and mission clarity. In addition, policies support confidentiality, individualized care, and professional services, and roles are clearly assigned. The primary policy document for sexual harassment, COMDTINST 5350.6, does not include guidance for victim response.

Policies including COMDTINST 1754.10F, COMDTINST 5350.6, and the Medical Manual (COMDTINST M6000.1) support these goals and show partial alignment with evidence-based approach (EBA) training requirements (Table 2.1). In line with training offered by civilian victim services centers, SARCs and victim advocates "must receive a (minimum) 40 hours initial training and receive NACP credentials (or have D-SAACP credentials) prior to assuming any SAPRR duties" (COMDTINST 1754.10F, 2023, p. 8-5). Medical care and access to sexual assault forensic exams should be established via a Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement with local civilian medical facilities that provides notification procedures and guidance for patient-centered TIC. COMDTINST M1743.10 does not include this requirement, which

opens opportunities for ambiguity in medical care standards. The Coast Guard's policies strongly endorse recovery principles in theory. For instance, COMDTINST 1754.10F and 5801.5A, along with Department of Defense Directive 1030.01, fully align with best practices on confidentiality, individualized care, and professional mental health services. The directive assigns response and some recovery responsibilities to SARCs, VAs, chaplains, and CGSUPRT.[2] However, it neither specifies therapeutic interventions nor provides detailed access guidance for victims.

Survivors of SASH face elevated risks of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and suicidality (Dworkin et al., 2017; Livingston et al., 2023). Recovery is nonlinear, with critical windows for intervention in the early months following trauma (Dworkin et al., 2023). Providing timely, competent support—whether through peers, counselors, or leaders—can significantly affect outcomes.

For survivors who develop PTSD, recommended therapeutic approaches include

- trauma-focused computer-based training (TF-CBT)
- cognitive processing therapy (CPT)
- eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR)
- narrative exposure therapy (NET)
- prolonged exposure therapy (PET).

These interventions are supported by clinical practice guidelines from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and DoD (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Department of Defense, 2023). They are delivered through both individual and group modalities, in-person and virtually, and have been adapted for diverse populations and trauma histories (Miles et al., 2024; Lomax and Meyrick, 2022; O'Doherty et al., 2023). Coast Guard policy documents direct response personnel to refer victims who have physical and behavioral health care needs to an appropriate clinical provider. There is no further guidance on the types of services that victims with physical or psychological sequelae should receive, as these health care systems and providers are distinct from the SASH response system and follow their own set of training and clinical and policy guidance. The transition of recovery services to external providers creates a seam that poses an increased opportunity for the Coast Guard to lose visibility on the continuum of care and overall wellness of the member.

Communication and Outreach as a Prevention Requirement

Effective SASH prevention requires more than policy reform and skills-based training. Sustained culture change also depends on deliberate communication strategies that build awareness, reinforce organizational norms, signal leadership expectations, and ensure that members understand available resources and reporting pathways. Rather than a peripheral support activity, communication is a structural prerequisite for the other prevention investments to take hold.

Research identifies three distinct functions that communication serves in a prevention enterprise (Nation et al., 2003; Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021). Informational outreach—which includes helpline numbers, websites, and quick reference guides—reaches members who are actively seeking help but does little to shift norms among those who have not yet identified a need. Social norms communication, such as the approach used in the Green Dot program, works through a different mechanism: It models prosocial bystander behavior at scale, creating the perception that intervention is normal rather than exceptional (Ebener et al., 2022;

[2] On August 25, 2025, the Coast Guard replaced CGSUPRT with the Military OneSource employee assistance program.

Alteristic, undated). Leadership communication operates through a third channel: visible, repeated, and sincere endorsement from command authority, which research consistently identifies as among the most powerful determinants of unit climate (Feldblum and Lipnic, 2016; Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021). Organizational climate is an important driver of harassment because it guides unsupervised behavior (Feldblum and Lipnic, 2016).

The Coast Guard has developed meaningful communication and outreach activities across all three of these channels. The joint Atlantic Area (LANTAREA) and Pacific Area (PACAREA) "Respect" toolkit provides direct fleet messaging, posted on the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS) and MyCG. The SAPRR program maintains a bystander intervention quick reference guide, command toolkit, and pretraining communication packages that coach commanders in delivering sincere, personally grounded training introductions. Observance months—including Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month in April—provide structured annual communication touchpoints. These activities demonstrate genuine institutional investment.

However, these activities share a common limitation: They are anchored in awareness-based models that the research identifies as insufficient for producing sustained behavior change. A RAND review of DoD prevention self-assessments found that prevention activities across the services focused more on building awareness than on building skills—the same pattern documented in this report for Coast Guard training (Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021). RAND's Getting to Outcomes handbook is explicit on this point: Websites with phone numbers and brochure distribution do not qualify as prevention activities because they constitute "a one-way passive transmission of information with no intervention designed to affect a particular outcome" (Ebener et al., 2022, p. 3). Awareness-month programming concentrated in an annual window reinforces the perception that SASH prevention is a periodic event rather than a sustained institutional priority (Porat et al., 2024). The Coast Guard also lacks targeted outreach for sexual harassment victims specifically—a significant gap, given that Coast Guard women experience sexual harassment at substantially higher rates than sexual assault (Morral, Gore, and Schell, 2015)—yet SAPRR's communication mandate is primarily oriented toward sexual assault.

The most fundamental gap, however, is structural: The Coast Guard does not have a documented enterprise communication strategy for SASH prevention. Existing activities—fleet videos, observance outreach, command toolkits, digital resources—have been developed at the program level without defined goals, target audiences, channel assignments, cadence, or metrics. Marquis et al. (2017, p. iii) identified this pattern as the core structural failure of DoD behavioral programs: a "largely stovepiped approach" in which separate programs are designed, resourced, and evaluated independently, without unified governance to achieve coordination. Without an enterprise strategy, communication activities will remain episodic and disconnected from the broader prevention logic that the Coast Guard's IPP program is beginning to build.

Summary

This chapter addressed the alignment of Coast Guard SASH prevention and response policy and practice with evidence-based best practices across three domains: prevention programming, response and recovery, and communication and outreach. In terms of prevention, Coast Guard policy provides a meaningful foundation. Training requirements, leadership expectations, and defined accountability structures are present in policy and broadly consistent with the literature. The IPP program represents a significant institutional step toward a more structured, capability-based approach to prevention. However, alignment weakens substantially in practice. A review of five core training courses found that the strongest alignment was in content and interactive modality—particularly scenario use and bystander skills—while gaps were most pronounced in training dosage, frequency, facilitator qualifications, and peer integration. Annual compliance-format train-

ings, such as SHP and Civil Rights Training (CRT), are unlikely to shift attitudes or behavior, consistent with research findings about awareness-only models.

In terms of response and recovery, the Coast Guard's policy architecture addresses the core elements of trauma-informed response, restricted and unrestricted reporting, and victim advocacy. Implementation gaps—staffing shortfalls, SARC accessibility, and inconsistent command-level response quality—are addressed in Chapters 1 and 6 and are not repeated here.

In terms of communication and outreach, the Coast Guard has developed meaningful activities across leadership messaging, observance-based outreach, and workforce reference materials. These efforts can contribute to a perceived positive cultural shift. However, they operate without an enterprise communication strategy, rely heavily on awareness-based formats that research identifies as insufficient for culture change, lack targeted outreach for sexual harassment victims, and are not evaluated for effectiveness. The core structural problem is the same one that runs through the other priority issues discussed in this report: activities developed at the program level, without unified governance, goals, or metrics.

CHAPTER 3

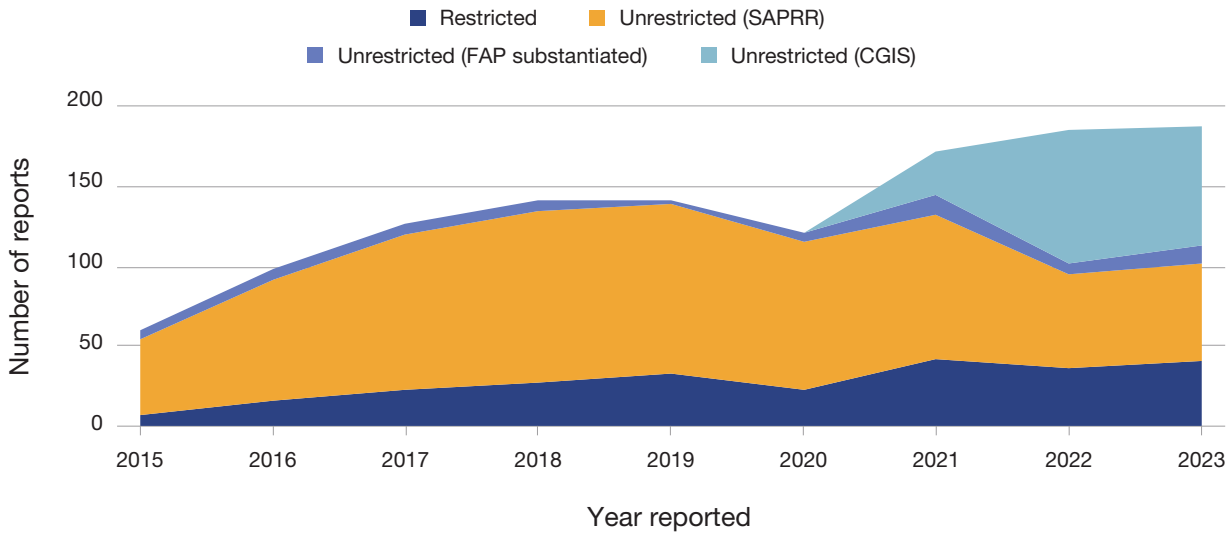
Reporting and Incident Trends

In this chapter, we examine patterns in SASH reporting and incident occurrence in the Coast Guard. The analysis focuses on how cases are reported, when incidents occurred, and how reporting patterns vary across demographic groups and geographic locations. Interpretation of these patterns is shaped by structural characteristics of Coast Guard data systems. SASH information resides across multiple non-integrated databases with differing case identifiers, reporting rules, and completeness standards. Missing incident dates and inconsistent historical coverage limit numerical precision (Appendix A). These constraints affect exact counts but do not materially alter the stability of major observed patterns. Findings should therefore be interpreted directionally rather than as exact enumerations. Chapter 4 provides additional prevalence estimates based on analysis of data from the results of the 2016, 2018, and 2021 Workplace Experiences Surveys.

Reporting Patterns for Sexual Assault

Because reporting data are often misinterpreted, our analyses distinguish between *reporting behavior*, which is when a case is disclosed, and *incident occurrence*, which is when an assault takes place. Reported sexual assault cases increased during the earlier portion of the observation period before stabilizing and declining in more recent years (see Figure 3.1). CGIS case counts shown in Figure 3.1 reflect only unrestricted cases inves-

FIGURE 3.1
Restricted and Unrestricted Sexual Assault Reports (2015–2023)



SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, sexual assault reporting data, spreadsheets provided to the authors, February 2025.

NOTE: We did not include 2024 because the data did not include the full year. This figure does not include duplicates from different reporting systems.

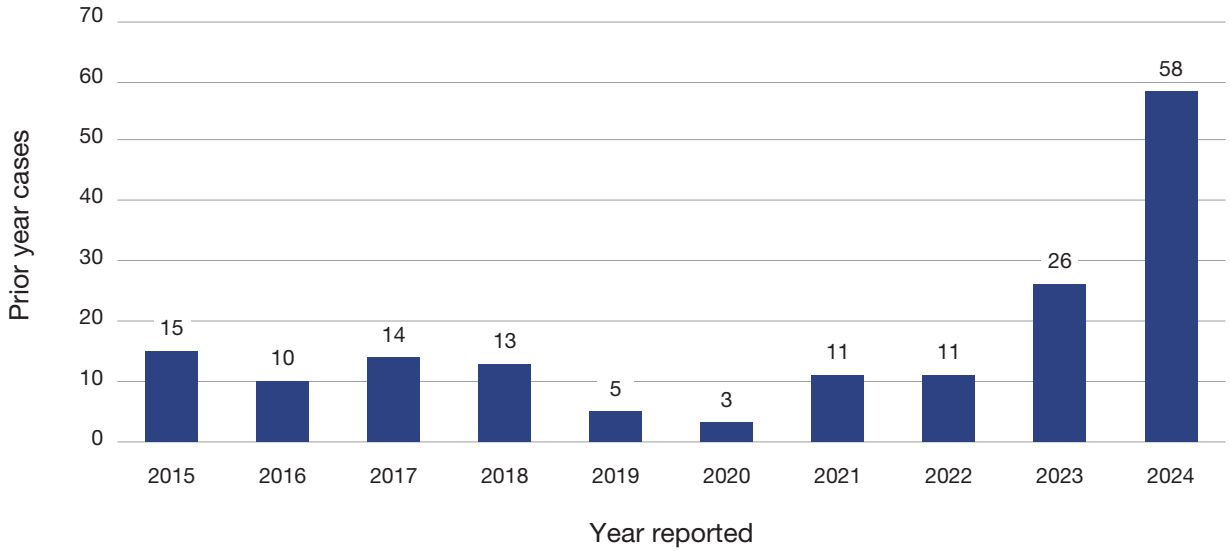
tigated by CGIS between 2021 and 2023 and therefore represent a subset of total reported incidents. These data are not directly comparable with SAPRR totals, which include both restricted and unrestricted reports. Differences between CGIS and SAPRR counts reflect differences in reporting pathways, system scope, and data structure. The differences in these systems revealed gaps in data coverage where reporting was not consistent (i.e., unrestricted reports that appeared in the SAPRR database did not appear in the CGIS database and vice versa). The rise in reports in 2021 highlights this inconsistency, as CGIS provided data beginning in 2021. In addition, the observed growth in reports should not be interpreted as a direct indicator of rising victimization. Reporting levels are shaped by multiple organizational factors, including policy reforms, reporting climate, awareness of response mechanisms, and victim confidence in institutional processes. Periods of increased reporting are commonly associated with improvements in transparency and reporting accessibility rather than underlying misconduct growth (Baumer, 2004). Declines in recent years therefore require cautious interpretation. Reporting behavior itself is an outcome influenced by institutional conditions.

Delayed Reporting Dynamics

Sexual assault reporting patterns display substantial temporal separation between incident occurrence and disclosure (see Figure 3.2 and Table 3.1). The persistence of prior-year incident reporting illustrates a well-established characteristic of delayed disclosure in sexual assault data (Klemmer, Neill, and Jarvis, 2021). Such delays reflect behavioral, psychological, and professional considerations rather than anomalies in measurement systems. Recent reporting years routinely include incidents that occurred well outside the reporting window. This dynamic complicates interpretation of year-over-year reporting changes and reinforces the need to separate reporting trends from incident patterns.

FIGURE 3.2

Sexual Assault Incidents Before 2015 Reported After 2015



SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, sexual assault reporting data, spreadsheets provided to the authors, February 2025.

NOTE: This figure does not include duplicates from different reporting systems.

TABLE 3.1
Time Between Sexual Assault Incident and Report

Reporting Interval	Percentage Reported
Same day or within 24 hours	~10–15 percent
Within first week	~30–40 percent
Within first month	~50 percent
Within six months	~65–70 percent

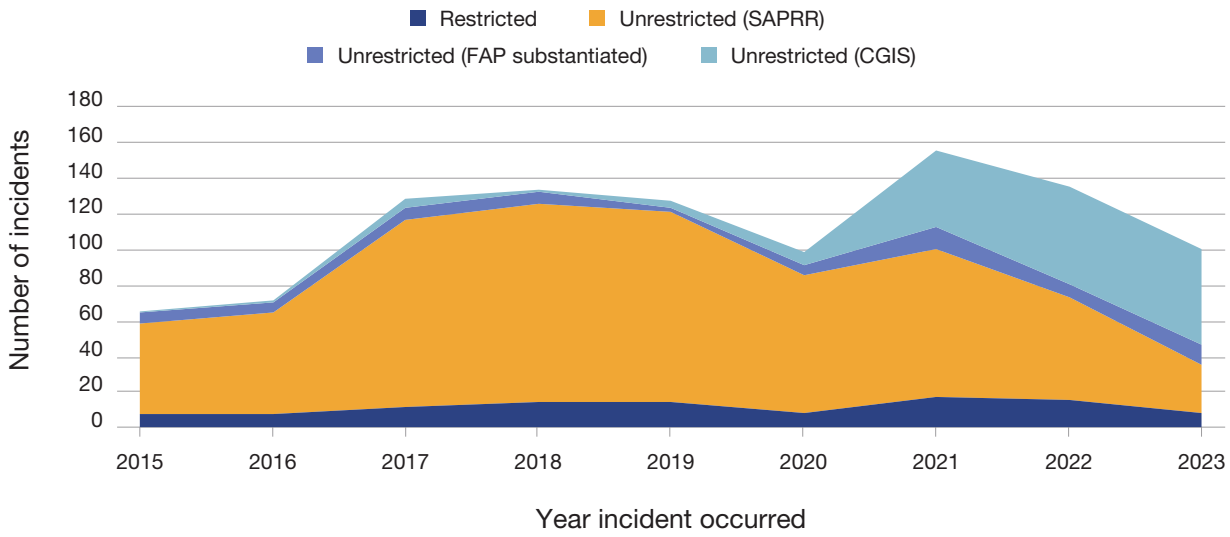
SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, sexual assault reporting data, spreadsheets provided to the authors, February 2025.

NOTE: We did not include 2024 because the data did not include the full year. This table does not include duplicates from different reporting systems.

Sexual Assault Incident Trends

Because reporting and incident timing differ, it is useful to examine incidents by year of occurrence rather than year of report. When organized by year of occurrence, sexual assault incidents exhibit a different pattern from reporting volumes (Figure 3.3). Available records suggest declines in incidents beginning in later years. However, incident counts for recent periods should be interpreted cautiously because of reporting latency effects. Sexual assault incidents are frequently disclosed months or years after occurrence, meaning that more recent years are structurally incomplete. Despite these constraints, incident timing patterns remain consistent with the broader empirical literature (Klemmer, Neill, and Jarvis, 2021).

FIGURE 3.3
Restricted and Unrestricted Sexual Assault Incidents (2015–2023)



SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, sexual assault reporting data, spreadsheets provided to the authors, February 2025.

NOTE: We did not include 2024 because the data did not include the full year. This figure does not include duplicates from different databases.

Victim-Subject Distributions

Demographic distributions for sexual assault incidents display strong stability. Victims are overwhelmingly female, whereas suspects are predominantly male. This pattern is consistent with observed distributions across military populations and remains stable despite database coverage differences (see Figure 3.4).

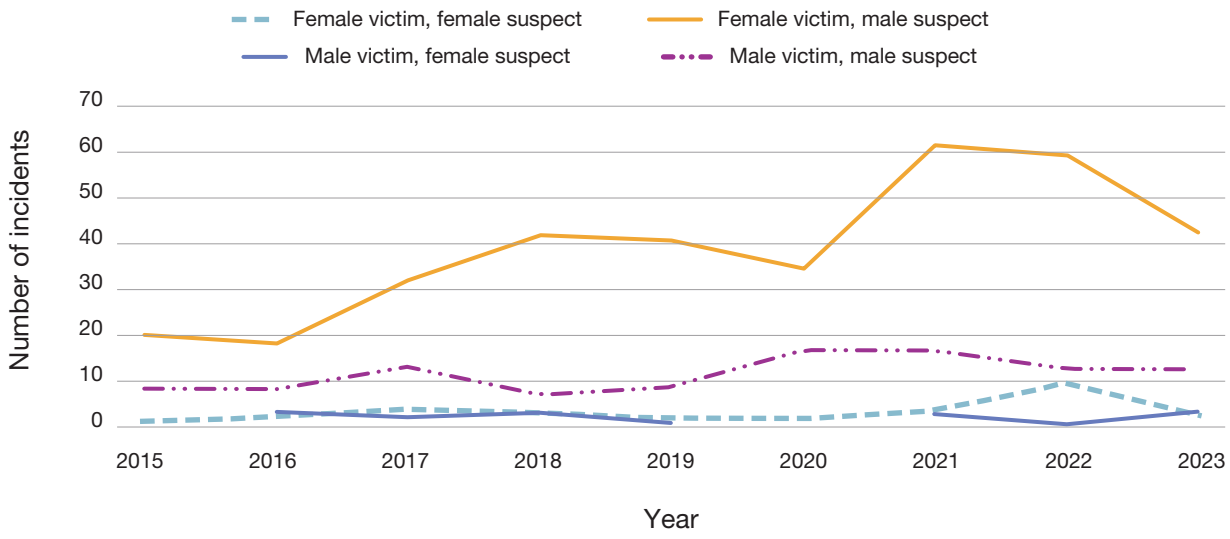
Pay grade distributions similarly exhibit concentration within junior enlisted ranks. Victimization risk is concentrated among early-career enlisted personnel, and suspects are similarly concentrated within junior enlisted grades. This convergence suggests that prevention strategies targeting early-career workforce populations represent a high-leverage intervention domain (see Figures 3.5 and 3.6). Report totals are not equivalent because information on the suspect was not always available.

Geographic Variation in Sexual Assault Reporting

Workforce-normalized reporting rates vary across Coast Guard districts. Because rates account for workforce size, observed variation cannot be attributed solely to district population differences (see Figure 3.7 and Table 3.2). Geographic variation likely reflects differences in operational environments, reporting climates, demographic compositions, and situational exposure conditions. Cross-district comparisons should therefore be interpreted as indicators of variation rather than causal conclusions. As before, the rate of reporting does not necessarily correlate to the rate of incidents.

FIGURE 3.4

Victim-Suspect Sexual Assault Incidents, by Sex (2015–2023)

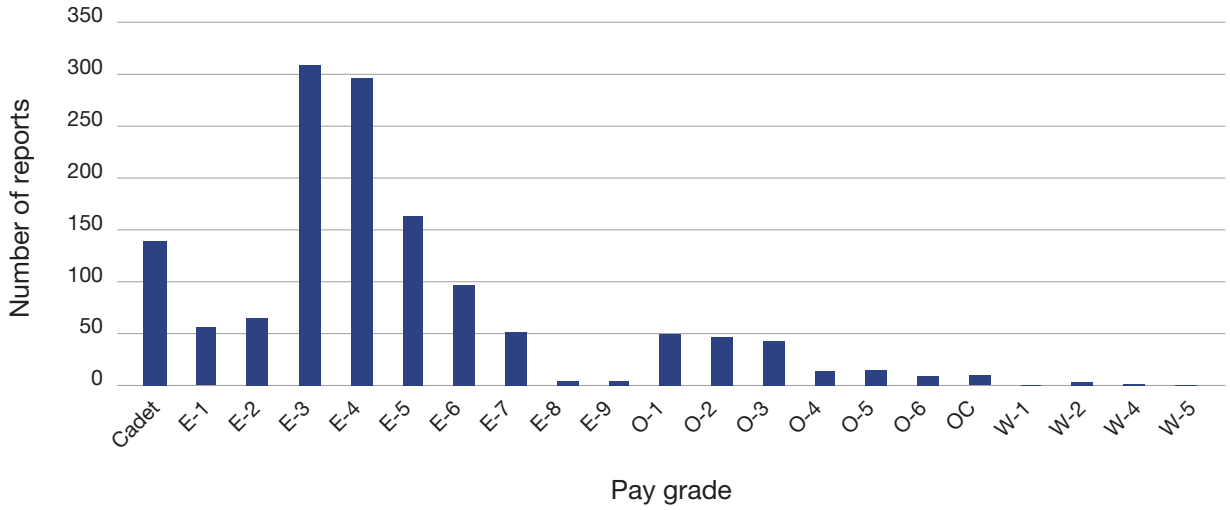


SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, sexual assault reporting data, spreadsheets provided to the authors, February 2025.

NOTE: We did not include 2024 because the data did not include the full year. This figure does not include duplicates from different databases and does not include partial year data or incidents for which the suspect gender was reported as unknown.

FIGURE 3.5

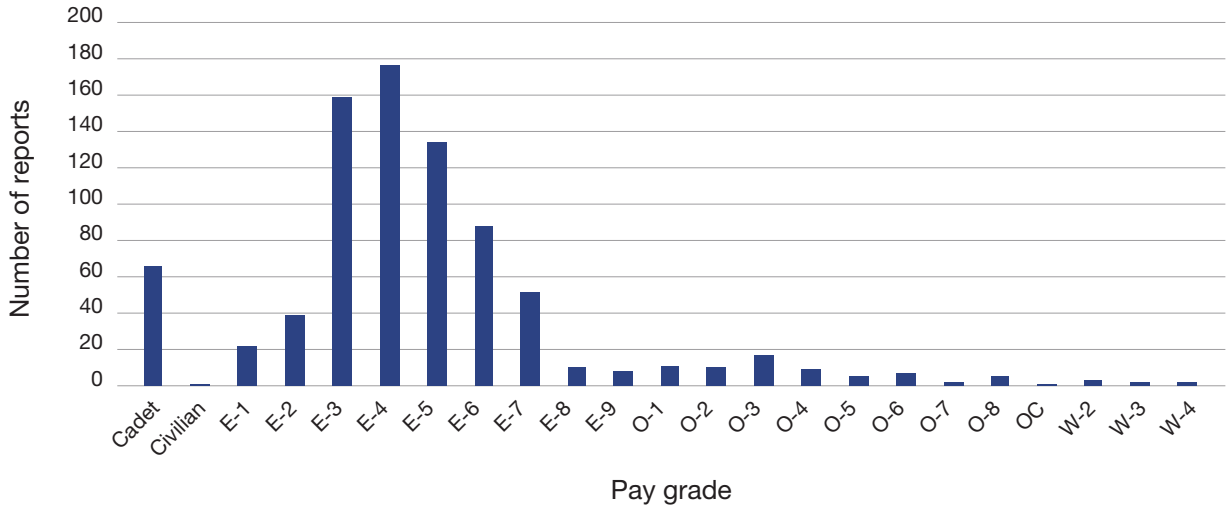
Sexual Assault Reports, by Victim Pay Grade



SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, sexual assault reporting data, spreadsheets provided to the authors, February 2025.

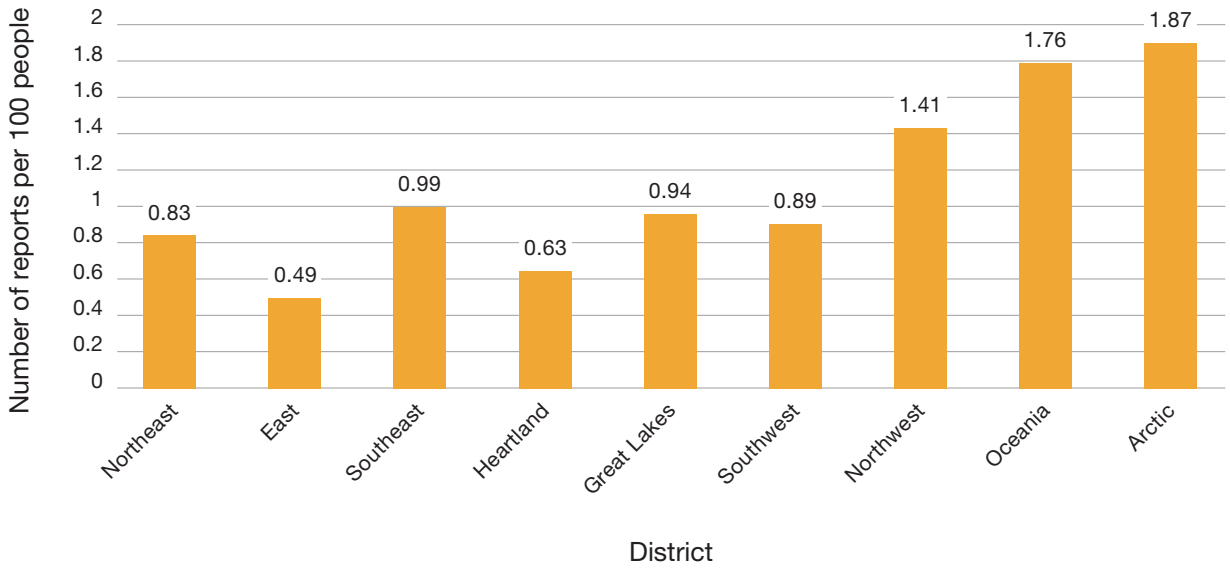
FIGURE 3.6

Sexual Assault Reports, by Suspect Pay Grade



SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, sexual assault reporting data, spreadsheets provided to the authors, February 2025.

FIGURE 3.7
Sexual Assault Report Rates, by District (2015–2024)



SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, sexual assault reporting data, spreadsheets provided to the authors, February 2025.

NOTE: This figure is based on the total workforce assigned in November 2025 and includes all report types. We are unable to determine a rate for foreign locations because the total number of personnel fluctuates depending on deployments.

TABLE 3.2
Relative Reporting Variation Across Districts

Observation	Interpretation
Reporting rates vary across districts even after workforce normalization.	Differences are unlikely to reflect population size alone.
No single district dominates reports.	Misconduct risk is enterprise-wide.
Foreign-location reporting is nontrivial.	Deployment environments warrant attention.

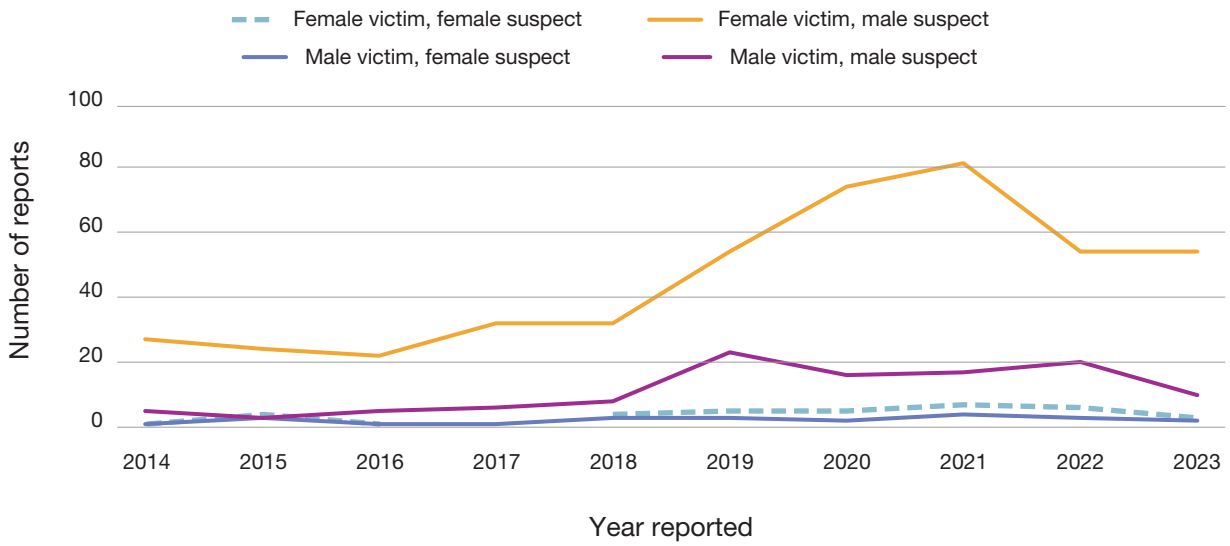
Sexual Harassment Reporting Patterns

Whereas the previous sections focused on sexual assault patterns, sexual harassment reporting exhibits distinct dynamics. As with sexual assault, victims are predominantly female and subjects predominantly male. Sexual harassment reports, however, display shorter reporting timelines and greater administrative visibility due to differences in reporting pathways and evidentiary structures.[1] Reporting spikes and declines should therefore be interpreted in the context of broader cultural shifts, policy changes, and administrative processes rather than assumed behavioral shifts alone (see Figures 3.8 and 3.9).

[1] Although stigma affects reporting for both sexual assault and sexual harassment, research suggests that reporting barriers may operate through different mechanisms. Sexual assault reporting is often shaped by concerns related to trauma, stigma, and victim-blaming (e.g., U.S. Department of Defense, 2024), whereas sexual harassment reporting is more frequently influenced by normalization of behavior, ambiguity about what constitutes reportable conduct, and concerns about career repercussions (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018).

FIGURE 3.8

Victim-Suspect Sexual Harassment Reports, by Sex

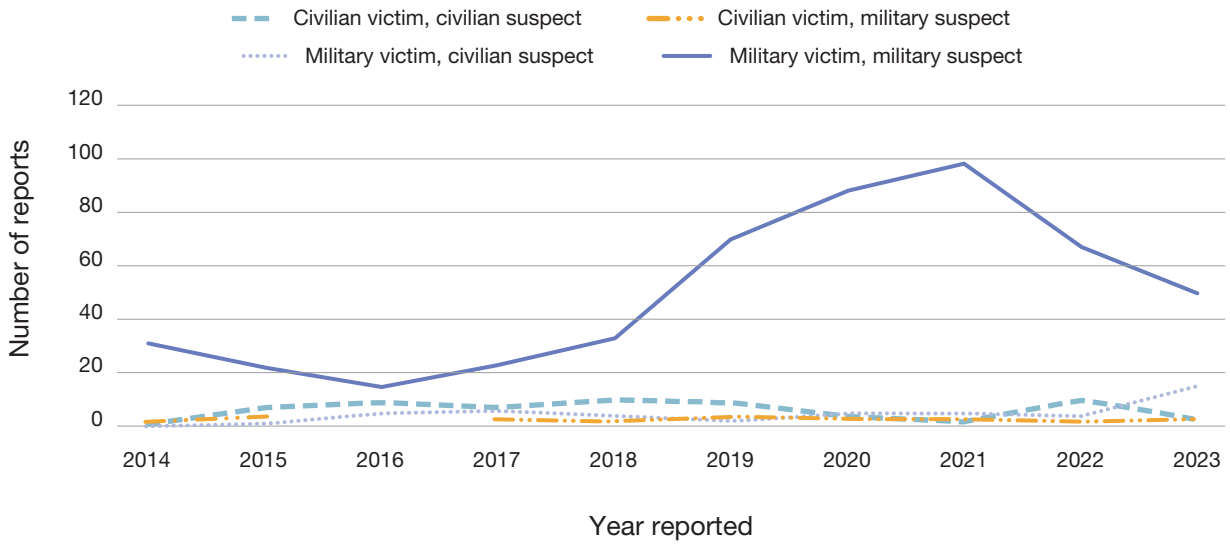


SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, sexual harassment reporting data, spreadsheets provided to the authors, February 2025.

NOTE: Transgender victims and suspects were not included because there were only three such cases over ten years.

FIGURE 3.9

Victim-Suspect Sexual Harassment Reports, by Military/Civilian Status



SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, sexual harassment reporting data, spreadsheets provided to the authors, February 2025.

Office of the Chief Prosecutor Case Timeline and Disposition Data

OCP began exercising disposition authority over designated serious and victim-centric offenses, including sexual assault, in 2023. Because OCP is newly established and relatively few cases have reached final disposition, the available data provide an initial description of case processing rather than evidence of long-term trends or the effects of prosecutorial reform.

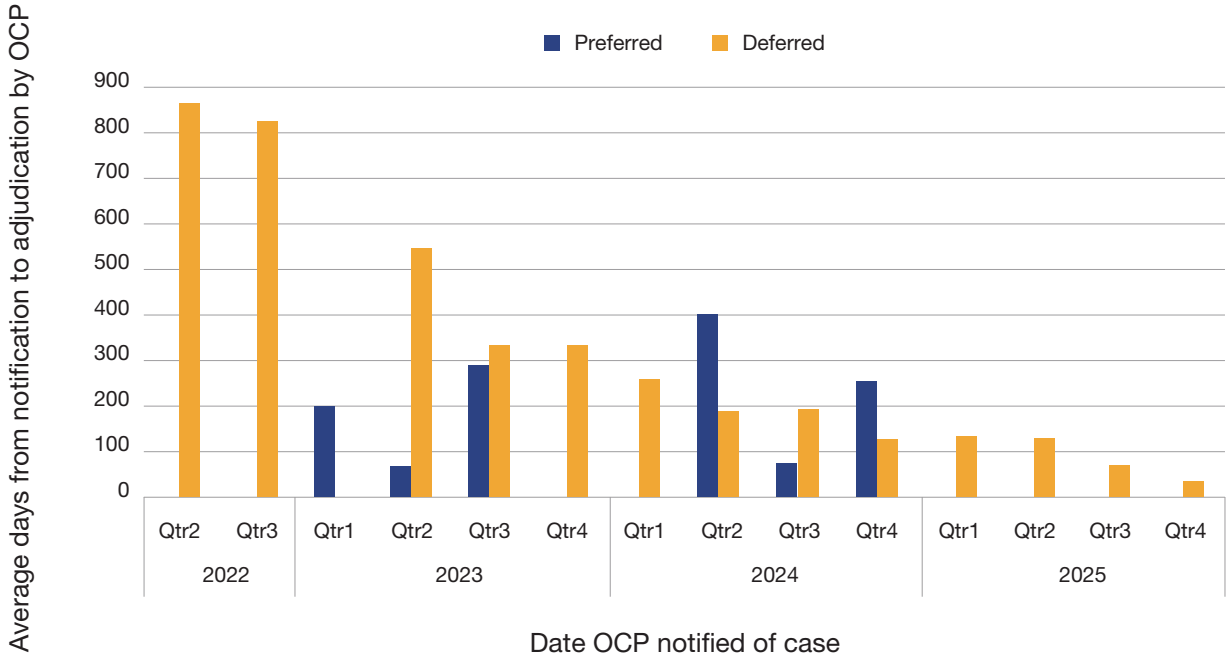
Among cases for which a disposition decision had been recorded by the end of fiscal year (FY) 2025, the average time between notification and decision was generally lower for more recent notification cohorts (see Figure 3.10). This pattern may reflect changes in processing time, but it may also be influenced by small quarterly case counts, inherited cases, differences in case complexity, and the exclusion of cases that remained unresolved at the end of the observation period. The available data therefore do not yet support a conclusion that processing time has consistently improved. Of the 272 cases in the OCP dataset, charges were preferred in 17 cases, or 6.3 percent.[2]

The most frequently recorded reasons for returning cases for disposition outside OCP were insufficient evidence (38 percent) and victim nonparticipation (32 percent). Other reasons included determining that another disposition was more appropriate, lack of jurisdiction over the accused, prosecution by state authorities, expiration of the statute of limitations, and an unidentified subject. Victim nonparticipation should not be interpreted as indicating that an allegation lacked credibility; rather, it may limit the evidence available to prosecutors or the feasibility of proceeding with criminal charges.

As of the data cutoff, five of the 17 cases in which charges were preferred resulted in a guilty finding for a sexual assault offense, two resulted in not-guilty findings, six had been withdrawn, and four remained pending. These early data are insufficient to determine whether centralized prosecution has reduced processing

FIGURE 3.10

Average Days Between OCP Notification and Decision to Defer or Prefer Charges



SOURCE: U.S. Coast Guard, Office of the Chief Prosecutor, spreadsheets provided to the authors, March 2026.

[2] The data provided may not include all the cases currently under investigation by CGIS.

time, increased consistency, or changed case outcomes. Future reporting should include cohort size, median processing time, unresolved cases, referral decisions, final outcomes, and noncourt-martial dispositions.

Summary

Several conclusions are supported with reasonable confidence.[3] Reporting volumes increased during earlier years before declining more recently, although the root cause is indeterminate due to a wide variety of factors. Victimization risk remains concentrated among junior enlisted women, whereas subjects are predominantly junior enlisted men. SASH cases exhibit distinct reporting and situational profiles. Geographic variation persists even after workforce normalization. At the enterprise level, database fragmentation constrains oversight and policy evaluation.

[3] Interpretation of SASH patterns is constrained by fragmentation across multiple Coast Guard data systems. SASH records reside in separate databases with differing case identifiers, reporting rules, and historical coverage. Incomplete data from CGIS limit comparisons prior to 2021. Missing incident dates and inconsistent data entry practices limit numerical precision. These constraints affect exact counts but do not materially alter the stability of the major patterns described above.

CHAPTER 4

Prevalence, Trends, and Risks Associated with SASH

Building on Chapter 3's analysis of reporting and incident patterns, we examine in this chapter the prevalence, distribution, and risk factors associated with SASH in the Coast Guard. Whereas Chapter 3 focuses on how incidents are reported and recorded, this chapter focuses on who is most at risk, how risk varies across the workforce, and how exposure to these behaviors is associated with downstream outcomes, such as separation from service. Interpretation of these patterns must be considered in light of the structural features described in Chapter 1, including fragmented reporting systems and variation in program responsibilities across SAPRR, FAP, and AHPO. These features shape both observed risk patterns and the Coast Guard's capacity to measure such patterns consistently.

Because official reporting data capture only a subset of total incidents, additional data sources are required to estimate the full scope of SASH in the Coast Guard. Every other year, DoD conducts its Workplace and Gender Relations (WGR) Survey—renamed the Workplace Experiences Survey in 2025—to measure the prevalence and circumstances of SASH among service members. Unlike official reports of sexual crimes made to Coast Guard officials, which underestimate total offenses because many victims choose not to report, these surveys provide population-based estimates of prevalence, including incidents that are never formally reported. The Coast Guard participates in these surveys and receives summary reports that compare current results with those from prior survey cycles. To assess longer-term patterns, we analyze Coast Guard WGR data from 2016, 2018, and 2021. These were the most recent data available at the time of our request to DoD, reflecting the timing of data access approvals and release processes within DoD. Results from the 2023 WGR, released subsequently, are used to assess consistency with the trends identified here.

In addition to examining prevalence trends, we conduct original analyses to identify organizational components of the Coast Guard with the highest and lowest estimated risk of SASH and to assess the relationship between exposure to SASH and premature separation from service. Detailed descriptions of data sources and methods are provided in Appendix C.

SASH Trends

Across 2016, 2018, and 2021, past-year sexual assault (or unwanted sexual contact) among Coast Guard active component service members increased significantly for both men ($p < 0.05$) and women ($p < 0.01$). Among men, rates rose from 0.3 percent in 2016 to 0.7 percent in 2021 and did not change significantly by 2023 (0.6 percent). Among women, rates increased from 2.0 percent in 2016 to 4.3 percent in 2021 and remained at a similar level in 2023 (4.1 percent; Office of People Analytics [OPA], 2017; OPA, 2024).

These trends are ambiguous, however, because the survey items used to measure sexual assault changed substantially in 2021. Even though prior research found that a version of the new item produced roughly equivalent estimates in comparison with the older approach (Morral, Gore, and Schell, 2015), the apparent trend here may be a methodological artifact rather than a real one.

In contrast, sexual harassment survey items have remained largely unchanged over this period and therefore provide a more stable basis for assessing trends. Among women, rates of past-year sexual harassment increased significantly, from 15.1 percent in 2016 to 18.2 percent in 2021 ($p < 0.05$), and rose further to 20.5 percent in 2023, although this increase was not statistically significant using OPA's threshold for significance ($p < 0.01$; OPA, 2017; OPA, 2024). Among men, no significant changes were observed between 2016 and 2021, with rates remaining relatively stable (4.0 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively; OPA, 2017; OPA, 2024). Rates for men remained at 4.2 percent in 2023 (OPA, 2024).

Past-year sexual assaults of women at the Coast Guard Academy similarly rose steadily, from 6 percent of cadets in 2014 to 14.4 percent in 2022, before falling significantly to 11.5 percent in 2024. Male cadet sexual assault rates peaked at the 2018 survey administration at 3.7 percent but fell to 2.5 percent as of the most recent survey in 2024 (OPA, 2023). Trends for Coast Guard reserves are harder to characterize because they were not surveyed between 2014 and 2021. As of 2023, however, rates for men (0.2 percent) and women (2.6 percent) are well below those of cadets and active component members (OPA, 2024).

Sexual harassment of women in the Coast Guard Academy rose with each survey, from 2016, when 36 percent of cadets experienced one or more past-year incidents, to 2024, when 52 percent had such experiences. Male cadet rates almost doubled from 2016 (14 percent) to 2022 (24 percent) before falling significantly in the 2024 survey to 17 percent (OPA, 2023). Past-year sexual harassment rates among reserve members remain largely unchanged in 2023 compared with 2021 and are nearly identical to rates experienced by active component members: In 2023, 20.5 percent of women and 4.3 percent of men experienced past-year sexual harassment (OPA, 2024).

Among active component Coast Guard members who experienced sexual assault or unwanted sexual contact, the proportion reporting that the offender(s) included a member of the military increased for both women and men. For women, this proportion rose from 95 percent in 2016 to 97 percent in 2023; for men, this rate consistently was 92 percent or greater over the period (OPA, 2017; OPA, 2024). Among men, nearly half these assaults occurred at work and during duty hours, whereas such circumstances were reported in fewer than 20 percent of cases involving women.

No significant trends were observed in reporting behavior over time. During this period, approximately 30 percent of women and 20 percent of men who experienced sexual assault reported the incident to the Coast Guard. In 2023, 37 percent of women experiencing unwanted sexual contact filed a report, a rate that was not statistically different from that in 2021 (OPA, 2024). Rates for men in 2023 were not reported by OPA because of the low reliability of the estimate.

Coast Guard SASH Trends Mirror Those in the DoD Services

Overall, Coast Guard trends are broadly consistent with those observed across DoD service branches (Figure 4.1). Across all services, rates of sexual assault (unwanted sexual contact) increased for both men and women from 2016 to 2021, as did rates of sexual harassment among women. In contrast, rates of past-year sexual harassment among men remained generally stable over this period.

Workplace Climate Has Worsened over Time

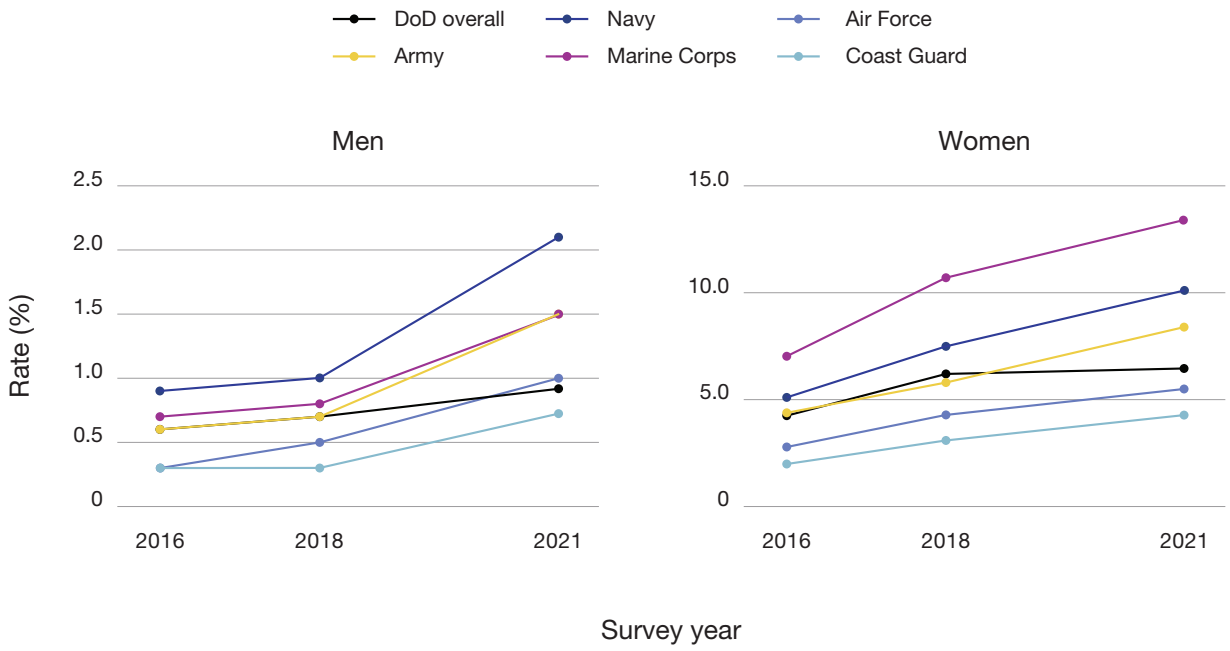
OPA substantially revised its leadership climate survey items between the 2016 and 2021 WGR cycles, precluding trend analysis for most climate measures over this period. However, two indicators of workplace climate and satisfaction were measured consistently.

The first, which we refer to as *retention intention*, asks whether respondents would choose to remain in the Coast Guard if given the option. Retention intention declined significantly for both men and women between 2016 and 2021. In 2016, 78 percent of men and 69 percent of women reported that they were likely

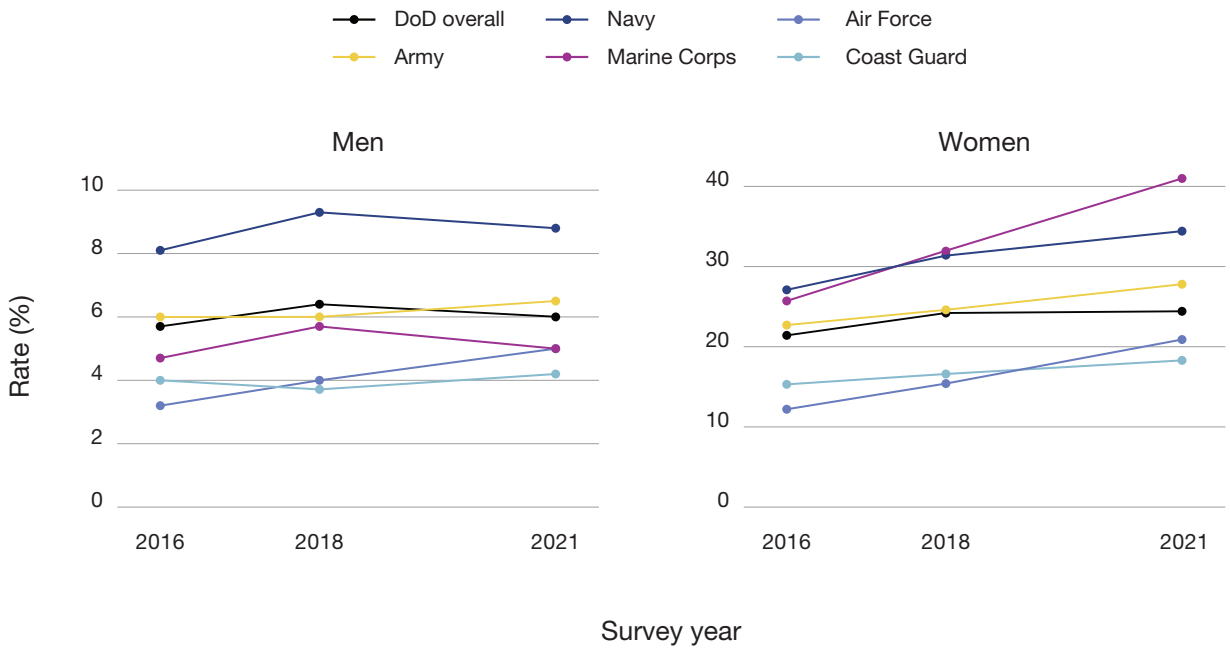
FIGURE 4.1

Trends in Past-Year Sexual Assault or Unwanted Sexual Contact and Sexual Harassment, by Service Branch and Sex of Victim (2016–2021)

Panel A. Past-Year Sexual Assault or Unwanted Sexual Contact



Panel B. Past-Year Sexual Harassment



NOTE: Survey item wording changes to the sexual assault questions make 2021 values possibly not comparable with earlier prevalence estimates.

or very likely to remain in the service; by 2021, this response rate had declined to 65 percent for both groups (linear trends: $p < 0.001$ for men; $p < 0.01$ for women). Rates declined further in 2023, to 62 percent for men and 60 percent for women ($p < 0.01$; OPA, 2024).

The second measure captures workplace hostility through a scale assessing the frequency of negative interpersonal experiences over the past 12 months. Items include such behaviors as coworkers undermining or taking credit for one's work, yelling in anger, using sarcasm or insults, or gossiping. Both men and women reported significant increases in workplace hostility between 2016 and 2021 ($p < 0.005$). This measure was not included in the 2023 WGR.

Subgroups at Highest and Lowest Risk of Sexual Assault and Harassment

To better understand how risk is distributed across the Coast Guard, we examined variation in past-year SASH across organizational units, ranks, job families, and unit types.

Risk Is Highest in Cutter Commands

We aggregated commands in two ways: first into four major command groupings (PACAREA, LANTAREA, Mission Support, and All Others), and second into 16 large commands or groups of smaller commands (see Table C.2 in Appendix C). Across both approaches, a consistent pattern emerges: Elevated risk is concentrated in cutter commands (Figure 4.2).

A striking feature of command-level risk for men and women and for SASH is the high rates estimated for major cutters (Figure 4.2). Rates of sexual assault for women (8.9 percent, standard error [SE] = 1.3 percent) and men (1.3 percent, SE = 0.2 percent) were markedly higher in cutter commands than in all other command groups. These rates were 4.0 percentage points (95-percent confidence interval [CI]: 2.0 percent, 6.4 percent) higher than would be expected based on the individual characteristics of the women serving in those commands and 0.5 percentage points (95-percent CI: 0.2 percent, 0.9 percent) higher than expected based on men's individual characteristics (Figure 4.2). Similarly, almost 30 percent of women in cutter commands experienced past-year sexual harassment (29.8 percent, SE = 2.0 percent), a rate far higher than any other command and 9.7 percentage points (95-percent CI: 6.5 percent, 13.2 percent) higher than expected based on their individual characteristics (see Figure C.20). Men in cutter commands had sexual harassment rates of 7.7 percent (SE = 0.7), a rate significantly higher than all other commands other than the small group of service members with no command assignments listed in their administrative records and 3.1 percentage points (95-percent CI: 2.0 percent, 4.2 percent) higher than expected based on their individual characteristics.

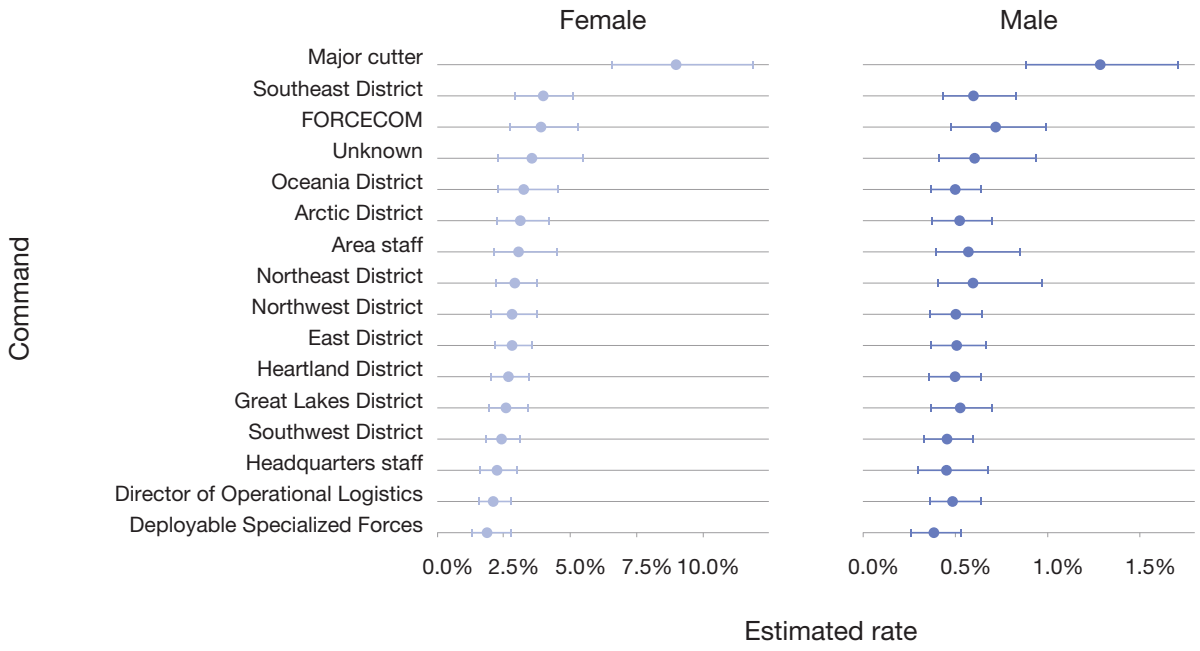
Among the five commands with the lowest sexual assault risk for women, all but headquarters staff have risk lower than expected based on the characteristics of women assigned to them (Figure 4.2, Panel A). Of the eight commands with the lowest sexual harassment rates for women, all but the Director of Operational Logistics and the Deployable Specialized Forces have lower risk than expected (Figure 4.2, Panel B). This suggests possible protective effects associated with those commands; however, relevant data to determine those aspects are not available. For men, no command had significantly lower sexual assault or sexual harassment rates than expected based on individual characteristics.

Results for the four aggregated command groups were consistent with those observed across the 16 large commands (Figures C.4, C.9, C.14, and C.19). PACAREA and LANTAREA—both of which include major cutter commands—had the highest risk of SASH. In PACAREA, sexual harassment risk was higher than expected based on the individual characteristics of assigned personnel. In contrast, Mission Support and All Other commands had lower-than-expected sexual harassment risk among women, relative to the characteristics of the women serving in those commands.

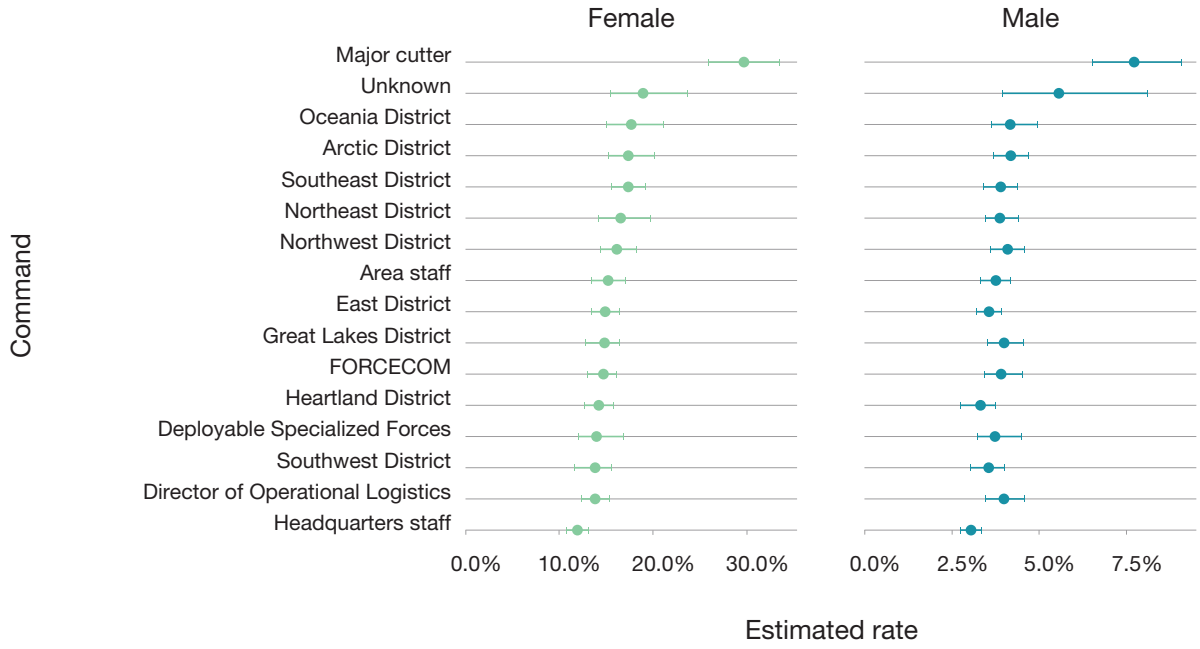
FIGURE 4.2

Estimated SASH Rates, by Command and Sex

Panel A. Sexual Assault Rates



Panel B. Sexual Harassment Rates



NOTE: FORCECOM = Force Readiness Command. Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

Junior Personnel Have Higher SASH Risk

SASH risk varied substantially by pay grade, with men and women junior officers and enlisted (O-1, E-2, and E-3) having two to six times higher SASH risk compared with officers with rank O-4 and above and warrant officers (Figures C.1 and C.6). Just over one in 12 women with the rank of E-2 experienced a past-year sexual assault (8.1 percent, SE = 1.6 percent), whereas fewer than one in 90 women with rank W-4 were assaulted. Men's rates of past-year sexual assault were far lower, ranging from 1.6 percent among those with an E-3 rank (SE = 0.3 percent) to 0.27 percent among officers of rank O-6 (SE = 0.01 percent). Sexual harassment risk among women ranged from 24.7 percent among O-1 officers (SE = 1.7 percent) to 7.6 percent among W-4 officers (SE = 1.2 percent) and for men ranged from 6.4 percent among E-3 enlisted (SE = 0.5 percent) to 1.8 percent among W-4 ranks (SE = 0.3 percent).

However, adjusted risk estimates—which account for age, race, education, marital status, number of dependents, and other individual characteristics—were small and statistically indistinguishable from zero across all pay grades for both outcomes (Figures C.11 and C.16). This suggests that differences in observed risk by pay grade are largely explained by the characteristics of the personnel within each rank, rather than pay grade exerting an independent effect.

Certain Job Families—Particularly Nonrates and Certain Technical Roles—Face Elevated Risk

Past-year SASH risk varied substantially by job family, with nonrated men and women at highest risk and warrant officers at lowest risk for both outcomes (Figures C.2 and C.7).[1] Sexual assault risk among women was 5.2 times greater for nonrates (7.4 percent, SE = 0.97 percent) than for warrant officers (1.4 percent, SE = 0.22 percent) and among men was 4.2 times greater for nonrates (1.4 percent, SE = 0.26 percent) than for warrant officers (0.34 percent, SE = 0.06 percent). Sexual harassment risk among women was 2.9 times greater for nonrates (23.6 percent, SE = 1.29 percent) than for warrant officers (8.3 percent, SE = 1.14 percent) and among men was 3.1 times greater for nonrates (6.2 percent, SE = 0.48 percent) than for warrant officers (2.0 percent, SE = 0.31 percent).

Adjusted risk estimates indicate that several job families are associated with levels of risk that are higher or lower than expected based on the individual characteristics of assigned personnel, suggesting that job-specific factors may confer risk or protective effects (Figures C.12 and C.17). Among women, job families associated with higher-than-expected risk for SASH include electrician's mate, damage controlman, and culinary specialist, whereas maritime enforcement specialists, aviation maintenance technicians, marine science technicians, avionics electronics technicians, and intelligence occupations were associated with lower-than-expected risk across both outcomes. For sexual harassment specifically, women operations specialists and electronics technicians also had higher-than-expected risk, while yeomen had lower-than-expected risk.

Among men, only nonrates had higher-than-expected sexual assault risk. However, many of the same job families associated with elevated sexual harassment risk for women were also elevated for men, including electrician's mate, damage controlman, operations specialist, electronics technician, and culinary specialist. In contrast, men working as aviation maintenance technicians, marine science technicians, avionics electronics technicians, intelligence specialists, and those in specialized job families had lower-than-expected risk of past-year sexual harassment.

[1] *Nonrated* active-duty members are enlisted personnel (E-1 to E-3) who have completed or are undergoing initial accession (recruit training) and have not yet completed certification toward an occupational specialty rating. They are typically the most junior personnel and support general utility and apprentice-level roles across the organization.

Afloat Assignments Are Associated with Substantially Higher SASH Risk Than Shore Units

The Coast Guard classifies units as either *shore* or *afloat*. Cutters are classified as afloat units, whereas Deployable Specialized Forces and FORCECOM units are exclusively shore-based; other major commands include a mix of both (see Appendix C). Assignment to shore or afloat units is a strong predictor of past-year SASH risk for both men and women, with afloat units exhibiting approximately twice the risk of shore units (Figures C.3 and C.8).

Among women, afloat units have 7.4 percent (SE = 0.86 percent) sexual assault risk and 26.6 percent (SE = 1.40 percent) sexual harassment risk, compared with 2.6 percent (SE = 0.23 percent) and 14.2 percent (SE = 0.47 percent), respectively, in shore units. Among men, afloat units have 1.0 percent (SE = 0.14 percent) sexual assault risk and 6.2 percent (SE = 0.41 percent) sexual harassment risk, compared with 0.50 percent (SE = 0.06 percent) and 3.6 percent (SE = 0.14 percent), respectively, in shore units.

For both outcomes, and for men and women, afloat assignments are associated with higher risk than expected based on the individual characteristics of the personnel assigned to those units (Figures C.13 and C.18). Shore commands are associated with lower-than-expected sexual harassment risk for both sexes and lower-than-expected sexual assault risk for women.

SASH Risk Patterns Are Highly Consistent Across Sexes and Outcomes

Groups of service members with higher or lower estimated rates tend to be consistently high or low across both SASH outcomes and for both sexes. Groups with elevated sexual assault or sexual harassment risk among women closely mirror those with elevated risk among men (correlations all above 0.88, $p < 0.001$; Table 4.1, Panel A), indicating that the underlying risk factors are largely shared across sexes.

A similar pattern is observed across outcomes: Groups with high sexual assault risk also tend to have high sexual harassment risk (correlations all above 0.79, $p < 0.001$; Table 4.1, Panel B). This consistency suggests that SASH may reflect a common underlying risk environment. If so, efforts to reduce sexual harassment may also contribute to reductions in sexual assault.

Associations Between SASH and Separation

Prior research on DoD services found that SASH in each year was associated with the loss of 16,000 person-years over the following two years due to premature separations from the military associated with those violations (Morral et al., 2021). We performed similar analyses to understand the association of SASH with separations from the Coast Guard.[2]

The results of this analysis confirm that sexual assault and harassment are significantly associated with premature separations. For sexual harassment, the share of separations associated with prior experiences declines over longer time horizons. Within any one-year period, approximately 6 percent of all separations are associated with sexual harassment within the past six to 18 months, or approximately 176 (95-percent

[2] Specifically, we used Coast Guard administrative data to predict separation in each year based on many factors, such as the service member's age, education, marital status, years of service, current contract end date, and promotion speed. Then, using three cohorts of WGR respondents (2016, 2018, and 2021), we compared actual and predicted separation rates among those who experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment versus those who did not. Using WGR survey weights, we could then extrapolate the higher-than-expected separation rates of those respondents who experienced sexual violations to the full Coast Guard to get population-level estimates of premature separations associated with either sexual assault or sexual harassment. Full details of the data and methods used for this analysis are found in Appendix C.

TABLE 4.1
Correlations in Estimated SASH Rates

Grouping	Levels	Correlation (r)
Panel A: Correlations between men's and women's rates		
Sexual assault		
Pay grade	17	0.904
Job family	21	0.917
Command	16	0.980
Sexual harassment		
Pay grade	17	0.973
Job family	21	0.887
Command	16	0.954
Panel B: Correlations between sexual assault and sexual harassment rates		
Women		
Pay grade	17	0.954
Job family	21	0.917
Command	16	0.945
Men		
Pay grade	17	0.894
Job family	21	0.797
Command	16	0.878

NOTE: All correlations significant, $p < 0.001$.

CI: 64–288) separations. Over a two-year period, this falls to 3 percent of separations, or approximately 321 (95-percent CI: 181–464) separations, associated with sexual harassment that occurred in the year preceding the period. This is very close to the proportion observed in other service branches (4 percent, Morral et al., 2021). Over a three-year period, approximately 2 percent of separations, or 414 (95-percent CI: 254–575) separations, are associated with prior sexual harassment.

The association between sexual assault and separation is stronger than that for sexual harassment, although sexual assault is less common. Among women, a past-year sexual assault more than triples the risk of separating in the following year and is associated with an increase in the probability of separating within three years from 16.7 percent (95-percent CI: 14.8–18.6) to 29.1 percent (95-percent CI: 26.9–31.4). Sexual harassment more than doubles the risk of separating in the following year and is associated with an increase in three-year separation probability from 18.6 percent (95-percent CI: 17.4–19.8) to 25.1 percent (95-percent CI: 24.1–26.1).

Among men, sexual assault is associated with more than a doubling of the probability of separating in the following year and an increase in three-year separation probability from 19.9 percent (95-percent CI: 16.9–22.9) to 36.2 percent (95-percent CI: 32.3–40.2). Sexual harassment is associated with an increase in separation probability from 16.3 percent (95-percent CI: 15.3–17.2) to 21.2 percent (95-percent CI: 20.2–22.2).

Because sexual assault is less common than sexual harassment, it is associated with fewer total separations. In any three-year period, close to 1 percent of all separations are associated with a sexual assault that occurred in the year prior to the period, or roughly 155 (95-percent CI: 84–226) separations. Among women,

more than 2 percent of separations over any three-year period (or 72 [95-percent CI: 29–115] separations) are associated with a past-year sexual assault. Among men, less than 0.5 percent of separations, or 83 (95-percent CI: 26–140) separations, are similarly associated with sexual assault.

Members whose separations were associated with sexual assaults may also have been counted as a separation associated with sexual harassment if they had both experiences. A deduplicated estimate of total annual USCG separations associated with either sexual assault or sexual harassment is 437 (95-percent CI: 273–602).

These estimates do not establish that sexual assault or harassment directly cause separation. It is possible that members who experience these events differ from others in ways that also contribute to shorter-than-expected tenure and that these differences are not fully captured by the characteristics included in our models.

Nevertheless, it is plausible that SASH influences decisions to remain in the service (Curry Hall et al., 2019). If we conservatively assume that those who separate for reasons associated with sexual assault or harassment would otherwise have extended their service by at least two years, these findings imply that SASH contributes to the loss of more than 800 person-years of service annually. Such losses affect readiness, increase replacement costs, and may negatively influence recruitment if the service is perceived as carrying elevated risk of sexual assault or harassment.

In addition to these possible costs of sexual violations borne by the Coast Guard, there are of course significant costs borne by service members themselves. These costs may include mental and physical distress or illness, as well as disrupted careers. In many cases, early separations may cost Coast Guard members hundreds of thousands of dollars in lifetime compensation, both because many members of the military receive higher salaries than they would find in the civilian workforce (Asch et al., 2025; Smith, Asch, and Mattock, 2020) and because military compensation is backloaded to incentivize retention with generous retirement benefits or deferred compensation (Asch, 2025).

Summary

In this chapter, we examined the prevalence, distribution, and consequences of SASH in the Coast Guard. Estimates from the WGR survey show that sexual harassment increased over time, particularly among women, whereas trends in sexual assault are less clear due to changes in measurement. Reporting rates among those who experienced an assault remained relatively low and stable, with about 30 percent of women and 20 percent of men reporting assaults. Declines in retention intention and increases in workplace hostility over the same period suggest a broader deterioration in workplace climate. Patterns observed in the Coast Guard are generally consistent with those seen across other DoD service branches.

Furthermore, SASH risk is not evenly distributed across the force. Higher risk is concentrated among afloat units, junior personnel, and nonrates, with these patterns consistent across both sexes and across sexual assault and harassment. These findings suggest that risk is shaped more by structural and environmental factors than by individual characteristics alone. SASH is also strongly associated with premature separation from the service: Sexual harassment is linked to hundreds of separations over multiyear periods, while sexual assault—though less common—has a larger individual effect on separation risk. Overall, SASH may contribute to the loss of more than 800 person-years of service annually, with implications for readiness, costs, and recruitment, as well as substantial personal consequences for affected service members.

CHAPTER 5

Stakeholder Perspectives on SASH Prevention, Response, and Accountability

In this chapter, we summarize the perceptions and experiences of Coast Guard commanders and support personnel regarding Coast Guard prevention, response, and accountability systems for SASH.[1] Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were conducted with 78 stakeholders involved in SASH prevention and response efforts across the Coast Guard (Table A.4). Drawing from interview data, we identify perceived areas of progress, ongoing challenges, and organizational factors that influence how members understand, engage with, and trust SAPRR-related resources, policies, and leadership actions. Themes include barriers to reporting, accountability concerns, resource constraints, unit-level risk factors, and the central role of command climate and leadership (see Appendix A).[2]

Barriers to Reporting

Stakeholders (a list of stakeholders and their relevance is included in Table A.4) identified multiple barriers that discourage Coast Guard members from reporting sexual assault and harassment. These include knowledge gaps in policies and reporting processes, negative command climates, and fears of peer retaliation and stigma.

Members Lack Detailed Knowledge of Reporting Processes

Interviewees reported wide variation in Coast Guard members' understanding of sexual assault and harassment reporting processes. Although some suggested that members had a general understanding, many emphasized that members often lack familiarity with critical details—particularly the distinction between restricted and unrestricted reporting and the limits of confidentiality. These gaps reportedly persisted despite routine training. FAP representatives also expressed that members may have confusion about whether to seek assistance from a FAS or SARC regarding a sexual assault perpetrated by someone the victim has a personal

[1] We asked participants not to discuss whether they had any personal experiences with sexual assault or harassment but rather to provide input based on their professional experiences in their specific role.

[2] One of the strengths of semistructured interviews is that they provide an opportunity to gather rich, in-depth information from participants. Throughout this chapter, we provide example quotes from interview participants to illustrate the themes we identified across multiple participants. These quotations are intended to be illustrative in nature and not representative. Where possible, we provide approximations of the prevalence of a theme's occurrence in interviews. However, because not all participants answered the same set of questions due to the protocols being tailored for unique stakeholder groups, precise statistical estimates are not possible. It is important to note that semistructured interviews are intended to provide descriptive information, not precise statistical estimates regarding the relative importance of any single theme, such as would be found using a survey. Instead, such interviews are designed to be exploratory and provide greater context and insight into various issues.

relationship with (e.g., dating). Regardless of initial entry point, FAS and SARCs will coordinate a *warm handoff* to the appropriate office.[3] FAP representatives noted that there is no mandated annual FAP training for members, which they said could increase awareness about FAP's role in sexual assault reporting.

Several interviewees noted that members may not retain the information about reporting processes because they do not believe they will ever need to use it. One Special Victims' Counsel (SVC) observed,

> A lot of people don't pay attention to [training], because they think "that's not gonna happen to me" and so they're not prepared when it does.

Similarly, several commanders explicitly noted that even though training exists, many service members do not retain this information or mistrust the confidentiality of the process. One commander noted,

> You can say the people are the most important, but you have to build the trust before they tell you anything. And they don't tell you anything for months.

In contrast, most interviewees said that command teams generally had a good grasp of the reporting procedures. However, the depth of that knowledge reportedly varied by command and individual experience. Commands that regularly consulted with subject-matter experts (SMEs), such as victim advocates, were perceived as more knowledgeable and more proactive.

Command Climate and Culture Can Influence Reporting

More than three-quarters of interviewees who were asked about factors that influence whether a victim of sexual assault chooses to report described how unit culture and command climate affect reporting. Fears of retaliation, reprisal, and being perceived as a "troublemaker" or "weak" were common concerns. One chaplain explained,

> Maybe they're just saying, "I can deal with this, it's not that bad," and then it escalates . . . They don't want to deal with an investigation or filing reports so they'd rather come to us and see what we can work on behind the scenes. Reporting is exhausting.

Interviewees also said that psychological factors, such as shame, guilt, or self-blame, affect reporting. According to interviewees, uncertainty about the confidentiality of the process and concerns about lengthy timelines for case resolution further discouraged reporting. In contrast, trust in the chain of command was identified as a key enabler of reporting.

Retaliation After Reporting Has Declined, but Ostracization from Peers Persists

Interviewees said that formal retaliation by commands is less common and less tolerated than in the past. However, peer retaliation—particularly in the form of ostracism, gossip, and social isolation—remains a concern noted by roughly one-third of interviewees. Even when expedited transfers are granted, the stigma of having reported an incident can follow victims to new units, according to interviewees. One VAPS said,

> Even though there's a lot of confidentiality that goes into this, if it's one of those cases where the victim has expressed something happened and word spreads, everybody now treats that person differently rather than supporting the victim. A lot of victim blaming.

[3] A *warm handoff* is a "confidential and direct transfer of care" (Underwood, 2022).

Accountability Challenges

In this section, we explore concerns about the transparency, timeliness, and fairness of investigations and outcomes, as well as confusion surrounding new policies and stakeholder roles.

Investigation Processes Are Poorly Understood

Interviewees noted that many Coast Guard members lack a clear understanding of how sexual misconduct investigations are conducted. This confusion can foster mistrust, with some members perceiving investigations as biased or opaque. Although CGIS representatives described ongoing efforts to regularly brief commands and improve awareness, a CGIS agent acknowledged the service's shortfalls in communicating investigative procedures:

> It's hard for me to understand how [members] don't understand the [investigation] process. But we don't do a good job of telling them. In the absence of knowledge, they fill in the gaps with the wildest information . . . And because they don't understand, they like to plant the seed of nefariousness.

Stakeholders also stated that OCP processes are not well understood, which might be due to the recent establishment of OCP. Commanders, in particular, expressed deep frustration with OCP. They noted that cases "languish," that communication is poor, and that delays demoralize victims and diminish unit discipline. Addressing this frustration, one commander said,

> I was briefed that their numbers . . . it's a 10 percent take rate, maybe 7, it just stalls . . . I've said it on every CIT call: "She's leaving, we failed her."

SVCs also highlighted challenges that they faced in supporting victims throughout the investigation and subsequent processes. Many victims are unaware that they can request an SVC, and members' general understanding of the SVC role remains limited. SVCs discussed frustration over inconsistent and limited information-sharing about a case by CGIS and commands, hindering their ability to effectively support their client. Commanders also expressed similar frustration regarding receiving case information from CGIS and OCP.

Members Express Frustration with OCP Timelines and Communication

Interviewees described inconsistent enforcement of accountability and frustration with the pace of investigations. Some policies—such as Confide in Another, CATCH, and Safe-to-Report—were seen as promising but insufficiently understood, and stakeholders highlighted the need for clearer policy guidance.[4] Others said that more-visible consequences for perpetrators were needed to strengthen accountability and encourage reporting. One SARC said,

> If people see that others are being held accountable, not only will that help prevent sexual assault and harassment from occurring, but it will also give people faith that if they are opening up about traumatic things in their life, someone will do something.

[4] Notably, FAP representatives reported that the CATCH program did not include FAP sexual assault cases, which they said was an oversight because repeat offenders in intimate partner relationships would not be identified.

Interviewees noted that slow case timelines and limited transparency also erode trust. Several commanders expressed frustration that they receive little information once a case is elevated beyond the unit, leaving them ill-equipped to support victims or reinforce accountability. There was a consistent emphasis that the process from reporting to accountability for sexual assault took too long and that both victims and alleged offenders were held in suspense without progress for long periods awaiting a decision by OCP. One SVC explained,

> The biggest issue my clients face is that they make the decision to come forward and report, and then they're stuck in limbo for a very long time. That uncertainty and feeling of powerlessness, because someone else is making a decision, eats away at them. They just want a decision made one way or another to get closure from these events. The lengthy time for prosecution in the Coast Guard negatively impacts victims.

This perspective suggests that lengthy case timelines not only diminish victim confidence in the system but also undermine command credibility.

Fairness in Case Processes and Outcomes Is Often Questioned

Although most commanders supported recent reforms to remove adjudication authority from the command, some described unintended consequences. In particular, commanders said they felt constrained by a process that gave them little input into case progress or outcomes, even though they are still held responsible for unit climate and discipline:

> I used to have some autonomy and authority to address and pursue administrative or disciplinary actions . . . Now it's not a timely process.

Stakeholders also shared that victims often do not consider the outcomes of their cases to be fair, sometimes because it is difficult to gather the evidence necessary to prosecute. CGIS representatives raised a variety of factors that affect how well an investigation can be completed. These included two key areas: (1) delays in investigation timelines (e.g., parties have different geographic locations or are underway) and (2) challenges in evidence collection (e.g., victim and witnesses agreeing to participate in the investigation, ability of agents to elicit information from interviews, existence of critical evidence). OCP representatives emphasized that sufficient evidence—particularly evidence that meets the elements of a sexual assault offense and would stand up in a criminal case—is essential to advancing a case.

For example, one CGIS representative said,

> Sometimes you just can't gather enough evidence to corroborate an allegation. It's not saying the allegation is false—it's just where the investigation leads you, right? Following all the breadcrumbs, there's just not enough evidence to support those allegations. I feel that sometimes those victims feel it's not fair for the outcome from beginning to end with the investigation.

Stakeholders also noted that what constitutes a "fair" outcome could vary widely from victim to victim. Commanders described frustration with the process:

> Cases can go on for years, we're facing a pretty significant backlog that is harming victims, as they have no resolution, no justice, no accountability. We don't have the resources. It's bad for the victims, and we're not holding perpetrators accountable.

Commanders also noted that when OCP decides that not enough evidence exists for a criminal case, responsibility is deferred back to the unit for a decision about whether to take administrative action and

the nature of any such action. Commanders must then undergo another lengthy process before deciding on administrative or punitive action, which may still ultimately result in discharge of the member for unsatisfactory behavior:

> It went to the Office of the Chief Prosecutor, who kicked it down, got further kicked down to me. It became an administrative process instead of a criminal process. I don't think we gave the member [suspect/accused] due process. The power of the OCP, two-star, the power to bring to bear, all came down to me and my XO [executive officer].

This perspective highlights that the process can seem inequitable when criminal and administrative processes appear to end in the same result after lengthy delays.

Victim Support Resource Shortfalls

Although many resources exist to support sexual assault victims, stakeholders identified uneven accessibility, gaps in support for sexual harassment victims, and major staffing shortfalls that hinder service delivery.

Victim Resources Are Prevalent, but Accessibility Issues and Resource Gaps Persist

Stakeholders acknowledged that while numerous resources exist for sexual assault victims, there are notable gaps in support for sexual harassment victims. Several interviewees reported that when they inquired about available support for sexual harassment victims, they were told that SAPRR lacked the resources to assist:

> My understanding is there isn't anything out there [for victims of sexual harassment], and if you ask SAPRR, "Hey, can your folks assist with this?" they say they don't have the resources for that.

Even among available resources for sexual assault, accessibility remains uneven, according to interviewees. Some stakeholders noted that online resources are available for those who know where to look, but others described significant gaps, particularly in mental health services:

> If I had to put my finger on the single most frustrating thing my clients go through, it's the availability of mental health providers in the Coast Guard and how few there are.

Commanders also highlighted that mental health services were inconsistently available across regions, with some describing months-long waitlists or reliance on civilian providers. As one commander explained,

> We're sending them downtown if we can get them in . . . but most of the time we just give them a hotline and hope they follow through.

Additionally, FAP representatives reported that the program does not have victim advocates to support victims of intimate partner sexual assault. They said that, depending on the availability of SAPRR Volunteer Victim Advocates (VVAs) and the relationship between the FAS and the SARC in the region, a SAPRR VVA may be able to support a victim initially, such as by accompanying them to the hospital for a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner exam, but then must do a "warm handoff" to FAP. However, SAPRR VVAs are largely not available to intimate partner sexual assault victims, and some FAP representatives noted having to go out into the community to find this type of support for victims. FAP representatives identified this as a resource

gap for victims of intimate partners but also noted that VVAs for FAP cases would need to be specially trained regarding the family dynamics that are at play in intimate partner assault or abuse.

Lack of Personnel and Lack of Straightforward Policies Cause Challenges

Interviewees repeatedly highlighted personnel shortages as a key obstacle to both prevention and response. SARC billets were frequently reported as vacant, and many SARCs cover vast geographic areas with little support. FAP representatives described a similar concern regarding their personnel shortages and responsibilities. They said that this limits their ability to engage in proactive outreach or prevention, as they are constantly addressing crises. One SVC bluntly described the situation:

> The SARC billets are frequently empty. The areas are too big to be effectively covered and they're only one deep . . . Because we're only one deep for these large geographic areas, they're doing so much response that they never get to prevention, to that engagement, outreach, education. Gets pushed to the waitlist because they're putting out fires all the time.

Similarly, a FAP representative said,

> The Coast Guard model is always "Do more with less." I think it has always been that way, and we have good people who know the job well, but people get frustrated, burned out, and tired. We're only one deep, and so most of our districts, we don't have an opportunity for someone to cover on-call.

A commander echoed this concern, saying,

> The amount of work put on them is insane, and we will wring them out like a sponge. Then we'll wonder why no one wants those jobs.

There were also concerns raised about throughput and certification processes for developing VVAs to support personnel with long waitlists for training to satisfy requirements.

Units in Which Alcohol Use Is Prevalent, Members Are Isolated, and Few Women Are Present May Increase Risk

Stakeholders described unit-level factors that may increase the risk of sexual misconduct, including alcohol culture, geographic isolation, and male-dominated environments in which problematic behavior is left unchecked.

Stakeholders identified several unit-level characteristics that may increase risk. Alcohol use and drinking culture, mentioned by roughly one-third of interviewees, were the most commonly cited contributors, particularly in deployed environments or during port calls. One VVA remarked,

> One of the biggest ones, the culture of drinking in the military. It definitely gives people opportunity to do things they usually wouldn't do in their right mind. When you're drinking you're not making the best decisions. The culture around drinking leads to situations. Our working life is very different. My wife's job isn't hanging out with coworkers 24/7, they're not three weeks at sea and then go on a port call and everyone gets drunk. That's not part of a normal job.

Remote or isolated units were also identified as higher risk due to a lack of oversight and increased peer dependence, which can discourage reporting. Units with very few women were perceived as more susceptible to gender-based misconduct, especially when leaders failed to intervene in problematic behavior.

Role of Commanders and Unit Culture in Prevention and Response

Commanders and unit culture play a critical role in shaping climate and setting expectations. This section highlights leadership practices that help reduce risk, as well as ongoing limitations in training and resource availability.

Commanders Emphasized the Importance of Visible Leadership and Developing Trust

Across interviews with commanders, they consistently emphasized the importance of visible leadership, focused on respect and accountability, in preventing and responding to SASH. Several leaders noted that early intervention and constant reinforcement of expectations are essential. As one commander explained, "Respect is a nonnegotiable condition of their employment," underscoring the importance of making respect a constant theme in unit communication. Another described the need for direct engagement with personnel: "If I observe any evidence of negative behavior . . . I make sure to address it on the spot," highlighting the role of immediate and clear correction in shaping climate.

Leaders also pointed to critical resources needed for prevention, particularly trusted, embedded personnel, such as SARCs, victim advocates, and mental health professionals. These individuals can help leaders monitor unit dynamics and intervene early: "They know the crew and can spot trouble really, really quick," one commander stated. However, these roles are reportedly often understaffed or not colocated with units, which limits their impact. Interviewees also said that it is much more difficult for embedded personnel to have this same type of impact in larger units, where they are not able to regularly engage with all members. Several commanders also noted the importance of dedicating time toward leadership training, emphasizing that sustained attention to climate cannot be rushed or delegated.

Bystander Intervention Is Seen as Effective, but Stakeholders Desire More In-Person Trainings

Stakeholders emphasized, in addition to leadership engagement, the importance of training in shaping prevention culture. Most interviewees expressed support for bystander intervention training, viewing it as a tool that empowers members to take action and can improve unit prevention culture, particularly when endorsed and promoted by commanders. One VVA said,

> The bystander intervention piece really empowers people . . . They joined the service to make a change and help people. It empowers them to want to do that.

Overall, stakeholders said that training would be more effective if it were provided in-person and interactive rather than online but also noted that longer in-person formats would be a challenge, given the limited number of SAPRR personnel available to facilitate training. One VVA said,

> Not online stuff that people just skip through. We need those uncomfortable scenarios and conversations that really need to happen.

They also indicated that some topics could be covered in more detail (e.g., clarity in such policies as expedited transfers and Confide in Another, more information about different stakeholder roles) and that there should be more leadership involvement in trainings. Some SAPRR staff also reported that training was not always standardized, meaning different stakeholders providing training could emphasize different information, and that standardization of some documents could help improve the collective knowledge of sexual

misconduct in the Coast Guard. As previously noted, FAP representatives suggested that mandatory annual training for all members be modified to include elements of FAP to increase knowledge in that area.

Overarching Thoughts from Stakeholders

Stakeholders observed a positive cultural shift in the Coast Guard's approach to sexual assault and harassment. However, challenges in staffing, policy clarity, and accountability remain. Many interviewees said that the Coast Guard has made significant progress in recent years. One SARC said,

> I really think that we have improved quite a bit in terms of commands and COs and XOs taking sexual assault seriously and making sure that we are focusing on the victim more. I really think we have improved in focusing on the victim. Not every single unit, necessarily, but I think as a whole, in general, even from the top down, it really seems like they want there to be change and they really want victims to feel comfortable.

Overall, stakeholders said that the "response" piece to sexual assault and harassment was improving and on the right track. Notably, however, some commanders expressed concern that momentum may be slowing in the absence of continued top-down reinforcement, with one stating, "We had momentum after Fouled Anchor, but it's hard to sustain."

Summary

Table 5.1 summarizes key findings from interviews with Coast Guard stakeholders and commanders. These findings highlight both areas of progress and persistent challenges in the service's efforts to prevent, respond to, and recover from sexual assault and harassment.

TABLE 5.1
Summary of Coast Guard Stakeholder and Commander Interviews

Section	Key Findings
Barriers to reporting	Members lack detailed knowledge of reporting options; confidentiality concerns, fear of retaliation, and peer stigma persist.
Accountability challenges	Investigation processes are poorly understood; long investigative timelines and lack of transparency frustrate victims and commanders.
Victim support resource shortfalls	Sexual assault resources exist, but access is uneven due to geographic distances; support for sexual harassment victims and intimate partner services is limited.
Risk factors	Alcohol culture, geographic isolation, and male-dominated units contribute to higher risk.
Roles of commanders and unit culture in prevention and response	Visible leadership and trusted embedded personnel improve climate; bystander training can improve prevention culture, but more in-person training is desired.
Overarching thoughts	Cultural improvements noted; momentum may slow without reinforcement; staffing and accountability gaps remain.

CHAPTER 6

Summary and Recommendations

In this chapter, we synthesize findings from the preceding analysis and present policy options to address the most consequential structural and implementation challenges identified across the Coast Guard's SASH prevention, response, and accountability systems. These findings draw on policy review, administrative data analysis, stakeholder interviews, and assessment of service-level practices conducted between September 2024 and April 2026, as described in previous chapters.

Our analysis identifies a consistent pattern: Although individual programs addressing SASH have developed meaningful capabilities, the overall system remains fragmented, unevenly implemented, and constrained by gaps in governance, resources, and data integration. In addition, a consistent gap emerges between policy requirements and implementation in practice, with variability across units shaping outcomes as much as formal policy design. These conditions affect prevention effectiveness, response credibility, and service member trust.

The following sections summarize seven priority issues and present policy options for addressing each. The relationship between the options varies by priority issue. Some options present alternative approaches to the same objective, while others are complementary actions that could be implemented together or sequenced over time. Each section identifies the intended relationship between its options. Each policy option has been reviewed by SMEs in the Coast Guard (see Appendix D). We also compared these options with directed actions from the Coast Guard's ATR (U.S. Coast Guard, 2023; see Appendix E) and developed rough order of magnitude (ROM) cost estimates for the options (see Appendix F). Implementing these recommendations alongside previous reforms will strengthen the Coast Guard's efforts to reduce the occurrence and impacts of SASH in the service.

Priority Issues

The findings presented in this report highlight seven cross-cutting challenges:

1. Fragmented policy architecture limits coherence, clarity of authority, and accountability.
2. Prevention is treated primarily as training compliance rather than as a sustained capability.
3. Variable training quality, consistency, and focus limits prevention effectiveness.
4. Leadership expectations are central to outcomes but are not consistently operationalized.
5. Response systems have improved, but trust remains fragile due to communication, transparency, and timeline challenges.
6. Resource constraints create a reactive system with limited capacity for prevention and sustained engagement.
7. Data fragmentation and governance challenges limit evaluation, oversight, and organizational learning.

Issue 1. Fragmented Policy Architecture Limits Coherence, Clarity of Authority, and Accountability

Coast Guard SASH-related policy is distributed across multiple directives governing sexual assault (SAPRR), intimate partner violence (FAP), and sexual harassment (AHPO and Civil Rights), without an integrating framework. This fragmentation creates overlapping authorities, inconsistent guidance, and uncertainty regarding policy primacy. The lack of a robust enterprise governance structure, coordinated oversight, and shared data leads to an incomplete understanding of SASH trends, program effectiveness, responses, and victim experiences across the programs. In practice, guidance is also conveyed through nondirective materials—such as ALCOAST messages, training materials, and program communications—which may include policy-like language without formal authority, further complicating interpretation and implementation. Requirements originating from DHS and DoD are not always fully translated into Coast Guard–specific procedures, contributing to gaps between external mandates and operational execution. In addition, inconsistent terminology across documents—particularly for distinctions between administrative and criminal procedures for SASH—can create ambiguity in reporting thresholds and command responsibilities.

Together, these factors contribute to uneven implementation across units, confusion among commanders and practitioners, and limited accountability for outcomes. Relationship-based distinctions—particularly the division between SAPRR and FAP for sexual assault cases—further reinforce parallel processes and can result in inconsistent victim experiences across systems. The following options present alternative approaches to improving policy integration.

Policy Options

Option 1A. A more comprehensive approach would be to establish a single authoritative SASH instruction that consolidates prevention, response, recovery, and accountability guidance into a unified directive. This would create a clear policy center of gravity; explicitly define how SAPRR, FAP, AHPO, and related authorities interface; and provide a consistent framework for implementation and oversight across the enterprise. The primary advantage of this approach is greater coherence and reduced ambiguity. However, it would require substantial coordination across program offices and could disrupt established roles and processes in the near term.

Option 1B. A less disruptive path would retain existing program-specific instructions while introducing a formal governance overlay to clarify roles, policy hierarchy, and coordination requirements. This approach would improve alignment and reduce confusion without requiring wholesale restructuring. At the same time, it would leave the underlying fragmentation largely intact and may limit the Coast Guard's ability to fully resolve long-standing challenges related to coherence and accountability. Either of these approaches could also be used to standardize victim support expectations across SAPRR, FAP, and AHPO, improving continuity when cases move across systems.

Issue 2. Prevention Is Treated Primarily as Training Compliance Rather Than as a Sustained Capability

Prevention efforts are largely training-centric, with success defined by completion rather than demonstrated capability. Existing training approaches vary in quality and alignment with evidence-based practices, and there is no integrated strategy linking training, risk factors, and desired behavioral outcomes. As a result, prevention activities are not consistently designed, reinforced, or evaluated as part of a sustained capability. Options 2A and 2B offer different levels of enterprise integration and resource allocation.

Policy Options

Option 2A. Defining prevention as an enterprise-wide capability would shift the focus from training completion to measurable outcomes. This option would involve establishing minimum standards for program design, requiring interactive and skill-based approaches, and implementing a small set of common indicators to assess effectiveness. Such an approach would improve consistency and support enterprise-level learning, though it would likely reduce flexibility in how units tailor prevention activities.

Option 2B. Alternatively, prevention efforts could remain decentralized, with individual programs required to clearly articulate how their activities reduce risk and how success will be measured. Requiring program-specific logic models would improve transparency and strengthen analytic rigor without imposing uniform standards. The trade-off is that differences across programs would remain, making it more difficult to compare effectiveness or identify enterprise-wide patterns.

Issue 3. Variable Training Quality, Consistency, and Focus Limits Prevention Effectiveness

Survey results show SASH risk is not evenly distributed across the Coast Guard. Risk is concentrated in particular operational environments and workforce groups, including cutter commands, afloat units, junior personnel, nonrates, and several job families. These findings suggest that prevention training must do more than provide general awareness across the force; it must build practical skills in the settings and among the populations where risk is highest.

Furthermore, existing SASH training does not consistently demonstrate strong alignment with evidence-based prevention practices. Some materials include useful content on bystander intervention, policy awareness, and reporting options, but the quality of training varies by format, setting, and delivery approach. Training is less likely to be effective when it is passive, brief, online-only, or insufficiently tailored to the rank, role, and operational context of the audience. Options 3A and 3B are complementary: The tiered model establishes differentiated prevention levels, and policy-based triggers specify when those levels should apply.

Policy Options

Option 3A. The Coast Guard could establish a tiered SASH training model that distinguishes between universal baseline training and enhanced training for higher-risk environments and groups. All members would continue to receive core annual training on reporting options, bystander intervention, retaliation prevention, and available support. However, units or populations with elevated risk—such as cutter commands, afloat units, junior enlisted members, nonrates, and selected job families—would receive additional prevention content tailored to their operational context. This approach would also allow the Coast Guard to preserve enterprise-wide consistency while increasing training intensity where the potential prevention payoff is greatest. If implementing this option, the Coast Guard would need to avoid stigmatizing specific units or groups.

Option 3B. An alternative, more dynamic option could be to establish triggers for enhanced SASH prevention training based on command climate survey results, reporting patterns, high turnover, prior incidents, or other risk indicators, assuming baseline training remains as implemented. Commands meeting predefined thresholds would receive additional facilitated training, leadership coaching, or prevention support from SAPRR, AHPO, FAP, or integrated prevention personnel. This option would allow training intensity to respond dynamically to emerging risks rather than rely solely on static categories, such as unit type or rank. It would also reinforce that prevention is an ongoing capability rather than an annual compliance event. However, it would require clear governance in terms of thresholds, data access, and safeguards to ensure that increased reporting is not interpreted punitively.

Issue 4. Leadership Expectations Are Central to Outcomes but Are Not Consistently Operationalized

Leadership behavior emerged as a primary determinant of unit climate, reporting behavior, and prevention effectiveness. However, policy guidance largely describes leadership responsibilities in general terms without clearly defining expected behaviors or linking them to accountability mechanisms. Interviews also highlighted the importance of peer dynamics, including stigma, ostracization, and informal retaliation following reports, which remain persistent barriers to reporting. Options 4A and 4B are complementary and would be strongest if implemented together.

Policy Options

Option 4A. Clarifying leadership responsibilities in more concrete terms would provide greater consistency in how prevention and response expectations are applied across units. Clarification could include defining specific behaviors related to climate management, engagement with prevention personnel, and active intervention in peer dynamics, such as retaliation or ostracization. Linking these expectations to existing oversight mechanisms would strengthen accountability, although it may be viewed as limiting command discretion.

Option 4B. A more indirect approach would emphasize reinforcement rather than formalization, embedding expectations for prevention and climate management into leadership development, mentoring, and evaluation processes. This would increase the visibility and salience of these responsibilities over time but would rely more heavily on cultural uptake than on enforceable standards, potentially resulting in uneven implementation. Either approach could be paired with mechanisms to assess implementation consistency across units, such as inspections, command climate assessments, or program reviews tied to defined standards.

Issue 5. Response Systems Have Improved, but Trust Remains Fragile Due to Communication, Transparency, and Timeline Changes

The Coast Guard has made meaningful progress in strengthening victim-centered response systems, particularly for sexual assault. However, trust remains fragile due to long investigative timelines, limited transparency, and inconsistent communication across CGIS, OCP, commands, and victims. These challenges are compounded by limited understanding of investigative processes and evidentiary standards. In addition, sexual harassment cases lack comparable victim support structures, resulting in uneven support across SASH domains. Options 5A and 5B address distinct but related sources of distrust and may be implemented independently or together.

Policy Options

Option 5A. Standardizing communication practices across the response system would improve transparency and reduce uncertainty for both victims and commands. Establishing clear expectations for when and how updates are provided could make processes more predictable without altering investigative standards. Implementing such changes would require coordination across multiple entities and could increase administrative burden.

Option 5B. Improving efficiency within existing processes offers another path. Identifying bottlenecks, clarifying handoffs, and reducing redundancies could shorten timelines and improve perceptions of fairness. These changes would need to be implemented carefully to avoid creating pressure to prioritize speed at the expense of investigative rigor or due process.

Issue 6. Resource Constraints Create a Reactive System with Limited Capacity for Prevention and Sustained Engagement

Staffing shortages, uneven geographic distribution, and high workloads among SARCs, VAPS, FAS, investigators, and mental health providers limit the system's capacity for prevention and sustained engagement. Stakeholder interviews highlighted that SASH support personnel are often consumed by response demands, resulting in a reactive posture. Resource gaps are particularly evident in remote locations and in support for sexual harassment victims, where dedicated advocacy structures are limited. Option 6A provides a permanent staffing approach, while Option 6B offers a more flexible augmentation strategy that may serve as an alternative or supplement.

Policy Options

Option 6A. Targeting additional resources based on risk and access would allow the Coast Guard to focus limited personnel and support capacity where they are most needed. Reassigning resources to higher-risk units or locations with limited access to services could improve both prevention and response in the near term. However, this approach may create perceptions of inequity, and it depends on having sufficiently reliable data to guide allocation decisions.

Option 6B. Expanding capacity through augmentation strategies provides an additional avenue. Increasing volunteer pipelines, streamlining certification processes, and developing flexible support models for remote environments could extend system reach more quickly. These measures can help address immediate gaps, but they are unlikely to substitute for sustained increases in staffing and may rely on variable personnel availability. Either change could be paired with expanding victim support mechanisms for sexual harassment cases to align more closely with those available for sexual assault.

Issue 7. Data Fragmentation and Governance Challenges Limit Evaluation, Oversight, and Organizational Learning

SASH-related data are distributed across multiple systems with differing definitions, reporting standards, and access controls, limiting the Coast Guard's ability to assess trends, evaluate program effectiveness, and support accountability. These structural divisions also affect continuity of victim support, particularly when cases move across SAPRR, FAP, and AHPO systems. Barriers to accessing externally maintained data further constrain analysis and reflect broader challenges in data governance and stewardship. At the same time, the absence of clearly defined prevention outcomes and standardized measures limits the Coast Guard's ability to assess effectiveness beyond training completion, even where data are available. Options 7A and 7B are best understood as staged approaches: 7B can strengthen near-term governance and interoperability while the Coast Guard evaluates or develops the longer-term integrated environment proposed in 7A.

Policy Options

Option 7A. Moving toward a more integrated data environment would enable more comprehensive analysis and improve oversight by aligning definitions, databases, entry and reporting standards, access controls, and governance across systems. A more integrated data environment would strengthen the Coast Guard's ability to evaluate programs and identify trends, but it would require substantial investment and coordination and may take time to implement.

Option 7B. A more incremental step would focus on clarifying data stewardship by assigning responsibility for data access, integration, and analysis within an existing organizational function. This incremental step could improve analytic capability in the near term and help resolve access bottlenecks. However, it would not fully address the structural fragmentation of existing systems and would depend on effective execution.

SME Review of Recommendations and Policy Options

We developed an online form and provided it to Coast Guard SMEs to gather structured and open-ended feedback on the seven proposed recommendations. The Coast Guard Office of SAPRR Oversight and Policy (CG-WFS-3) circulated the form, and 17 respondents completed the instrument.

Respondents generally viewed the recommended areas as worthwhile and beneficial, with an overall sense that implementing each recommendation could improve the Coast Guard's prevention of and response to SASH. Most proposals were seen as only moderately difficult to carry out, suggesting a broad perception that meaningful improvements are possible without facing insurmountable implementation barriers.

Respondents said that the clearest priorities were addressing resource constraints and clarifying fragmented policy authority. SMEs also placed strong emphasis on leadership accountability, trust in the response system, and training quality, whereas data fragmentation and shifting prevention toward measurable outcomes were seen as somewhat less compelling, though still important. When asked to identify the most critical area, respondents most often pointed to consolidating or coordinating authorities within a unified policy framework, followed by expanding support capacity and strengthening leadership accountability. Appendix A provides the study methods and limitations of the SME feedback, and Appendix D provides an in-depth analysis of the SME review of recommendations and policy options.

Conclusion

Taken together, the findings in this report indicate that the Coast Guard's SASH efforts are constrained less by the absence of programs than by how those programs are structured, implemented, and integrated. Fragmented policy authority, uneven execution across units, and gaps in data and measurement limit the effectiveness of prevention and the credibility of response systems. At the same time, the analysis highlights areas of meaningful progress—particularly in strengthening sexual assault response capabilities—that provide a foundation for further improvement. Addressing the identified challenges will require not only refining policy content but also strengthening governance, clarifying expectations, and improving consistency in implementation across the enterprise. The policy options outlined in this chapter are intended to support that effort by offering alternative approaches to improving coherence, accountability, and effectiveness across prevention, response, and oversight functions.

APPENDIX A

Study Methods

This appendix provides additional detail on the methods used to assess policies, programs, and practices related to SASH. We used a mixed-methods approach that combined a review of Coast Guard policy and program documents; a review of empirical and gray literature on prevention, response, and recovery practices; analysis of Coast Guard reporting and incident data; and interviews with key Coast Guard stakeholders involved in SASH prevention, response, victim support, investigation, adjudication, and accountability. Together, these methods allowed us to examine both the formal design of Coast Guard systems and how those systems are understood and implemented in practice and provided a basis for comparative analysis with evidence-informed methods. Technical details for the quantitative survey analyses used to estimate prevalence, subgroup risk, and associations with separation are provided in Appendix C.

Policy and Document Review

We conducted a comprehensive review of Coast Guard policies, practices, procedures, and resources relevant to SASH prevention, response, recovery, and accountability. This review covered documents issued from 2002 to 2024. Documents ranged from PowerPoint presentations to statutory texts and were primarily sourced from official Coast Guard channels. The objective was to identify, categorize, and assess policies related to SASH. The review aimed to evaluate the consistency, clarity, and coverage of relevant directives and to assess their alignment with statutory mandates, institutional responsibilities, and cultural change efforts.

We analyzed 128 files in total. These included ALCOAST messages, COMDTINSTs, statutory guidance, and internal communications. Inclusion criteria required reference to sexual assault, sexual harassment, military sexual trauma, or broader behavioral standards. For the purposes of this study, the term *policy document* was applied only to documents that were authoritative or provided mandatory requirements. For example, "Flag Voice" documents, though widely disseminated, lack formal policy status or authoritative instruction. Additionally, there was inconsistency across these documents in terms of standardized definitions. To enable uniformity in our review, key terms were defined—based on existing documents and approved by the Coast Guard—as follows:

- **Prevention:** Policies, programs, or practices that reduce risk factors and lead toward eliminating sexual assault and other harmful behaviors.
- **Response:** Near-term actions that ensure the safety of and support for sexual assault victims, including reporting, medical, legal, and advocacy.
- **Recovery:** Actions that contribute to the long-term wellness and empowerment of a sexual assault victim, including medical, behavioral care, legal services, and administrative support.
- **Accountability:** Systems that hold members responsible for enforcing laws, policies, and standards.

We developed a multisheet Excel workbook to support this review, documenting key attributes, such as document type, effective date, relevant populations (civilian, enlisted, officer); mention of sexual assault,

sexual harassment, or military sexual trauma; implementation bodies; and definitions used. Reviewers used standardized dropdowns and open-ended fields to ensure consistency. Key elements coded included

- explicit mention of sexual assault or sexual harassment
- intended audience
- definition quality
- implementation responsibility
- document status (new, amended, or referencing prior policy).

Reviewers also flagged foundational cross-references and policy gaps. A thematic matrix enabled gap identification and alignment checks with Coast Guard mandates and cultural goals. Figures A.1 and A.2 illustrate the key points of the documents providing policy and guidance for sexual assault and sexual harassment, respectively.

Literature Review

We conducted a structured review of academic and gray literature published between January 1, 2021, and November 22, 2024. The review focused on research and theory relevant to the prevention of, response to, and recovery from SASH. Because relatively little published research evaluates military-specific programs, we also considered evidence on sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, and broader violence-prevention programs implemented in educational, workplace, and community settings. The review emphasized studies and synthesis reports that evaluated program outcomes or identified characteristics associated with effective prevention, response, or recovery approaches.

Searches across seven academic and government databases yielded 782 unique documents. Records were reviewed for substantive relevance to these domains and retained when they provided empirical findings, synthesized an evidence base, described a theoretically grounded intervention, or otherwise informed the best-practice criteria used in this report. Seventy-five records advanced to full-text review, including meta-analyses, systematic and scoping reviews, and evaluations of relevant training and intervention programs. Key terms were defined as follows:

- **Evidence-Based Programs:** Interventions with demonstrated effectiveness based on empirical evaluation.
- **Prevention:** Strategies to reduce or eliminate the occurrence of SASH.
- **Response:** Immediate actions taken to ensure victim safety, initiate reporting, and provide support.
- **Recovery:** Longer-term efforts to support healing and reduce the psychological impact of SASH.

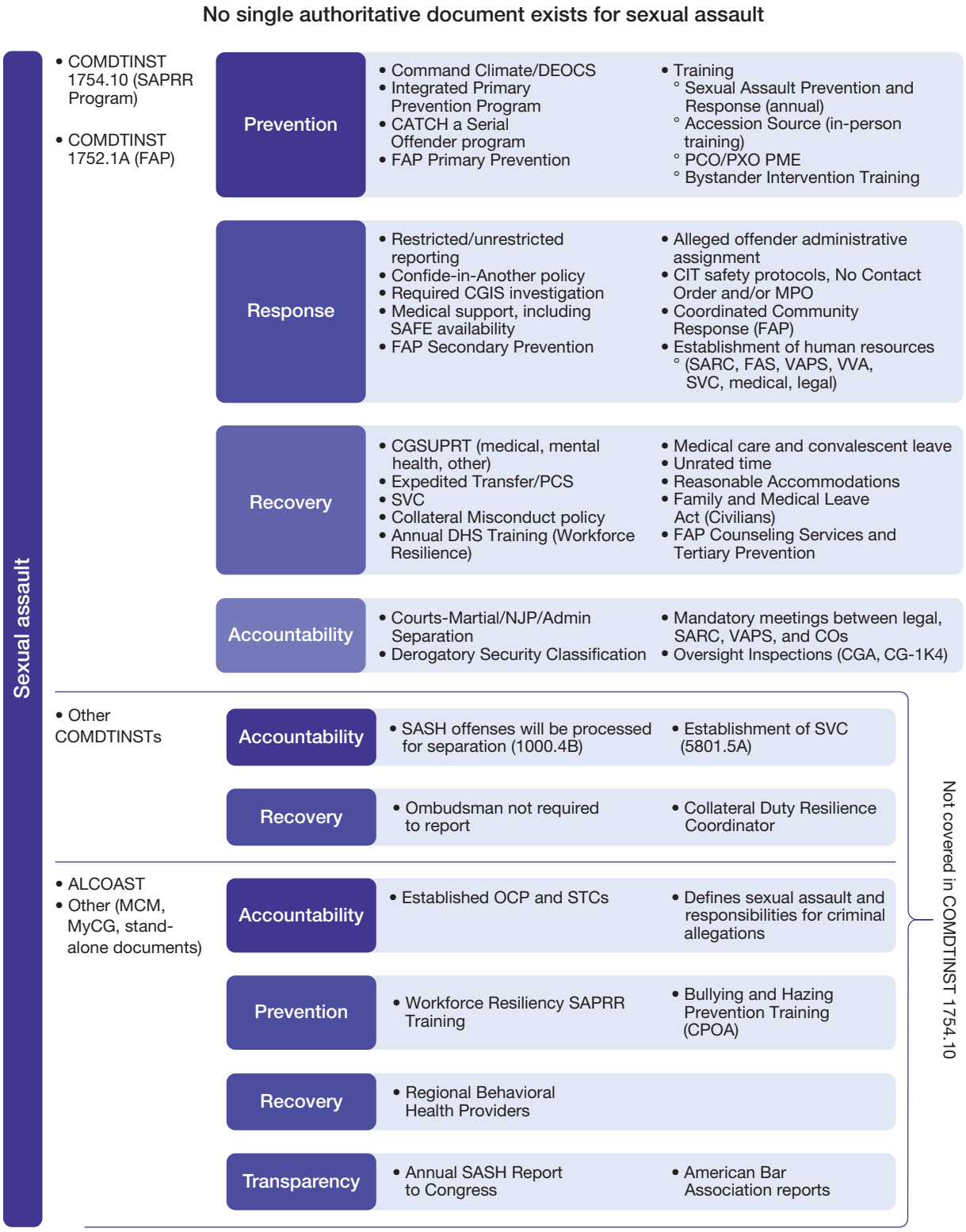
Table A.1 lists information on the literature obtained for our review of evidence-based practices.

Quantitative Reporting and Incident Review

In addition to policy and literature reviews, we examined recent trends in Coast Guard reporting data on SASH from 2015 to 2023. These data were drawn from several key sources, including AHPO (DCP-WFS-5), the Civil Rights Directorate (CG-00H), CGIS, the Civilian Workforce Relations Office (DCP-WMC), and the SAPRR Program Office (DCP-WFS-3). We received limited data from the Coast Guard's FAP Office (CG-WFS-1) on the totals of unrestricted reporting for sexual assault allegations between intimate partners

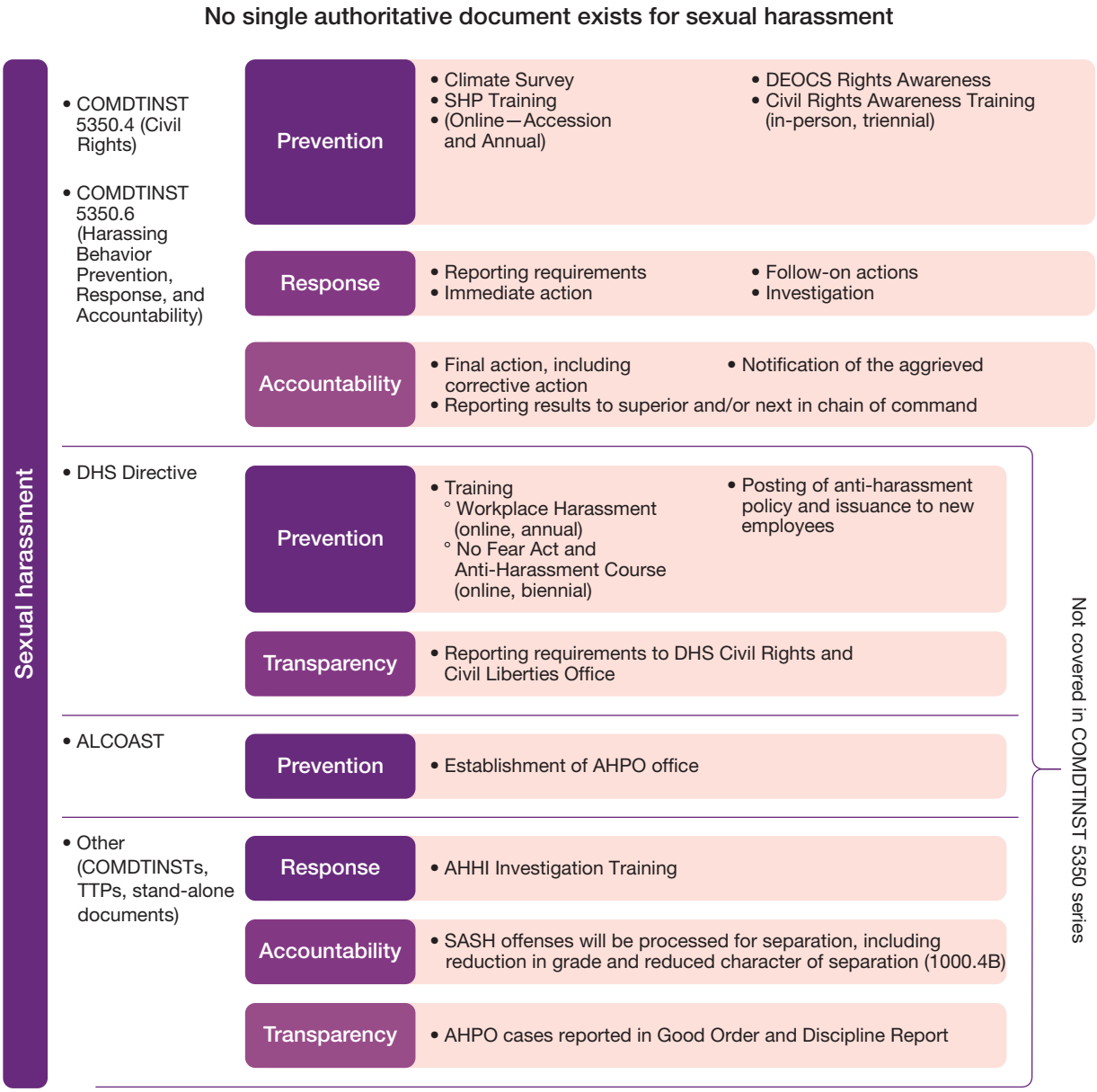
FIGURE A.1

Summary of Policy Documents on Sexual Assault for the Coast Guard



NOTE: CGA = Coast Guard Academy; CPOA = Chief Petty Officers Association; MCM = Manual for Courts-Martial; MPO = Military Protective Order; NJP = Non-Judicial Punishment; PCO/PXO = Prospective Commanding Officer and Prospective Executive Officer; PCS = Permanent Change of Station; PME = professional military education; SAFE = Sexual Assault Forensic Examination; STC = Special Trial Counsel.

FIGURE A.2
Summary of Policy Documents on Sexual Harassment for the Coast Guard



NOTE: AHHI = Anti-Harassment and Hate Incident; TTPs = Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures.

without associated details (such as the victim's and/or accused's rank, sex, or relationship). We also received only three years of data from CGIS (2021–2023) because the USCG had not yet digitized data from previous years. Although each of these entities plays a distinct role in addressing SASH, together they provide a picture of trends across the service. Importantly, underreporting remains (Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021). Our analysis primarily consists of descriptive statistics, with trends examined over time and across demographic and geographic categories.

Data received from the SAPRR office included 1,708 restricted and unrestricted cases reported in 2015 and later; however, many cases were missing dates and other information. Data received from the CGIS office included 479 unrestricted cases from 2021 to 2024; however, 21 cases did not have dates of the incident. Theo-

TABLE A.1
Literature Search Results, by Database

Database	Harmful Behaviors Results	Prevention Results	Effectiveness Results	Combined Search (S1 + S2 + S3)	Reviews Identified	Final Included (2021–2024, English)
APA PsycInfo	2,020	53,110	121,655	485	38	9
Military and Government Collection	9,197	304,762	558,043	212	19 (plus 12 GAO)	14
PubMed	38,037	4,528,413	14,547,855	6,776	1,089	418
DTIC	—	—	—	18,719 → 1,624	—	84
Homeland Security Digital Library	—	—	—	—	—	106
Policy Commons	—	—	—	409 → 157	—	157
Policy File Index	945	62,949	105,438	150	—	30

NOTE: APA = American Psychological Association; DTIC = Defense Technical Information Center; GAO = U.S. Government Accountability Office.

retically, the two databases should have an identical number of unrestricted cases, but we identified unique cases in each database. Data from FAP included 121 unrestricted intimate partner allegations between FYs 2015 and 2024, with 68 cases meeting the criteria for sexual assault. The FAP, CGIS, and SAPRR offices do not share a common database structure or case identification codes. Because of these limitations, it was particularly challenging to screen for duplicate data and ensure a precise analysis among the FAP, SAPRR, and CGIS databases to understand total sexual assault cases across the Coast Guard. For SAPRR and CGIS databases, we were able to screen by matching incident dates and reporting dates to determine duplicates, likely duplicates, and possible duplicates, as described in Table A.2. The results of the screening for matches are included in Table A.3. It is not clear why dates were missing or different in the data, but this could be attributed to improper data entry, procedural differences, or different reporting and database entry times to a SARC, victim advocate, or CGIS agent. FAP uses the CGCR database for unrestricted cases and does not share its information with the SAPRR program, which uses the DSAID for case management. CGIS uses its own data storage system, which is not connected to the DSAID. Restricted FAP cases are kept in local hard-copy files and are not entered into the CGCR database. The different usage, scope, and function of the three systems reflect the challenges and potential inconsistencies in data integration and reporting practices and in developing a complete understanding of sexual assault in the Coast Guard.

TABLE A.2
Duplicate Data Analysis for Sexual Assault

	Same Report Date	Report Date +/– 1 Day	No Report Date Listed	Different Report Date
Same incident date	Duplicate	Likely duplicate	Possible duplicate	Unique
Incident date +/– 1 day	Likely duplicate	Possible duplicate	Possible duplicate	Unique
No incident date listed	Possible duplicate	Possible duplicate	Unknown	Unique
Different incident date	Unique	Unique	Unique	Unique

TABLE A.3
Duplicate Data Results for Sexual Assault in CGIS and SAPRR Databases (All Reports)

Case Type	Source	Amount
Unrestricted	Duplicates (2021–2024)	35
	Likely duplicates (2021–2024)	27
	Possible duplicates (2021–2024)	142
	Unknown (no reporting or incident dates)	200
	Unique CGIS unrestricted cases (2021–2024)	275
	Unique SAPRR unrestricted cases (2015–2024)	973
	Unique FAP reported cases (2015–2024)	121
	Total unique unrestricted cases (2015–2024)	1,773
Restricted	Total restricted cases (SAPRR, 2015–2024), including reports without dates	331

NOTE: The table includes both substantiated and unsubstantiated FAP cases.

Quantitative Survey Analyses

We also drew on survey data on sexual assault, unwanted sexual contact, and sexual harassment among active component Coast Guard from the 2016, 2018, and 2021 WGR administrations and linked these data to Coast Guard administrative records using anonymized identifiers. We used these data to estimate SASH prevalence and trends, identify subgroup risk by organizational characteristics, and assess associations between SASH exposure and premature separation. Additional technical details are provided in Appendix C.

Interviews

As described in Chapter 4, we conducted interviews with 78 stakeholders across the Coast Guard involved in SASH prevention and response efforts. Table A.4 lists those personnel and their roles in SASH, and this information provided the basis for stakeholder engagement via interviews.

To identify participants, we reached out to stakeholders, with contact information provided by the sponsor office, via email to invite them to participate, and individuals responded to indicate interest. For commanders, we considered location, unit size, time in the position, and SASH incidence potential to ensure variety across these variables among our participants.

Interviews were voluntary, roughly 60 minutes in length, conducted virtually, and covered a variety of topics related to SASH prevention and response in the Coast Guard. One research team member facilitated the interview, and another research team member took notes during the interview.

Once interviews were complete, we uploaded interview notes into the Dedoose qualitative coding software. We then coded and analyzed the qualitative data to identify key themes and trends across interviews.

TABLE A.4
SASH Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Role in Sexual Assault Processes	Role in Sexual Harassment Processes
SARCs	• Manage sexual assault cases • Inform victims of their rights, reporting options, and available resources • Connect victims to desired resources and support • Convene CITs and provide case management • Communicate with the command, CGIS, and other relevant stakeholders • Support victims through duration of recovery process • Provide SAPRR training	• No formal role but can provide guidance and refer to appropriate stakeholders
VAPS	• Receive reports of sexual assault • Inform victims of their rights, reporting options, and available resources • Identify relevant local resources • Connect victims to desired resources and support • Support SARC with case management and SAPRR training	• No formal role but can provide guidance and refer to appropriate stakeholders
VVAs	• Provide guidance to victims on reporting options • Take reports of sexual assault • Connect victims to resources • Provide support to victims • Coordinate with SARC as needed • Assist with SAPRR training	• No formal role but can provide guidance and refer to appropriate stakeholders
Chaplains	• Provide confidential counseling to victim or accused perpetrator • Advise victims on options for reporting and accessing resources • Connect victims to appropriate reporting authority or resources	• Provide confidential counseling to victim or accused perpetrator • Advise victims on options for reporting and accessing resources • Connect victims to appropriate reporting authority or resources
EEOs/EOAs	• No formal role but can refer to appropriate stakeholders	• Take victims' reports of sexual harassment • Advise victims on options and file complaints • Advise on available resources • Advise command and provide training on civil rights
Commanders/ Officer in Charge	• Coordinate with SARC, CGIS, OCP, and all relevant stakeholders, including up the chain of command • Responsible for completing commander's checklist and confirming victim is safe and connected with resources • Support member needs, including by facilitating transfer, if desired • Maintain confidentiality for parties involved • Adjudicate any administrative actions under their purview	• Coordinate with EO, AHPO, CGIS, and relevant stakeholders, including up the chain of command • Responsible for safety of victim and confidentiality of case • Manage investigations and take administrative or disciplinary action, as required
AHPO representatives	• No formal role but can refer to appropriate stakeholders	• Receive and manage reports and investigations of AHHI complaints • Coordinate with CGIS, command, and legal until case adjudication • Provide training and guidance

Table A.4—Continued

Stakeholder	Role in Sexual Assault Processes	Role in Sexual Harassment Processes
CGIS agents	• Conduct investigation of the sexual assault report, including evidence-gathering and interviewing victim, accused, and any witnesses	• For sexual harassment cases that rise to the level of investigation, conduct investigation of the sexual harassment report, including evidence-gathering and interviewing victim, accused, and any witnesses
OCP	• Evaluate the evidence from the investigation to determine whether a case meets the criteria for trial and prosecution or deferral back to the command for possible administrative action	• Evaluate the evidence from the investigation to determine whether a case meets the criteria for trial and prosecution or deferral back to the command for possible administrative action
SVCs	• Represent and advocate for victims through legal counsel and assistance during the investigation and through administrative or criminal avenues	• May consult in sexual harassment cases
FAP representatives	• Manage sexual assault cases between intimate partners (including covered civilians) • Inform victims of their rights, reporting options, and available resources and connect victims to desired resources and support • In unrestricted reports, notify command, CGIS, and Incident Determination Committee • Provide training and education on FAP	• No formal role but can refer to appropriate stakeholders

NOTE: EEOs/EOAs = Equal Employment Opportunity Specialists and Equal Opportunity Advisers. Role descriptions are based on stakeholder interviews and how stakeholders described their roles in the SASH processes.

SME Review of Recommendations and Policy Options

We administered an online form to gather structured and open-ended feedback on seven proposed recommendation areas. The Coast Guard Office of SAPRR Oversight and Policy (CG-WFS-3) circulated the HSOAC-developed survey link to SMEs. Seventeen respondents completed the instrument, which collected basic professional characteristics—including assigned district, role, and time in role—followed by ratings of the anticipated implementation difficulty, expected impact, and priority of each issue or recommendation area. Difficulty and impact were measured using seven-point bipolar scales centered at zero, with difficulty ranging from –3 (extremely easy) to +3 (extremely difficult) and impact ranging from –3 (major negative impact) to +3 (major positive impact). Priority was measured using a seven-point unipolar scale ranging from 0 (not a priority) to 6 (top priority). Respondents also provided written explanations for their ratings and identified issues or considerations relevant to implementation. A final item asked respondents to select the recommendation they considered most critical, with space for additional comments.

Quantitative responses were coded numerically and summarized using means-based analysis. Open-ended responses were imported into NVivo and analyzed using a hybrid deductive-inductive coding approach. The areas and survey questions provided the initial organizational structure, while substantive themes were developed from recurring concerns, anticipated benefits, implementation conditions, and potential unintended consequences identified in respondents' narratives.

Limitations

Policy and Document Review

The policy and document review described in this appendix assessed the content and structure of written directives and guidance as provided or made accessible to the research team. This approach has two limitations. First, we cannot assess the degree to which policies are implemented consistently at the unit level; written policy architecture may diverge from actual practice in ways the review cannot detect. Second, some unit-level or informally circulated guidance may not have been captured in the document set reviewed.

Gaps identified in Chapters 1 and 2 accordingly reflect gaps in policy as written. These findings may overstate gaps in practice if units have developed local solutions not reflected in policy documents or may understate gaps if policies are unevenly implemented. Because we were not provided access to locally generated policies or practices that may be implemented beyond service policies, there is the possibility that gaps identified in the research and detailed in this report do not exist in local geographic areas.

Literature Review

The evidence base on SASH prevention and response draws primarily on research conducted in the U.S. Army and broader military contexts; Coast Guard–specific evidence is limited. To address the limited evidence base on the Coast Guard—as a unique service—we relied on SASH literature from other military services. For example, the data reported in Chapter 3 indicate that incidents disproportionately occur on afloat assets—a practice not common across civilian organizations—therefore, the use of literature from the military services is likely to be more relevant to the Coast Guard than literature from civilian workforces but may not be an exact counterpart. The literature review was structured to identify best practices most relevant to the Coast Guard's programs and mission context rather than as a systematic review with preregistered search criteria and formal quality appraisal.

Best-practice comparisons in Chapter 2 carry cross-service generalizability uncertainty. Approaches validated in large, land-based service branches may require adaptation to the Coast Guard's distributed and maritime operational environment. Findings from Chapter 2 should be interpreted as indicating alignment with available evidence rather than as definitive proof of effectiveness in a Coast Guard context.

Administrative Reporting Data

The administrative data used in Chapter 3 are drawn from three separate, non-integrated systems (SAPRR/DSAID, CGIS, and FAP/CGCR) that use different case identification codes, reporting rules, and completeness standards. A substantial proportion of SAPRR records were missing incident or report dates, and CGIS data are available only from 2021 through 2024, precluding direct trend comparisons across the full observation window for unrestricted cases. Restricted FAP cases are maintained in local hardcopy files and are not entered into any shared system. All three systems capture only incidents that were formally reported; the full scope of unreported SASH is not reflected in these data.

These constraints have two principal implications for findings. First, case counts in Chapter 3 should be interpreted as directional indicators of reporting patterns rather than precise enumerations of incident volume; apparent changes in counts may reflect shifts in reporting behavior or data completeness rather than changes in incidence. Second, cross-database comparisons may slightly undercount or overcount total cases depending on how potential duplicates are resolved, despite the duplicate-screening procedures described in this appendix.

Survey Data

The survey analyses in Chapter 4 rely on the 2016, 2018, and 2021 administrations of the WGR. Several limitations apply. Response rates declined substantially across waves, from 18,536 respondents in 2016 to 7,867 in 2021, which may introduce nonresponse bias if nonrespondents differ systematically from respondents in their SASH experiences. The most recent data are from 2021, meaning that findings may not fully reflect the current environment. Survey coverage is limited to active component members below flag rank; reserve, civilian, and academy cadet populations are not represented. Additionally, populations are based on permanently assigned status, but incidents may occur while a member is temporarily assigned to a unit, which commonly affects training schools administered by FORCECOM. Measurement of sexual harassment changed between the WGR and subsequent administrations of the Workplace Experiences Survey, which constrains direct trend comparisons to the three available waves. As with all self-report surveys, these data are subject to recall bias and social desirability effects that may result in underreporting of SASH even in confidential settings.

These limitations have several implications. Prevalence estimates represent the best available population-based approximations but should be treated with appropriate uncertainty. Trend conclusions—particularly the observed increase in sexual assault among women (Figure 4.1, Panel A)—should be interpreted with caution, given measurement differences across waves. Subgroup risk estimates for small organizational units carry wider confidence intervals and are less reliable than servicewide estimates.

Stakeholder Interviews

The interviews summarized in Chapter 5 were conducted with a sample of Coast Guard support personnel and commanders selected based on their roles in SASH prevention, response, or accountability. This sample is not statistically representative of the broader Coast Guard workforce. Perspectives of SASH survivors were not directly solicited; findings reflect the views of professional stakeholders and program administrators rather than those with lived experience of victimization. Participants who declined to be interviewed are unrepresented, and the views of those who did participate may not reflect the full range of perspectives within their role groups. Interview data are qualitative and reflect self-reported perceptions, which may not align with actual program performance or outcomes.

Chapter 5 findings should therefore be interpreted as identifying salient themes and concerns within a segment of the stakeholder community, not as a systematic measurement of Coast Guard–wide attitudes or practices. The absence of direct survivor perspectives is a gap that limits the ability to characterize victim experience from a first-person standpoint.

SME Review

The SME review should be interpreted in light of several limitations. The small sample of 17 respondents limits the extent to which the results can be generalized beyond those who participated, and some professional roles, districts, or levels of experience may be represented by only a few individuals. Because participation and responses were self-reported, the findings may also reflect selection effects, differences in respondents' familiarity with the proposed recommendations, and individual interpretations of such terms as *difficulty*, *impact*, and *priority*. The survey assessed anticipated rather than observed implementation outcomes, so ratings represent informed perceptions rather than evidence of actual effects. In addition, mean scores on ordinal rating scales provide a useful summary but can obscure disagreement or polarized response patterns, particularly in a small sample. Finally, although the open-ended responses add important context, their depth varied across respondents, and the qualitative analysis necessarily involved researcher judgment in interpreting and coding the comments.

APPENDIX B

Review of Prevention Training Materials and Communication

This appendix provides additional detail on the review of Coast Guard SASH prevention training materials and communication as compared with evidence-informed programs. The review included 57 documents drawn from official Coast Guard training repositories and materials provided to the project team. These materials included COMDTINSTs, ALCOAST messages, training slide decks, implementation summaries, program lists, and standalone memoranda. Reviewers coded each item by effective date, document type, implementing authority, target audience, training setting, and delivery modality. The team also conducted more-detailed reviews of REACT (Recognize, Evaluate, Assess, Confirm, and Take Action), SPeL, and Bystander Intervention Training (BIT). Three reviewers compared coding and notes where follow-up or clarification was needed. The findings therefore reflect what was documented in the materials available to the team rather than direct observation of training delivery.

The training review used dimensions derived from the same evidence base that informed the nine prevention-policy criteria in Chapter 2, but we adapted them to assess training materials more directly. The dimensions address audience and group composition; content, including skill-building, bystander intervention, relationship skills, and social norms; duration and reinforcement; learning environment; facilitator preparation and credibility; and instructional modality, including active learning and discussion. These dimensions reflect recurring characteristics associated with more-effective prevention programming, including appropriately tailored audiences, skills-based and interactive instruction, sufficient dosage, credible facilitators, leadership and organizational support, and evaluation of outcomes (Crusto, Hooper, and Arora, 2024; Matthews et al., 2021; Mujal et al., 2021; Roehling et al., 2022; Rose and Coates, 2021).

Building on the analysis in Chapter 2, we examine in this appendix whether selected training materials reflect characteristics associated with more-effective prevention efforts, including interactive delivery, skill-building content, realistic scenarios, credible facilitation, leadership reinforcement, and sufficient dosage or reinforcement over time. We focus on training materials as written and do not assess how consistently trainings are delivered across units or how participants experience them in practice. Together, these materials help identify where Coast Guard prevention training aligns with evidence-informed practices and where variation in format, intensity, and delivery may limit prevention effectiveness.

Sexual Assault Prevention Programs

Several well-studied prevention programs illustrate how evidence-based principles have been operationalized in civilian and military-adjacent contexts. These programs vary in scope and delivery but share common features aligned with the framework described in Table 2.1. To illustrate how these characteristics have been operationalized in practice, the following section summarizes several well-studied prevention programs (Appendix A) that serve as reference points for assessing Coast Guard approaches.

Bringing in the Bystander employs a community responsibility model to build bystander intervention skills through interactive, scenario-based training delivered over one to three sessions. Evaluations show consistent improvements in bystander efficacy and reductions in rape myth acceptance, with some evidence of reduced perpetration (Mujal et al., 2021; Park and Kim, 2023).

Green Dot combines bystander skills training with peer influence and social norms change strategies. Research demonstrates significant reductions in sexual violence perpetration and victimization in communities implementing the program at scale (Coker et al., 2017).

Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act is a women's empowerment program that significantly reduced sexual assault victimization in randomized controlled trials (Senn et al., 2015). Although the program is not designed for mixed-gender audiences, it highlights the effectiveness of intensive, skills-based interventions.

Other programs, such as **Safe Dates** and **Shifting Boundaries**, demonstrate the value of early, developmentally appropriate prevention focused on relationship skills and environmental risk reduction, though their adolescent focus limits direct generalizability to military populations (Foshee et al., 2005; Taylor et al., 2013).

Together, these programs illustrate the variety of approaches available for addressing SASH prevention and underscore the importance of a diversified prevention portfolio.

Sexual Harassment Prevention Programs

The available evidence base for harassment prevention has largely focused on compliance training, which has been widely implemented in workplaces and legally encouraged since the 1980s. These brief educational trainings focus on policy awareness and reporting procedures for employees. Although employees increase their factual knowledge following compliance training (Antecol and Cobb-Clark, 2003; Campbell et al., 2013; see Buckner et al., 2014, for review), such trainings typically do not improve attitudes or behaviors and may even worsen them (Bingham and Scherer, 2001; Magley et al., 2013). Consequently, experts recommend that organizations move beyond compliance-only models toward more-interactive and culture-focused approaches to sexual harassment prevention.

Several promising approaches can be considered. To be clear, these practices do not yet meet the threshold for an *evidence-based* designation but are grounded in sound theory, expert consensus, or positive outcomes in related domains.[1] Using expert testimony from legal professionals, trainers, and organizational psychologists, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission concluded that two organizational conditions are essential for sexual harassment prevention: (1) visible leadership commitment to a culture of respect and intolerance for harassment and (2) systems that hold all employees accountable for maintaining that standard (Feldblum and Lipnic, 2016). Accountability must be consistent across ranks: Disciplinary actions should be proportionate to the offense and applied equally to senior and junior personnel. Supervisors and midlevel managers should also bear responsibility for monitoring and addressing inappropriate behavior within their teams. Other characteristics of effective policies that seemed related to reduced workplace harassment were clear and accessible language, multiple and flexible reporting channels, transparent descriptions of investigative procedures, and prompt, confidential responses to complaints.

With respect to training, workplace civility training offers an alternative to compliance-based training. It focuses on cultivating positive interpersonal behaviors rather than merely prohibiting negative ones. The

[1] *Evidence-based* research is research that derives conclusions from systematically collected, empirically validated data using rigorous and transparent methodologies, with findings that are reproducible, verifiable, and supported by the weight of available evidence (adapted from Sackett et al., 1996).

underlying assumption is that environments marked by disrespect are more likely to foster harassment, bullying, or discrimination, whereas respectful climates reduce these risks (Feldblum and Lipnic, 2016). Civility training encourages such skills as constructive communication, conflict resolution, and effective supervision (Leiter et al., 2011). This proactive approach aligns with behavioral learning principles, emphasizing reinforcement of desired behaviors rather than punishment for undesired ones. It also tends to reduce defensiveness among participants and can benefit all employees.

Finally, bystander intervention training, reviewed above as an intervention for sexual assault prevention, emphasizes challenging disrespectful behavior and reinforcing positive group norms, which may make it adaptable for workplace harassment prevention (Feldblum and Lipnic, 2016). In this context, training would help employees identify unwelcome conduct, feel responsible for taking action, and gain confidence in intervening appropriately.

Variation in Materials

In contrast to policy, Coast Guard training materials show substantial variation in format, intensity, and learning environment. In this section, we examine how training materials align with best practices as written, recognizing that implementation may differ in practice. A review of 57 training materials revealed inconsistent alignment across best-practice dimensions. Alignment was strongest in training content and modality, particularly in promoting positive relationships and norms, strengthening bystander intervention, and using realistic scenarios to illustrate course content. In addition, training materials and policy documents consistently direct leaders to express support for the training. Alignment was weakest in indicators of adequate dose, including training duration and booster sessions. Group size was often larger than recommended, which likely limits interactive learning techniques, such as group discussions. There was little evidence of integrating peers as contributors to the materials or as training facilitators.

A closer comparison of the following five core trainings reveals additional variation (see Table B.1):

- BIT is an eight-hour, in-person course that trains participants to recognize SASH and to intervene with safe and effective strategies to prevent or address the behavior. It demonstrated the highest overall alignment across the five trainings, particularly in interactive delivery and learning environment, though gaps remain in frequency and peer integration.
- The REACT framework is a bystander intervention training developed and delivered at Training Center Petaluma. It showed strong content alignment but limited support for small-group formats, facilitator consistency, and reinforcement.
- The SPeL bystander intervention training is a brief online course. It exhibited low alignment due to its asynchronous, individual format, though it may serve as a useful primer when paired with in-person training.
- SHP Training is typically delivered as a self-paced e-learning course that all Coast Guard members complete annually. The ratings in Table B.1 reflect alignment between the e-learning course and best practices. Although the training attempts to improve interactivity by incorporating real-world scenarios and quizzes, the material is largely didactic, with few opportunities for learners to engage with the concepts. Alternatively, commanders can request that annual training be delivered in-person by a trained facilitator. In-person trainings use the same slide deck and speaking points, are scheduled for groups of 15–20 people (ideally), and last 90 minutes.
- Civil Rights Training (CRT) is required of every member at their accession point and every three years thereafter. The training is modified for relevance to nonmanagers or managers and focuses primarily on response and compliance. SHP is included as part of the training in years that members complete

their triennial CRT.[2] Strengths include the in-person format, delivery by a certified instructor, and instructions to leaders to voice support for the course material. However, opportunities for engaged learning are largely absent from the material.

Table B.1 compares five core Coast Guard training courses against the best-practice framework, illustrating how alignment varies by format and delivery approach. All three sexual assault trainings, as well as SHP, incorporate at least some elements of bystander intervention (with BIT focused primarily on bystander intervention), which is consistent with the focus of civilian-tested evidence-based programs for sexual assault and is a promising practice for sexual harassment prevention. SHP and CRT are largely patterned after compliance-based models of harassment prevention, focusing on policy guidance, accurate identification of harassment, and reporting procedures. Although it is reasonable to expect that SHP and CRT increase factual knowledge, it is unlikely that they are responsible for shifting attitudes or improving behavior.

Communication and Outreach Strategies for SASH Prevention and Culture Change

SASH prevention requires more than policy reform and training delivery. Sustained culture change depends on deliberate communication strategies that build awareness, shift organizational norms, reinforce leadership expectations, and ensure that every member of the force understands available resources and reporting pathways (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). In this section, we draw on a review of Coast Guard materials and the broader prevention literature to describe the state of Coast Guard communication and outreach and specify gaps that require attention.

The Role of Communication in SASH Prevention

Communication and outreach are not peripheral activities in SASH prevention. Instead, they are structural prerequisites for culture change. Research consistently demonstrates that prevention programs succeed or fail, in part, based on the organizational communication environment in which they are delivered (Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021; Nation et al., 2003). Members who do not understand reporting options, who distrust the responsiveness of the system, or who perceive SASH training as a compliance exercise rather than a genuine institutional commitment are unlikely to change their behavior or intervene on behalf of others (Feldblum and Lipnic, 2016). Effective outreach therefore serves three distinct functions: It informs members about policies and resources; it shapes social norms by signaling what behaviors are and are not acceptable; and it reinforces leadership credibility and commitment, which the research identifies as one of the most powerful determinants of unit climate (Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021).

The distinction between these functions matters because each requires a different communication strategy. Informational outreach, such as resource websites, reaches members who are already seeking help, but it does little to shift norms among those who have not yet identified a need. Working through a different mechanism, social norms activities model prosocial bystander behavior at scale, creating the perception that intervention is normal and expected rather than exceptional (Alteristic, undated). Leadership communication operates through a third channel: visible, repeated, and sincere endorsement from command authority, which research shows is among the most effective levers for changing organizational behavior (Feldblum

[2] SHP alignment with evidence-based prevention training practices was evaluated separately from the other CRT training elements.

TABLE B.1

Training Documentation Alignment with Best Practices

Dimension	Best Practice	BIT Observation	REACT	SPeL	SHP	CRT
Audience	Peers	● Supports	■ Does not support	● Supports	■ Does not support	● Supports
Audience	Small group (2–9 participants)	◆ Partially supports	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support
Content	Foster positive relationships	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	■ Does not support
Content	Skill-building	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	◆ Partially supports	■ Does not support
Content	Strengthen bystander intervention	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	■ Does not support
Content	Target norms accepting SASH	◆ Partially supports	● Supports	● Supports	■ Does not support	■ Does not support
Content	Promote positive social norms	■ Does not support	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	■ Does not support
Content	Small group discussions	■ Does not support	● Supports	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support
Duration	90–120 minutes	● Supports	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	● Supports
Environment	Nonjudgmental (participants are not shamed)	● Supports	◆ Partially supports	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports
Environment	Supportive leadership and culture	■ Does not support	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports
Environment	Informal	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	● Supports	■ Does not support	■ Does not support
Facilitator	Qualified, trained, resource supported	■ Does not support	● Supports	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	● Supports
Facilitator	Integration of peer leaders in development and implementation	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support
Frequency	Multiple times per year	■ Does not support	◆ Partially supports	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support
Frequency	Longer main session plus booster sessions	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	■ Does not support
Modalities	Engaging and interactive	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	■ Does not support	■ Does not support
Modalities	Role play	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	■ Does not support	■ Does not support
Modalities	Use of scenarios	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports	● Supports
Modalities	In-person	● Supports	● Supports	■ Does not support	■ Does not support	● Supports

and Lipnic, 2016; Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021). The Coast Guard operates across all three functions, but it appears to do so without a coherent, integrated communication strategy that defines goals, audiences, channels, and measures of effectiveness.

The campaign design literature identifies specific characteristics that distinguish effective outreach approaches from those that merely generate awareness. A systematic review of social marketing campaigns for sexual violence prevention on college campuses found that although campaigns showed promising effects for increasing knowledge and modifying some attitudes toward sexual violence, evidence for sustained behavioral outcomes was more limited and mixed; the authors concluded that more rigorous, evaluative research is needed to establish the conditions under which campaign-level effects translate to behavioral change (Lee, Bouchard, and Wong, 2023).

These findings are consistent with a broader pattern: A 2021 RAND review of DoD prevention self-assessments found that other military branches also focused more on building awareness than on building skills (Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021). Campaigns designed primarily to convey information are more likely to affect knowledge than to change behavior. One proposed response to this limitation is to shift the delivery model rather than just the message. Cancio (2021) argues that military leaders possess the same core competencies as social media influencers—trusted relationships, authenticity, and influence that operates outside formal authority—and proposes harnessing those competencies through a deliberate social media influencer model to create new norms among service members most at risk.

State of Coast Guard Communication and Outreach on SASH

The Coast Guard has developed a variety of communication and outreach mechanisms across multiple channels, including senior leadership messaging, observance-based outreach, workforce-facing reference materials, command-level toolkits, and digital platforms. These efforts demonstrate meaningful institutional investment. However, as detailed below, they are fragmented, unevenly distributed, inconsistently implemented, and insufficiently connected to measurable prevention outcomes.

Leadership Messaging to the Fleet

The Coast Guard has used senior leader communications as a primary vehicle for signaling institutional commitment to SASH prevention. The joint LANTAREA and PACAREA Respect toolkit—which includes direct video messaging, posted to DVIDS and MyCG, from Area Commanders and Master Chiefs—represents one of the most visible examples of this approach. The ATR produced additional leadership-facing communications through the Senior Leader ATR Implementation Summit and the Command Transparency Toolkit, both of which aimed to engage command authority in reinforcing SASH accountability expectations (U.S. Coast Guard, 2023).

The research literature supports this leadership communication orientation, such that Feldblum and Lipnic (2016) identify visible, authentic top-down leadership commitment as the most important organizational factor in preventing harassment. A RAND on-site installation evaluation process similarly found that, among the nine core prevention capability dimensions assessed, the highest-maturity installations were those where "leaders demonstrate the level of priority they place on fostering a protective environment through their actions (e.g., role modeling; taking timely action to address negative behaviors and reinforce positive ones) and through their communications" (Acosta et al., 2023, p. vii). However, leadership communications in the Coast Guard do not appear to be systematically planned or sustained.

Observance-Based Outreach

The Coast Guard uses a structured calendar of awareness observances—including Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month—as anchor points for outreach activity. Observance months provide predictable

communication touchpoints and can help sustain the salience of SASH prevention across the annual training cycle. However, awareness-month outreach carries well-documented limitations: Concentrated, calendar-driven communications tend to reinforce the perception that SASH prevention is a periodic event rather than a sustained institutional priority (Porat et al., 2024). When outreach is primarily reactive to observance windows rather than proactively integrated into the unit communication rhythm, it risks contributing to a "check-the-box" dynamic.

Workforce-Facing Reference Materials

The Coast Guard has developed a suite of materials designed to communicate SASH policies, reporting options, and intervention strategies to the workforce. These include the SAPRR Bystander Intervention Quick Reference Guide, which summarizes definitions, reporting processes, and the five I's of perpetrator behaviors in a portable format intended for unit distribution (U.S. Coast Guard, Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery Program, undated-b). The BIT pretraining communication package includes email templates, crew notification messages, and command remarks guides designed to ensure that units receive consistent, psychologically safe framing before training delivery (U.S. Coast Guard, Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery Program, undated-a). The SAPRR Command Toolkit—referenced repeatedly by stakeholders and observed by a member of the research team during a January 2025 BIT pilot—provides additional command-level communication guidance, though participants noted it needed updates to align with the Commandant's direction. Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN)–sourced guidance on survivor communication ("Tips for Talking with Survivors of Sexual Assault") provides personnel with specific language for trauma-informed disclosure conversations, addressing what research identifies as a critical micro-communication gap: the quality of the immediate response a survivor receives when first disclosing (U.S. Coast Guard, Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery Program, undated-c; see also Wegrzyn et al., 2023).

The SAPRR Behavioral Health Instructor Guide for the Chief Petty Officer Academy formalizes unit-level communication responsibilities as a leadership competency for new Chiefs. This guide represents one of the most direct institutionalizations of communication as a command responsibility in the reviewed documents, embedding outreach expectations into leadership development at the point of rank transition.

Digital and Web-Based Channels

The Coast Guard maintains two public-facing SASH directed actions webpages (U.S. Coast Guard, undated-a; U.S. Coast Guard, undated-c) and an internal SAPRR resources page that serve as centralized information repositories. However, an absence of a single authoritative source for SASH policy also characterizes the digital environment: ALCOAST messages, program communications, and training materials contain policy-like language without formal authority, which can contribute to confusion rather than clarity.

Evidence on Effective Communication Strategies for Culture Change

The prevention literature offers a well-developed framework for distinguishing effective communication approaches from those that produce awareness without behavior change. Four principles are particularly relevant to the Coast Guard context.

Social Norms Approaches Outperform Information-Based Models

First, social norms approaches outperform information-based models. Traditional SASH outreach assumes that members behave harmfully because they lack awareness of policies or the definition of consent. Research consistently challenges this assumption. Porat et al. (2024) argue that most prevention communication is behaviorally uninformed, relying on awareness and attitudinal change while failing to address the situational

and social factors that actually drive behavior. Marquis et al. (2017, p. xi) reach a parallel conclusion at the organizational level: Their synthesis of risk factors across six problematic military behaviors found that "attitudes seem to predict problematic behavior best when organizational context also supports the behavior" and that individuals who might be inclined toward problematic behavior can be dissuaded "if the organizational climate is clearly in opposition to such behavior." This means that communicating clear organizational norms—not just information about policies—is the operative mechanism for prevention. Social norms approaches work by correcting misperceptions about peer behavior: When members believe that most of their peers tolerate or commit SASH, they are more likely to do so themselves; when they come to understand that the norm is intolerance, behavior shifts (Alteristic, undated; University of New Hampshire, undated).

Second, leadership modeling is a communication act, not a communication product. Research identifies visible leader behavior—not just leadership-signed communications—as the primary mechanism through which organizational norms are signaled (Feldblum and Lipnic, 2016; Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021). A commander who directly and publicly addresses a low-level SASH incident communicates more to unit members than any ALCOAST message. An Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Task Force report finds that organizations with high harassment rates consistently shared a pattern of leadership who stated anti-harassment norms in policy while tolerating or ignoring norm violations in practice (Feldblum and Lipnic, 2016).

Third, dosage, repetition, and channel diversity matter. Single-event communications, such as one-time training deliveries or stand-alone ALCOAST messages, are unlikely to produce durable behavior change. Nation et al. (2003) identify adequate dosage and sufficient follow-through as core principles of effective prevention. The RAND Getting to Outcomes framework is explicit on this point: It calls for installations to plan communication activities as part of a sustained prevention infrastructure, and it directly designates one-way information transmission with no intervention component (e.g., websites) as nonqualifying prevention activities precisely because they do not meet the dosage and interaction standards required for behavior change (Ebener et al., 2022). Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer (2021) find that DoD training practices failed on multiple Nation et al. (2003) criteria simultaneously: not comprehensive, not of sufficient length, not using varied interactive teaching methods, not administered by well-trained prevention specialists, not theory-driven, and lacking outcome evaluation. The authors recommend phasing out lecture-format trainings and replacing them with approaches that include planning, evaluation, and quality improvement—the core logic of the Getting to Outcomes model (Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021; Ebener et al., 2022). The Bringing in the Bystander program, already used in the Coast Guard, models the channel diversity principle through its combination of initial training delivery, facilitator coaching, ongoing peer leader support, and culturally adapted materials—all designed to sustain the communication of new norms beyond the training event itself (University of New Hampshire, undated).

Fourth, the audience must be segmented. Communication that works for a junior enlisted member on a cutter is unlikely to work for an O-6 at headquarters—and vice versa. Morral, Gore, and Schell (2015) document that Coast Guard women and junior enlisted members experienced substantially higher rates of sexual assault and harassment than their peers, and that risk was concentrated among those in certain unit types and pay grades. This finding has direct implications for outreach targeting: Matthews et al. (2021) find that one-third of sexual assaults of female soldiers occurred at just five Army installations, reinforcing that risk is geographically and organizationally concentrated and that communication investments not calibrated to that concentration will be inefficient. Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer (2021) emphasize that prevention communication should be risk-informed, targeting the populations and environments in which it can produce the greatest impact. Table B.2 compares these communication approaches against Coast Guard communication practices as observed and communicated by stakeholders.

TABLE B.2
Communication Approach Alignment with Best Practices

Principle	Characteristic	Alignment	Gap
Social norms	SASH prevention is most effective when intolerance is the standard.	◆ Partially supports	Lack of enterprise communication strategy and metrics on attitudes toward SASH do not address behavior shifts. A focus on sexual assault policies can overlook harassment concerns.
Leadership modeling	Routine public discussion of consequences of SASH incidents reinforces norms.	■ Does not support	Stakeholders expressed frustration with transparency scarcity and the perception of a lack of accountability. Limited peer-to-peer communication venues and leadership discussions hinder reinforcement mechanisms.
Dosage, repetition, and diversity	Sustained, interactive, and diverse communication channels strengthen expectations.	◆ Partially supports	BIT partially addresses the interactive approach, but episodic and disconnected communications (ALCOAST, policy messages, awareness campaigns) do not provide adequate follow-through.
Audience	Risk-informed targeted interactions increase impact.	■ Does not support	The lack of data and metrics to measure effectiveness and high-risk areas results in limited to no targeting (except at accession sources).

Gaps in the Coast Guard's Communication and Outreach Approach

Taken together, the reviewed documents and research literature identify the following gaps in the Coast Guard's communication and outreach approach.

No Clear Enterprise Communication Strategy

The Coast Guard does not have a documented communication and outreach strategy for SASH prevention. Existing activities—DVIDS videos, Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month outreach, BIT pretraining packages, command toolkits—have been developed at the program level. Although the SAPRR Strategic Plan provides strategic goals and performance measures, prevention communication activities are not organized as coordinated elements of an enterprise-wide communication plan with clearly defined audience segmentation, channel assignments, communication cadence, and mechanisms for assessing message reach and effectiveness. This absence maps directly onto what Marquis et al. (2017, p. iii) identify as the core structural failure of DoD behavioral programs: a "largely stovepiped approach to behavioral program supervision" in which separate programs are designed, resourced, and evaluated independently, without a unified strategy or governance mechanism to achieve coordination.

Reliance on Awareness-Only Models

Existing Coast Guard outreach is predominantly informational: It tells members what SASH is, what reporting options exist, and where to find resources. This approach aligns with a compliance-based prevention model that the research literature identifies as insufficient for culture change. Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer (2021) find that DoD prevention activities focused more on building awareness than on building skills and explicitly identified this approach as inconsistent with evidence-based prevention. Compliance training increases knowledge but does not reliably change attitudes or behavior (Feldblum and Lipnic, 2016). Lee, Bouchard, and Wong (2023) find precisely this pattern in their systematic review of social marketing campaigns: The strongest effects were on knowledge, while behavioral outcomes remained weak and inconsistent. The Coast Guard's BIT program is a partial exception—it explicitly addresses social norms and bystander behavior change—but it remains a training intervention rather than a sustained communication campaign.

Insufficient Policy Communication Clarity

Multiple stakeholders, as discussed in Chapter 4, identified confusion about reporting processes, investigation timelines, and OCP authorities as barriers to both reporting and intervention. This confusion persists

despite mandatory annual training, which suggests that the problem is not a lack of training content but a failure of communication design. In our policy review described in Chapter 1, we found that SASH guidance is dispersed across ALCOAST messages; COMDTINSTs; Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs); and nondirective materials that carry policy-like language without formal authority, which can contribute to inconsistent interpretation. The recent transition to CGIS-mandatory reporting for all sexual harassment allegations was specifically identified by stakeholders as inadequately communicated to commanders. This inadequacy represents a structural communication failure, not an individual one.

Absence of Sexual Harassment–Specific Victim Outreach

There also appears to be a gap in outreach and resources for victims of sexual harassment relative to victims of sexual assault. The SAPRR program website, quick reference guides, and training materials are primarily oriented toward sexual assault—as is the SAPRR program's mandate—leaving sexual harassment victims with limited information about where to go, what support exists, and how the process works. Morral, Gore, and Schell (2015) document that sexual harassment rates among Coast Guard women significantly exceeded sexual assault rates, making harassment the more prevalent harm experienced by the active component workforce. Calkins et al. (2021) reinforce this point for the military generally: Seemingly less severe behaviors that constitute sexual harassment are substantially more common than sexual assault, and prevention programs should treat sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and sexual assault as a continuum rather than address them as separate phenomena. Stakeholders in the interviews discussed in Chapter 4 explicitly noted that when they asked SAPRR for assistance with sexual harassment cases, the response was that support was outside program scope. A targeted communication strategy that addresses sexual harassment victims' distinct informational and support needs appears necessary.

No Systematic Measurement of Outreach Effectiveness

Existing communication activities are not systematically evaluated for effectiveness. There is no documented mechanism for assessing whether outreach campaigns reach their intended audiences, whether messaging changes knowledge or attitudes, or whether observed changes in reporting rates or climate survey results can be attributed, in part, to specific communication activities. The Getting to Outcomes framework identifies continuous evaluation as a core component of effective prevention infrastructure (Ebener et al., 2022, p. 30). RAND's 2021 on-site installation evaluation found that most installations do not regularly collect or review evaluation data to drive strategic or operational prevention decisions—a deficit the Coast Guard appears to share (Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, 2021). Without evaluation, the service cannot distinguish communication activities that produce culture change from those that merely fulfill administrative requirements.

Limited Peer-to-Peer and Bottom-Up Channels

The communication approaches reviewed are predominantly top-down: from Commandant to fleet, from SARC to unit, from facilitator to participant. The research literature identifies peer-to-peer communication as one of the most effective mechanisms for norm change in organizational settings, precisely because peer messengers carry credibility with their audiences that hierarchical messengers may not (Alteristic, undated; University of New Hampshire, undated; Acosta et al., 2023). The VVA program represents the Coast Guard's closest analog—VVAs assist in prevention and education efforts and serve as trusted unit-level resources—but VVA roles are not explicitly framed in the reviewed documents as communication ambassadors, and their prevention and outreach functions are frequently displaced by victim support demands (see Chapter 4). The absence of a structured peer communication infrastructure in the Coast Guard's SASH outreach approach represents not merely a program gap but a structural departure from what the evidence identifies as among the most effective prevention communication mechanisms available.

APPENDIX C

Quantitative Data, Analytic Methods, and Supplemental Risk Figures

This appendix provides additional detail on the quantitative data, analytic methods, and supplemental figures used to support the Chapter 4 findings on SASH prevalence, subgroup risk, and associations with premature separation from the Coast Guard. The analyses draw primarily on WGR Survey data linked to Coast Guard administrative records, allowing the research team to examine SASH risk across individual characteristics, organizational settings, and workforce categories. In this appendix, we describe the survey and administrative data sources, construction of organizational classifications, estimation of prevalence and trends, subgroup risk modeling, and separation analyses. We also present supplemental figures documenting estimated and adjusted risk patterns by pay grade, job family, unit type, command grouping, and large command category. Together, these materials provide the technical foundation for the quantitative findings summarized in Chapter 4.

Data Sources

Survey data on sexual assault (or unwanted sexual contact) and sexual harassment of active component members of the USCG were drawn from three consecutive administrations of the WGR: 2016, 2018, and 2021. Each cohort of respondents was linked to USCG administrative records describing all personnel below flag rank in the month each survey's sample frame was drawn; the population of USCG members the survey was designed to be representative of was linked to USCG administrative records using an anonymized unique identifier code. Small differences in our reconstruction of the original Coast Guard sample frames and those constructed by OPA resulted in our sample frames excluding less than one-half of 1 percent of survey respondents from these analyses, with trivially small differences between some of our estimates and corresponding estimates published by OPA. Table C.1 shows the size of each sample frame population and WGR respondent

TABLE C.1
USCG Sample Frame Size and Number of WGR Respondents for Each of the Three Survey Waves, by Sex

	USCG Sample Frame Population			Survey Respondents		
WGR	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
2016	38,865	5,755	33,110	18,536	3,062	15,474
2018	41,076	5,937	35,139	13,718	2,610	11,108
2021	40,275	6,212	34,063	7,867	1,762	6,105
Total				40,121	7,434	32,687

populations used in our analyses. Across all three cohorts, there was a total of 54,383 unique individuals, as many members were part of the sample frames of more than one WGR administration.

WGR data were used to establish respondents' exposure to either sexual assault (or unwanted sexual contact) or sexual harassment, as well as details about any sexual assault that occurred (such as whether it occurred at work and whether the attacker was a member of the military) and respondents' feelings about their time in the USCG (such as their intention to remain in the service and how they rate the level of conflict in their workgroup). Administrative records were used to establish members' individual risk factors (such as sex, age, race, education level, marital status, and number of dependents) and organizational risk factors (such as pay grade, job family, command, and years of service).

Organizational Classifications

Commands were aggregated in two ways. In the most aggregated form, all commands were grouped within four major command groups: PACAREA, LANTAREA, Mission Support, and All Other. In the second, commands were clustered within one of 16 large commands or clusters of commands, as summarized in Table C.2, with respondents counted according to their assignment during the survey. Units in Coast Guard administrative data are classified as shore or afloat units, a categorization we also examined. Table C.3 shows how many personnel in each large command were in afloat versus shore units. Finally, ratings were organized into 21 rating families, as shown in Table C.4.

TABLE C.2
Aggregation of Commands into Large Commands or Command Groups

Tier 2 Label	Command Group	Respondent Count	Percentage Who Responded
Arctic District	CGD SEVENTEEN (000100)	3,805	3.2 percent
Area staff	CGC ADAK (000378), CGC AQUIDNECK (000338), CGC BARANOF (000555), CGC MAUI (000302), CGC MOHAWK (000642), CGC MONOMOY (000377), CGC WRANGELL (000478), DDE-JIATF SOUTH KEY WEST FL (003981), DDE-JIATFW HALAWA HEIGHTS HI (000442), LANTAREA (00) (038184), OL-COMBINED MAR FORCES BAHRAIN (000048), PACAREA (00) (038290), PATFOR SWA BAHRAIN (007006)	3,603	3.0 percent
Deployable Specialized Forces	MARITIME SECURITY RESP TM EAST (000008), MARITIME SECURITY RESPONSE TM (000085), MSRT WEST (007038), MSST BOSTON (91110) (006968), MSST BOSTON TEMP OFCO 045-17 (004795), MSST CAPE COD (91110) (006968), MSST GALVESTON (91104) (006587), MSST HONOLULU (91107) (007037), MSST HOUSTON (91104) (006587), MSST KING'S BAY (91108) (006842), MSST LA/LB (91103) (006586), MSST MIAMI (91114) (007049), MSST NEW ORLEANS (91112) (007048), MSST NEW YORK (91106) (006820), MSST SAN DIEGO (91109) (007038), MSST SAN FRANCISCO (91105) (006983), MSST SEATTLE (91101) (006568), NAT STRIKE FORCE COORD CENTER (000003), PORT SECURITY UNIT 301 (006979), PORT SECURITY UNIT 305 (000632), PORT SECURITY UNIT 307 (000771), PORT SECURITY UNIT 308 (000773), PORT SECURITY UNIT 309 (000633), PORT SECURITY UNIT 311 (000631), PORT SECURITY UNIT 312 (006978), PORT SECURITY UNIT 313 (000772), TACLET PACIFIC AREA (000072), TACLET SOUTH (000627)	4,249	3.5 percent
Director of Operational Logistics	DIR OF OPERATIONAL LOGISTICS (03759), DETACHED DUTY—DOL (044884)	9,131	7.6 percent
East District	CGD FIVE (000304)	7,881	6.6 percent

Table C.2—Continued

Tier 2 Label	Command Group	Respondent Count	Percentage Who Responded
FORCECOM	FORCECOM (039211)	12,441	10.3 percent
Great Lakes District	CGD NINE (000169)	6,220	5.2 percent
Headquarters staff	ACTIVITIES EUROPE (000625), CG ACADEMY (000046), CG ACTIVITIES EUROPE (000625), CG CYBER COMMAND (044448), CG HEARING OFF (CG-094H) (009474), CG INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE (043906), CG LSC (009463), CG LSC COMMAND STAFF (009463), CGC EAGLE (000045), CIVIL RIGHTS DET REGION 1 (036083), CIVIL RIGHTS DET REGION 2 (036084), CIVIL RIGHTS DET REGION 3 (036085), CIVIL RIGHTS DET REGION 4 (037484), COMMANDANT (CG-00A) (008652), COMMANDANT (CG-00B) (008653), COMMANDANT (CG-00E) (010812), COMMANDANT (CG-00H) (008654), COMMANDANT (CG-00H-1) (036078), COMMANDANT (CG-00H-12 (036081), COMMANDANT (CG-00HE) (036077), COMMANDANT (CG-00J) (008655), COMMANDANT (CG-092) (008658), COMMANDANT (CG-0921) (043733), COMMANDANT (CG-0922) (008662), COMMANDANT (CG-094A) (046432), COMMANDANT (CG-094J) (043900), COMMANDANT (CG-094J) (044087), COMMANDANT (CG-0951) (036269), COMMANDANT (CG-0952) (036272), COMMANDANT (CG-09E) (010809), COMMANDANT (CG-09ES) (010811), COMMANDANT (CG-1), (007948), COMMANDANT (CG-2) (007811), COMMANDANT (CG-4) (008046), COMMANDANT (CG-5P) (008818), COMMANDANT (CG-5R) (008686), COMMANDANT (CG-6) (006951), COMMANDANT (CG-7) (009035), COMMANDANT (CG-8) (006893), COMMANDANT (CG-8D) (036226), COMMANDANT (CG-9) (008935), COMMANDANT (CG-DCMS-ES) (047592), COMMANDANT (CG-DCO) (009030), COMMANDANT (CG-DCO-8) (009032), COMMANDANT (CG-DCO-ES) (009031), COMMANDANT (CG-DCO-G) (036730), COMMANDANT (CG-DCO-I) (009033), COMMANDANT (CG-DCO-X) (036731), COMMANDANT (CG-LGL) (008666), COMMANDANT (CG-LII) (008669), COMMANDANT (CG-LMA) (044088), COMMANDANT (CG-LMI) (008663), COMMANDANT (CG-LMJ) (008668), COMMANDANT (CG-LPD) (008670), COMMANDANT (CG-LRA) (008665), COMMANDANT (CG-R) (048195), COMMANDANT'S ADVISORY GROUP (046301, COMMUNICATIONS COMMAND (046580), DCMS-34 (010774), DCMS-5 (010775), DCMS-8 (010776), DCMS-SAPR/MIL CAMPAIGN OFFICE (000446), DCO-HOLD (009145), DD-CG RUITOFF RICHMOND (CGJAG) (000045), DDE-DHS WASHINGTON DC (006656), DDE-JCS/DIR PENTAGON WASH DC (003606), DDE-PENTAGON WASHINGTON DC (047341), DDE-WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC (000362), DDE-WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC (000476), DEP COMDT FOR MISSION SUPPORT (000107), FMS Integration Team (044883), INTERDICTION COMMITTEE WASH DC (000003), NATIONAL COMMAND CENTER (038237), OFC EXT OUTREACH & HERITAGE (046851, PERSONNEL READINESS TASK FORCE (000048)	15,525	12.9 percent
Heartland District	CGD EIGHT (000483)	10,808	9.0 percent

Table C.2—Continued

Tier 2 Label	Command Group	Respondent Count	Percentage Who Responded
Major cutter	CGC ACTIVE (000078), CGC ALERT (000487), CGC ALEX HALEY (000780), CGC BEAR (000515), CGC BERTHOLF (007998), CGC BERTHOLF (008630), CGC BOUTWELL (000075), CGC CAMPBELL (000098), CGC CONFIDENCE (000088), CGC DAUNTLESS (000454), CGC DAUNTLESS HOMEPORT SHIFT (04795, CGC DECISIVE (000621), CGC DECISIVE HOMEPORT SHIFT (047960, CGC DEPENDABLE (000090), CGC DILIGENCE (000087), CGC DOUGLAS MUNRO (WHEC) (000511), CGC ESCANABA (000095), CGC FORWARD (000516), CGC HAMILTON (044423), CGC HAMILTON (044444), CGC HARRIET LANE (000514), CGC HEALY (000796), CGC JAMES (045283), CGC JAMES (045284), CGC KIMBALL (046987), CGC LEGARE (000086), CGC MELLON (000074), CGC MIDGETT (000398), CGC MIDGETT (047619), CGC MORGENTHAU (000740), CGC MUNRO (000511), CGC MUNRO (008887), CGC NORTHLAND (000092), CGC POLAR STAR (000508), CGC RELIANCE (000575), CGC RESOLUTE (000723), CGC SENECA (000094), CGC SHERMAN (000620), CGC SPENCER (000093), CGC STEADFAST (000485), CGC STONE-CREW (048166), CGC STRATTON (009455), CGC STRATTON (009525), CGC TAHOMA (000096), CGC TAMPA (000097), CGC THETIS (000099), CGC VALIANT (000089), CGC VENTUROUS (000079), CGC VIGILANT (000003), CGC VIGOROUS (000091), CGC WAESCHE (008578), CGC WAESCHE (008914), TEMP-CGC DILIGENCE-OFCO 001-19 (047, TEMP-CGC RELIANCE-OFCO 027-18 (000469), WMSL CREW GOLF (MUNRO) (008887), WMSL CREW HOTEL (KIMBALL) (046987), WMSL CREW INDIA (MIDGETT) (047619)	12,125	10.1 percent
Northeast District	CGD ONE (000341)	8,194	6.8 percent
Northwest District	CGD THIRTEEN (000123)	5,420	4.5 percent
Oceania District	CGD FOURTEEN (000456)	2,534	2.1 percent
Southeast District	CGD SEVEN (000264)	11,712	9.7 percent
Southwest District	CGD ELEVEN (000145)	5,775	4.8 percent
Unknown	[Missing duty assignment]	793	0.7 percent

TABLE C.3

Personnel Serving in Afloat and Shore Units, by Large Command Group

Tier 2 Commands	Afloat	Missing	Shore
Arctic District	1,066	0	2,739
Area staff	745	0	2,858
Deployable Specialized Forces	0	0	4,249
Director of Operational Logistics	0	0	9,131
East District	1,163	0	6,718
FORCECOM	0	0	12,441
Great Lakes District	920	0	5,300
Headquarters staff	297	0	15,228
Heartland District	2,157	0	8,651
Major cutter	12,125	0	0
Northeast District	1,395	0	6,799
Northwest District	672	0	4,748
Oceania District	654	0	1,880
Southeast District	2,388	0	9,324
Southwest District	850	0	4,925
Unknown	0	793	0

NOTE: Afloat units assigned to headquarters and area staff primarily consist of cryptologic units, deployed duty positions, and unique assets, such as USCGC *Eagle*. Numbers listed here are cumulative across the survey years.

TABLE C.4

Aggregation of Ratings and Occupations into Job Families

Label	Job Family	Count	Percentage
Intelligence	[IS] Intelligence Specialist, [ISS] Intelligence Systems Specialist	1,536	1.3 percent
Nonrate	[AN] Airman, [FN] Fireman, missing job code, [SN] Seaman	16,507	13.7 percent
Specialized	[AST] Aviation Survival Technician, [CMS] Cyber Mission Specialist, [DV] Diver, [IV] Investigator, [MU] Musician, [OCS] Officer Candidate School, [PA] Public Affairs Specialist, [TA] Talent Acquisition	1,838	1.5 percent
Warrant	[AVI] Aviation Engineering Warrant, [BNDM] Bandmaster Warrant, [BOSN] Boatswain Warrant, [CMM] Cyber Mission Manager, CWO, [DIV] Diver Warrant, [ELC] Electronics Warrant, [ENG] Naval Engineering Warrant, [F&S] Finance & Supply Warrant, [INF] Public Information Warrant, [INV] Investigator Warrant, [ISM] Info Systems Mgmt Warrant, [MAT] Material Maintenance Warrant, [MED] Medical Administration Warrant, [MLES] Maritime Law Enforcement Spec, [MSS] Marine Safety Spec Warrant, [MSSD] Marine Safety Specialist Deck, [MSSE] Marine Safety Specialist Engineering, [MSSR] Marine Safety Spec Resp, [OSS] Ops Systems Spec Warrant, [PERS] Personnel Administration Warrant, [WEPS] Weapons Warrant	4,917	4.1 percent
[AET] Avionics Electronics Technician	AE, [AET] Avionics Electronics Technician, AT, AVT	3,667	3.1 percent
[AMT] Aviation Maintenance Technician	[AMT] Aviation Maintenance Technician	4,749	4.0 percent
[BM] Boatswain's Mate	[BM] Boatswain's Mate	14,335	11.9 percent
[COMOFF] Commissioned Officer	[COMOFF] Commissioned Officer	19,944	16.6 percent
[CS] Culinary Specialist	[CS] Culinary Specialist, [FS] Food Service Specialist	3,432	2.9 percent
[DC] Damage Controlman	[DC] Damage Controlman	2,595	2.2 percent
[EM] Electrician's Mate	[EM] Electrician's Mate	3,550	3.0 percent
[ET] Electronics Technician	[ET] Electronics Technician, RD, RM	3,771	3.1 percent
[GM] Gunner's Mate	[GM] Gunner's Mate	1,922	1.6 percent
[HS] Health Services Technician	[HS] Health Services Technician	2,135	1.8 percent
[IT] Information Systems Technician	[IT] Information Systems Technician	2,428	2.0 percent
[ME] Maritime Enforcement Spec	[ME] Maritime Enforcement Spec	3,596	3.0 percent
[MK] Machinery Technician	[MK] Machinery Technician	12,051	10.0 percent
[MST] Marine Science Technician	[MST] Marine Science Technician	3,665	3.0 percent
[OS] Operations Specialist	[OS] Operations Specialist	5,234	4.4 percent
[SK] Storekeeper	[SK] Storekeeper	3,957	3.3 percent
[YN] Yeoman	[YN] Yeoman	4,387	3.6 percent

Prevalence and Trend Estimates

The prevalence of SASH, as well as trends in those outcomes and other experiences described in Chapter 4, was estimated using the *survey* package in R. We used respondent weights developed by OPA to account for sampling design and nonresponse so that estimates would be representative of the full sample frame (all active-duty Coast Guard below flag rank). Because some respondents participated in more than one WGR administration, we specified the anonymized identification codes as a clustering variable in the survey design for all analyses.

Sexual Assault and Harassment Risk, by Organizational Units

We estimated SASH risk for service members in organizational subgroups using weighted XGBoost gradient boosting (binary logistic objective). Two models were fit for each outcome: a full model that included individual and organizational predictors and a partial model that included only individual-level predictors. Models were trained on survey respondents with nonmissing outcome data, using OPA survey weights. We then used these models to predict probabilities of sexual assault or sexual harassment exposure for all members of the sample frame (respondents and nonrespondents). Subgroup risk was defined as the mean of these predicted risk probabilities within each organizational subgroup, computed separately by outcome, subgroup variable, and sex. The difference between full- and partial-model subgroup means was used to summarize how much of the subgroup risk was associated with organizational or unit context beyond the individual characteristics we examined.

Individual-level predictors were survey cohort, Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score, age, number of children, education, Hispanic ethnicity, marital status, race, years of service, and months until contract end date. Organizational predictors were deployment months (in-port, total ship, underway) and several measures calculated for all members of the individual's echelon 5 command (other than themselves): mean age, percent afloat, percent male, percent shore commands, mean deployment months, average retention intention reported by survey respondents, total strength, average workplace conflict scores reported by survey respondents, and the percentage of survey respondents reporting a sexual assault during their time in the service but more than one year ago. Organizational subgroup variables were major command groupings, large commands, afloat versus shore, job family, and pay grade. The full model used all of the above; the partial model used only the individual-level predictors.

Uncertainty in subgroup risk estimates was quantified by bootstrapping. For each outcome, 400 bootstrap samples were drawn with replacement from the respondent sample (using respondent weights). For each replicate, the full and partial XGBoost models were refit, predictions were generated for the full analysis file, and subgroup mean risks (and their difference) were computed. The standard error of each subgroup risk (and of the full-partial difference) was taken as the standard deviation of the 400 bootstrap estimates. Two-sided 95-percent confidence intervals were obtained as the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles of the bootstrap distribution.

Pseudo R2 for the full sexual assault model (0.12) was modestly larger than for the partial model (0.11). Similarly, the full sexual harassment model had R2 slightly greater than the partial model (both round to 0.09), indicating that organizational characteristics have, at most, a small overall usefulness in predicting exposures. Table C.5 lists the features contributing the greatest gain (or model improvement) for each of the four models. In each model, the individual characteristics of sex, years of service, AFQT score, and age provide the highest gain scores and account for over half of total model gain. Organizational characteristics contributed to lower average gain scores. Among the features with the highest gain scores were total months of deployment and months in port (versus at sea), having a pay grade of E-3 (versus E-2), the size of the member's Tier 2 command group (numbers of personnel), and average retention intention and workplace conflict scores reported by WGR respondents in Tier 2 command groups.

TABLE C.5
Top Ten Average Gain Values Associated with Features in Bootstrapped Models of SASH

Rank	Full	Gain	Partial	Gain
Sexual assault models				
1	Sex	0.30	Sex	0.37
2	Years of service	0.09	AFQT score	0.15
3	AFQT score	0.08	Years of service	0.13
4	Age	0.08	Age	0.12
5	Retention intent (commands)	0.05	Contract end date (months)	0.10
6	Contract end date (months)	0.05	2021 WGR cohort	0.04
7	Deployed in port (months)	0.04	Married	0.03
8	Large command size	0.04	Children (number)	0.02
9	Deploy total (months)	0.04	Never married	0.01
10	E-3 pay grade	0.04	Associate degree	0.01
Sexual harassment models				
1	Sex	0.42	Sex	0.52
2	AFQT score	0.09	AFQT score	0.13
3	Age	0.06	Years of service	0.10
4	Years of service	0.06	Age	0.09
5	Workplace conflict (commands)	0.05	Children (number)	0.04
6	Deploy total (months)	0.04	Contract end date (months)	0.03
7	Retention intent (tier 2)	0.04	2021 WGR cohort	0.03
8	Children (number)	0.03	Married	0.01
9	Percentage shore-based (command)	0.02	Other race	0.01
10	Deployed in port (months)	0.02	Non-Hispanic	0.01

Association of SASH Exposure with Premature Separations

We examined, using a two-stage model of expected years of service, whether sexual assault or sexual harassment exposure was associated with earlier separations from the USCG than otherwise expected.

In the first stage, we used administrative data on all sample frame members to model the probability of separation one, two, and three years after the sample frames were drawn, conditional on members remaining in the active component Coast Guard at least until their corresponding WGR survey was fielded. We used gradient-boosted trees (XGBoost) with demographic, service history, and organizational predictors (age, sex, race, ethnicity, marital status, number of children, pay grade, years of service, AFQT scores, highest education level, months until contract expiration, past-year deployment history, and survey cohort) and past-year assignment characteristics (job family, major command groupings, large command groups, and percentage of the large command group members assigned to shore units). Missing AFQT scores were imputed with the mean, and missing contract end dates—typically for officers—were set to 120 months. We created a derived feature measuring the difference between an individual's age and their pay grade's mean age to capture fast

or slow tracked promotion trajectories. For each time horizon, we used tenfold cross-validation to determine the optimal number of boosting rounds, then trained a final model on the full dataset. Folds sampled on unique individuals so that members' records did not appear in more than one fold.

To quantify prediction uncertainty, we ran 50 bootstraps: For each iteration, we resampled individuals (not records) from the original data with replacement, trained an XGBoost model on the bootstrap sample using the optimal number of rounds from cross-validation, and generated predictions on the original (non-bootstrapped) dataset. This yielded 50 prediction draws per individual, which were used as multiple imputations for the second-stage model.

In the second stage, we estimated the association of SASH exposure on military separation using survey-weighted generalized linear models (GLMs) with a quasibinomial link function. Imputed separation propensity from the first stage was included as an offset to account for baseline separation propensity (logit scale). Separate models examined separation within 12, 24, and 36 months of the survey cohort sampling date and by exposure type. We specified interaction terms between exposure and the five covariates with the highest gain scores across models from the stage 1 modes (sex, age, AFQT score, years of service, months to contract end date) and survey cohort to allow exposure effects to vary across key demographic and organizational characteristics. For each separation time frame and exposure type combination, we fit survey-weighted GLMs on the survey respondent sample and used these models to compute counterfactual predictions for the entire population by setting exposure to zero while holding all other covariates constant. This counterfactual framework allowed us to estimate the number and proportion of separations attributable to sexual assault or sexual harassment exposure overall and stratified by sex.

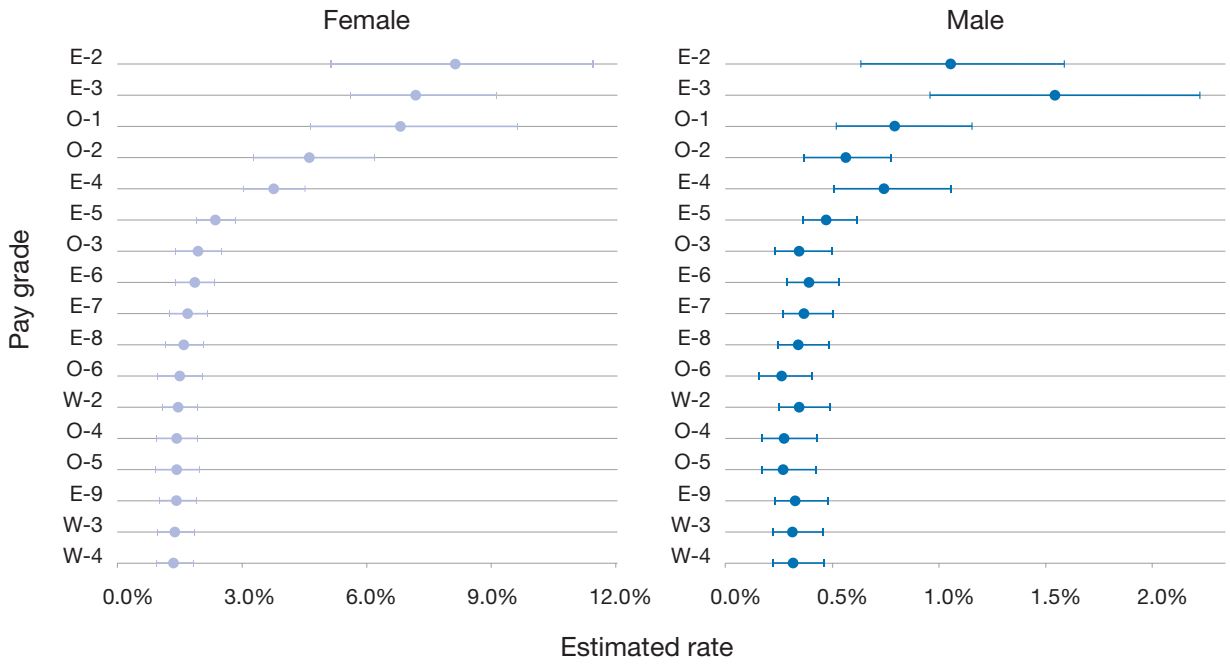
To incorporate model and survey uncertainty in our estimates of the association between exposures and separation risk, a nested bootstrap was used. In each of 50 outer loops, survey respondents were sampled with replacement, and a different baseline separation propensity (from the first-stage model) was used. In the inner loop, 200 bootstraps were used with the *survey* package in R to account for the complex sampling design. We combined estimates across multiple imputation draws using Rubin's rules to obtain final point estimates, standard errors, and 95-percent confidence intervals that properly reflect both sampling and prediction uncertainty.

Supplemental Risk Figures

This section presents supplemental figures from the subgroup risk analyses described above (Figures C.1–C.20). The figures show estimated and adjusted SASH risk across pay grade, job family, unit type, command grouping, and large command category, separately by sex and outcome. Estimated risk figures show observed variation across workforce groups and organizational settings, while adjusted risk figures show whether those groups or settings have higher or lower risk than would be expected based on the individual characteristics of assigned personnel. These figures provide additional support for the Chapter 4 findings that SASH risk is concentrated in particular operational environments and workforce groups, including cutter commands, afloat units, junior personnel, nonrates, and selected job families.

FIGURE C.1

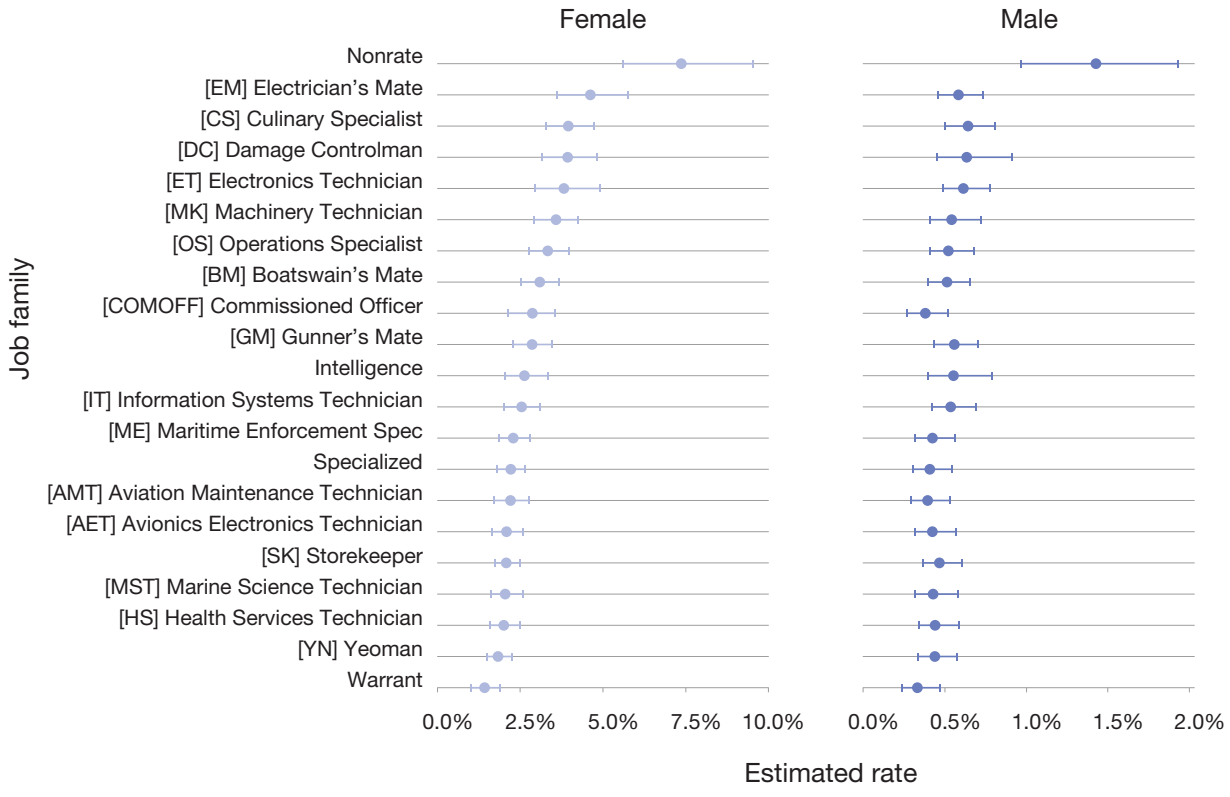
Estimated Sexual Assault Risk, by Pay Grade and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.2

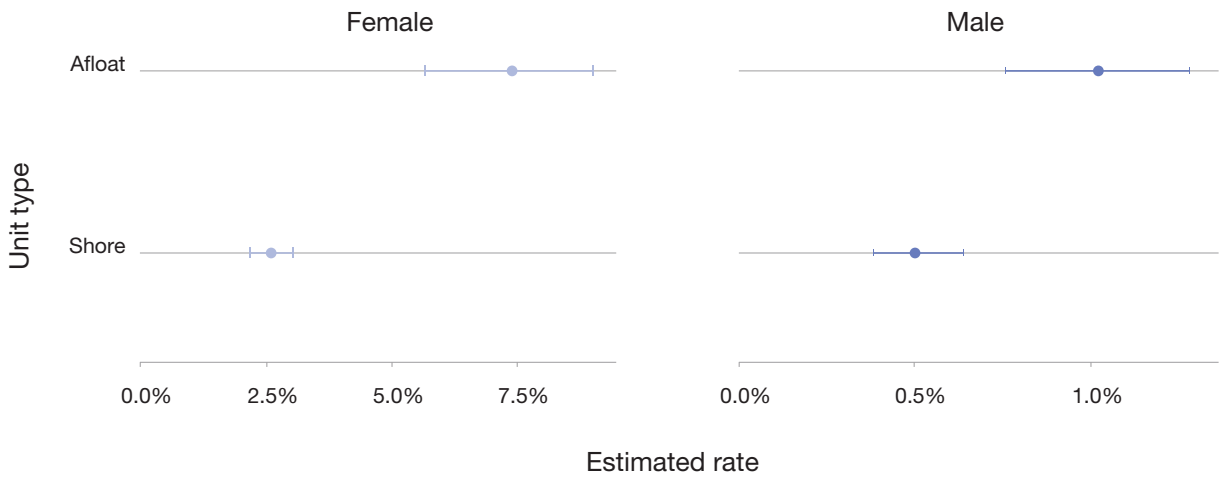
Estimated Sexual Assault Risk, by Job Family and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.3

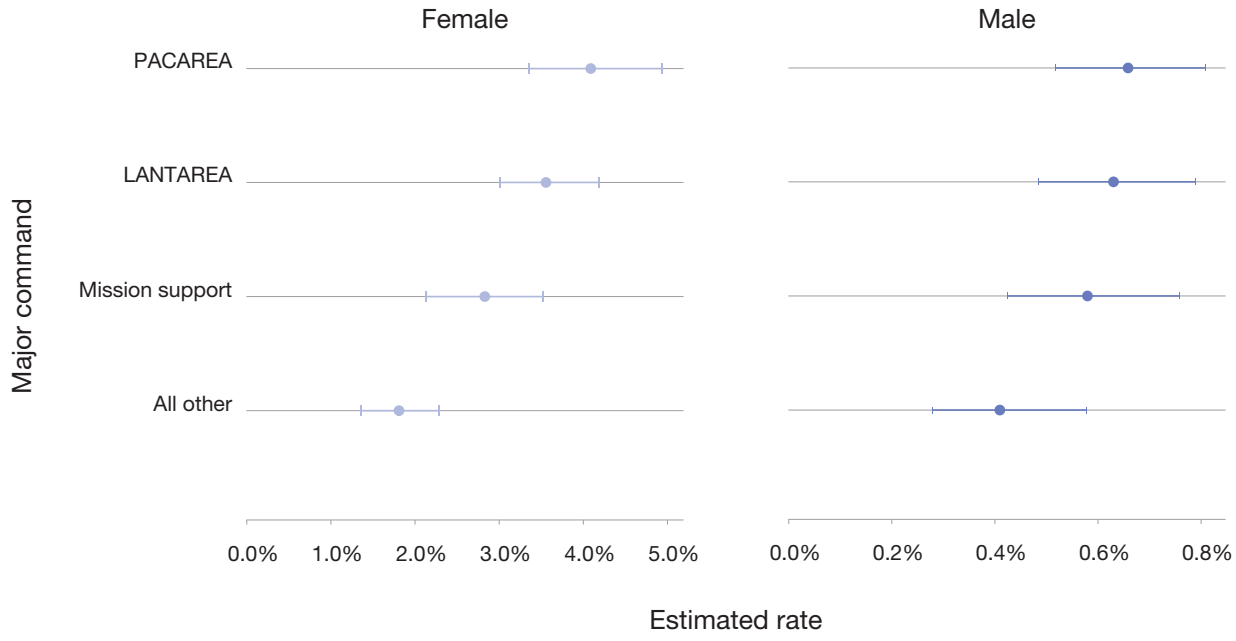
Estimated Sexual Assault Risk, by Unit Type and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.4

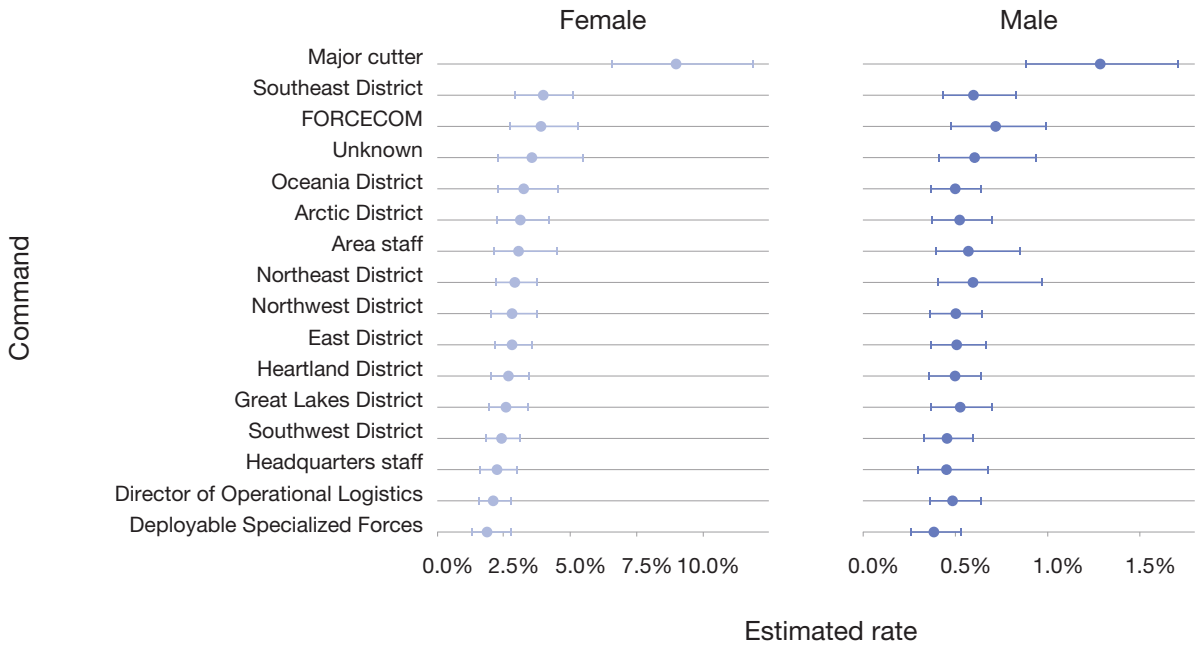
Estimated Sexual Assault Risk, by Major Command Grouping and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.5

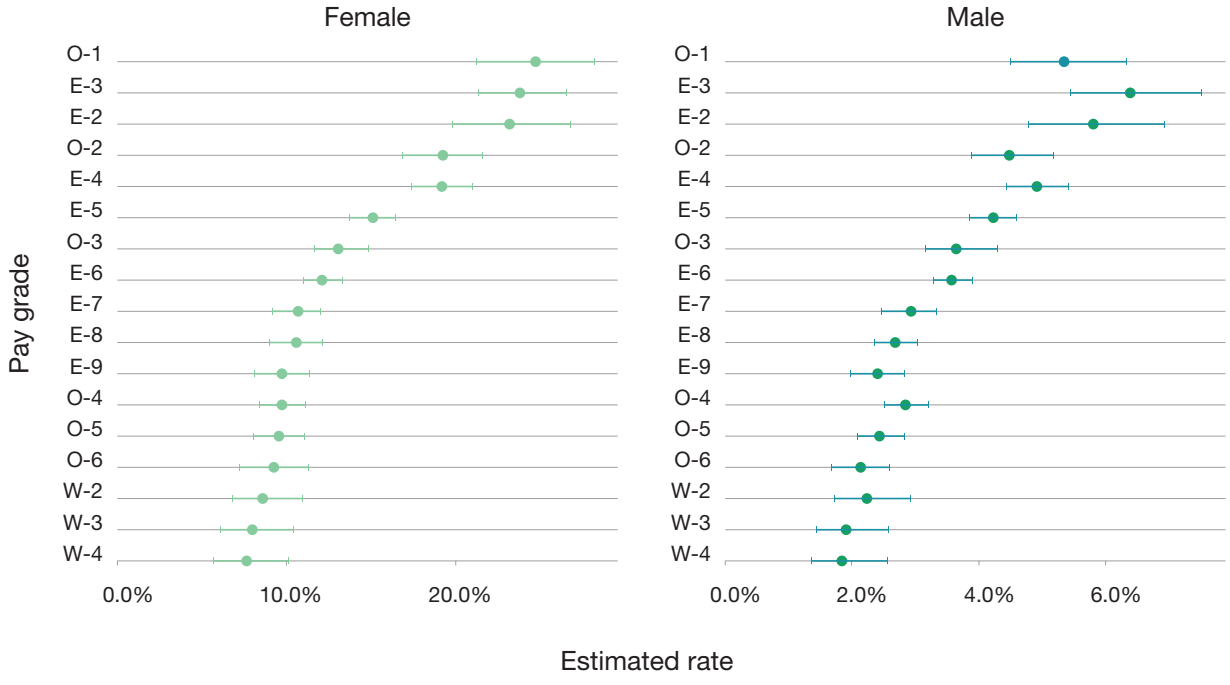
Estimated Sexual Assault Risk, by Large Command and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.6

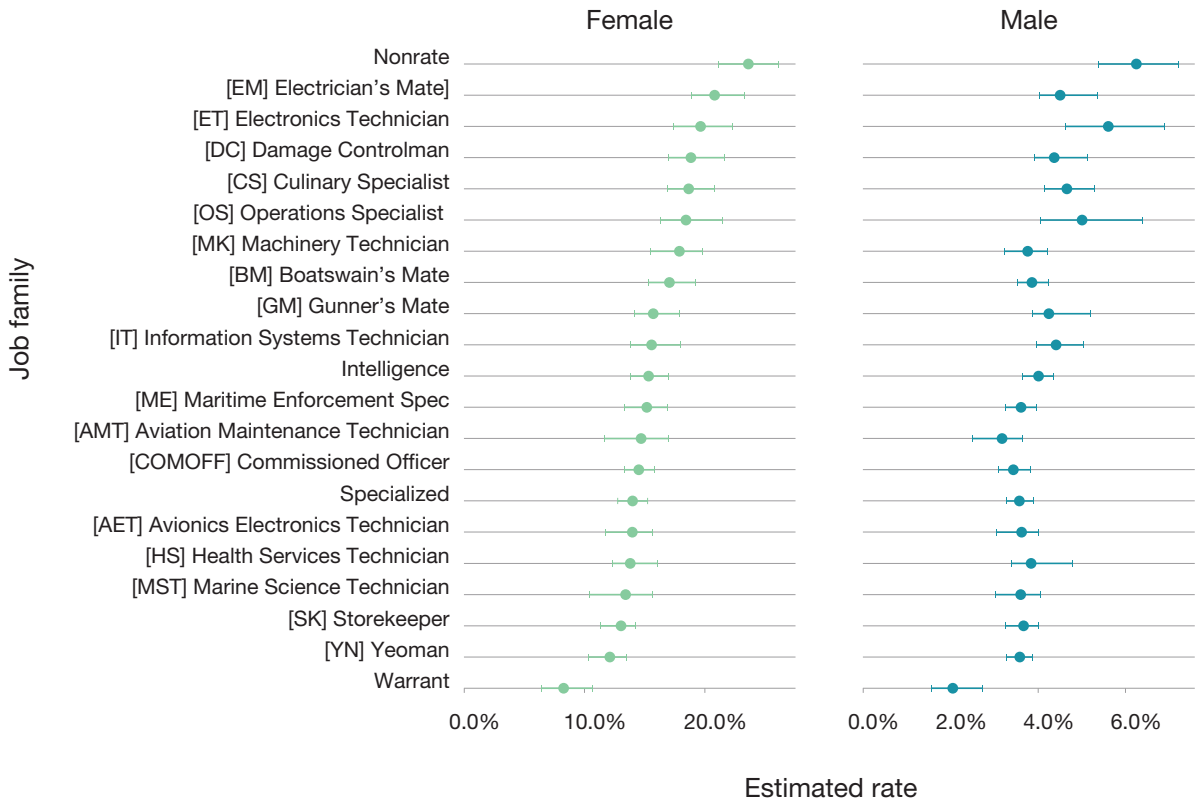
Estimated Sexual Harassment Risk, by Pay Grade and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.7

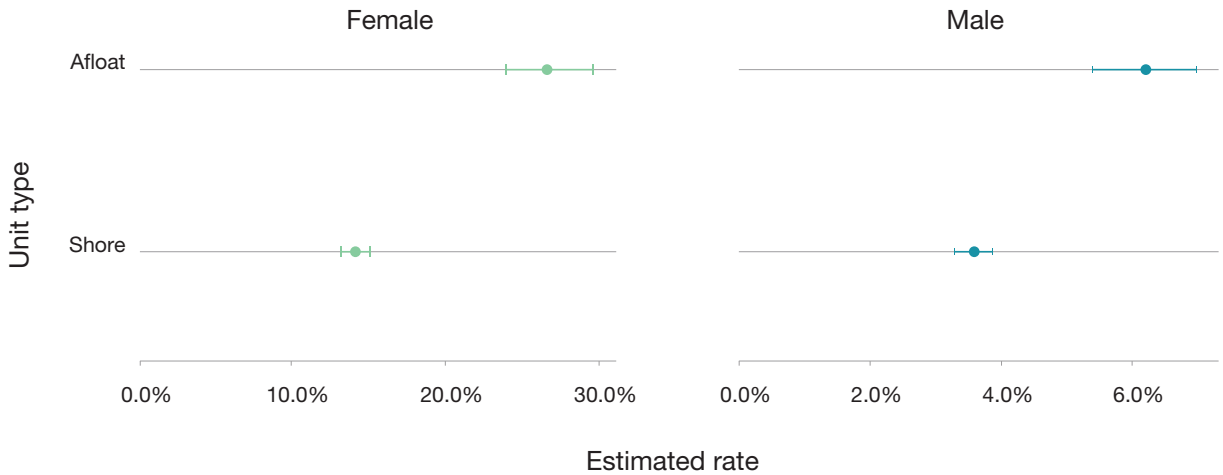
Estimated Sexual Harassment Risk, by Job Family and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.8

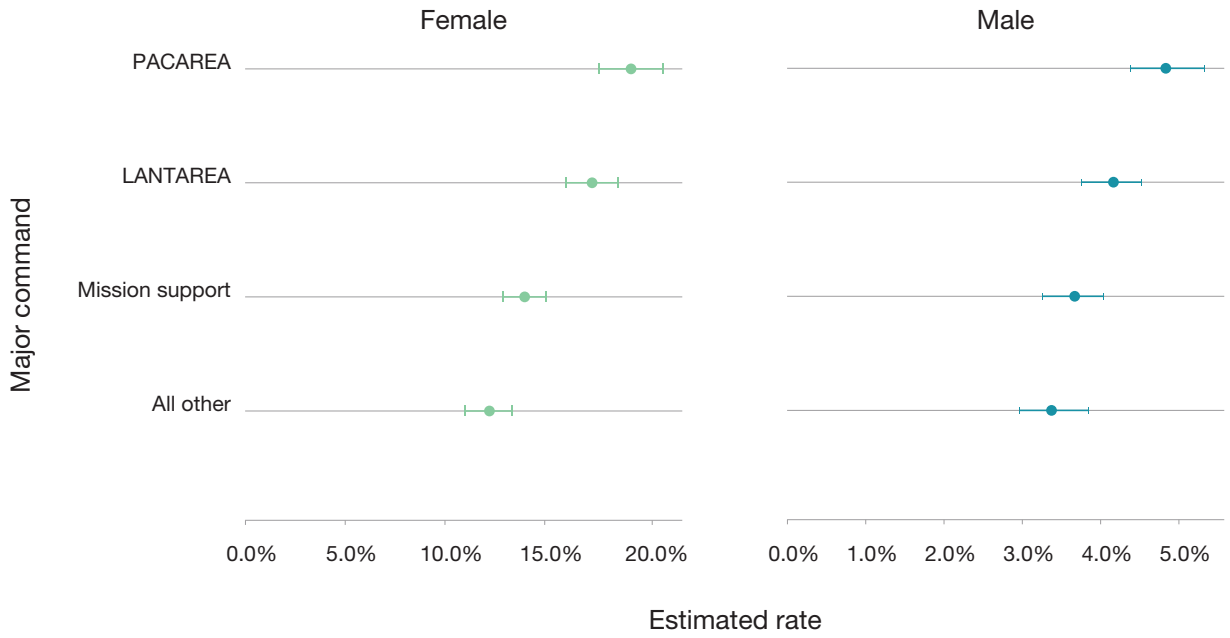
Estimated Sexual Harassment Risk, by Unit Type and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.9

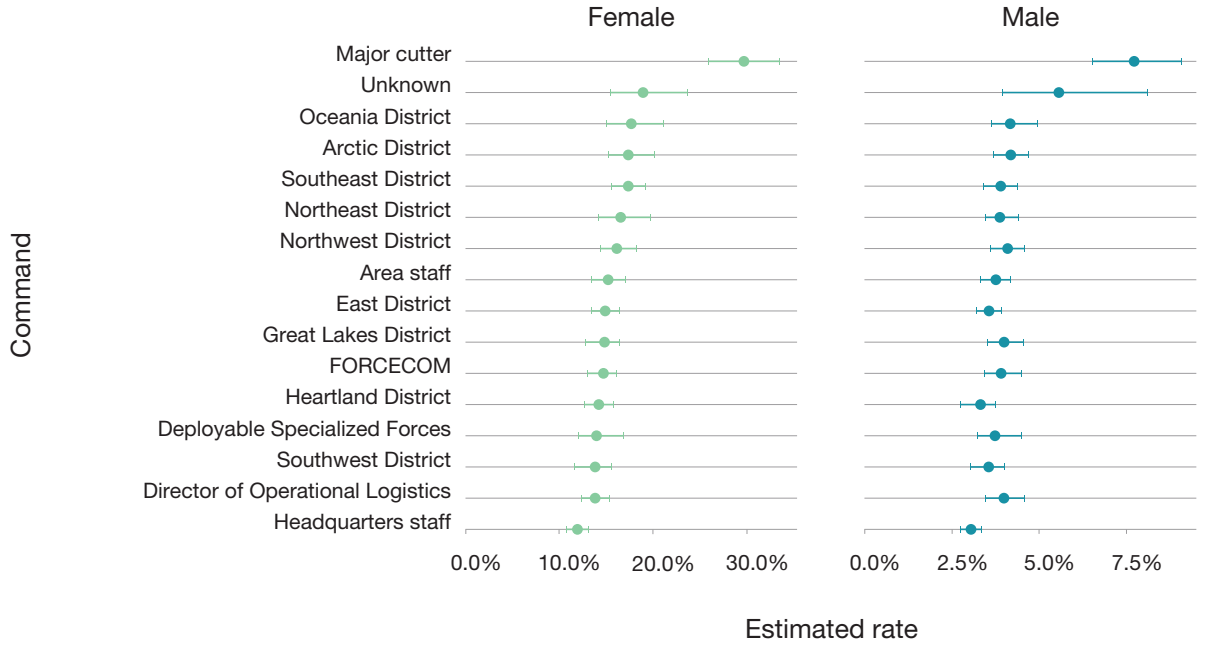
Estimated Sexual Harassment Risk, by Major Command Grouping and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.10

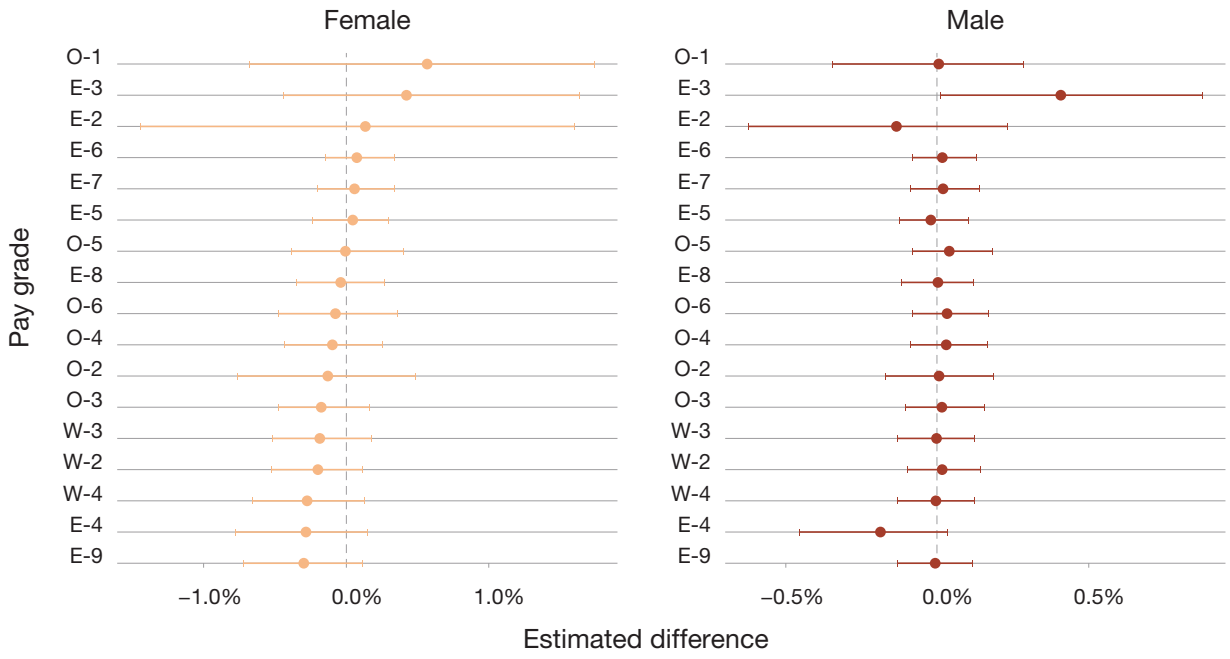
Estimated Sexual Harassment Risk, by Large Command and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.11

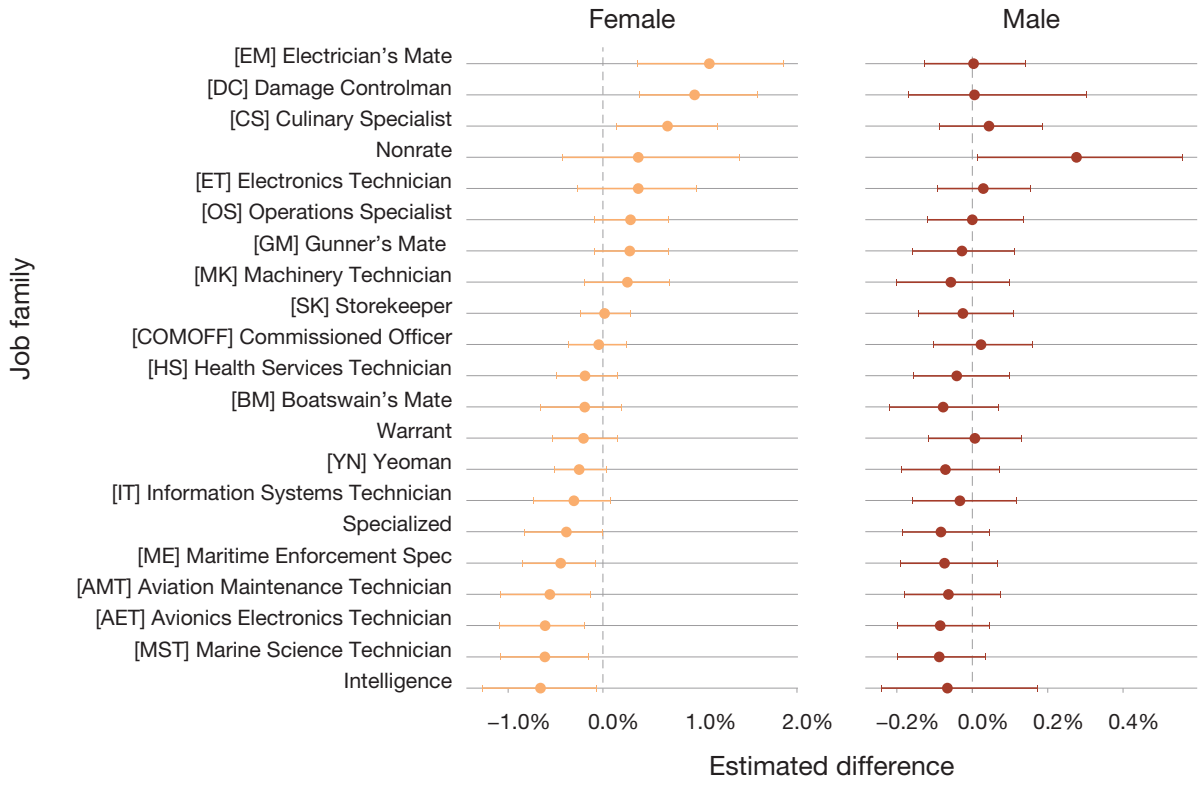
Adjusted Sexual Assault Risk, by Pay Grade and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.12

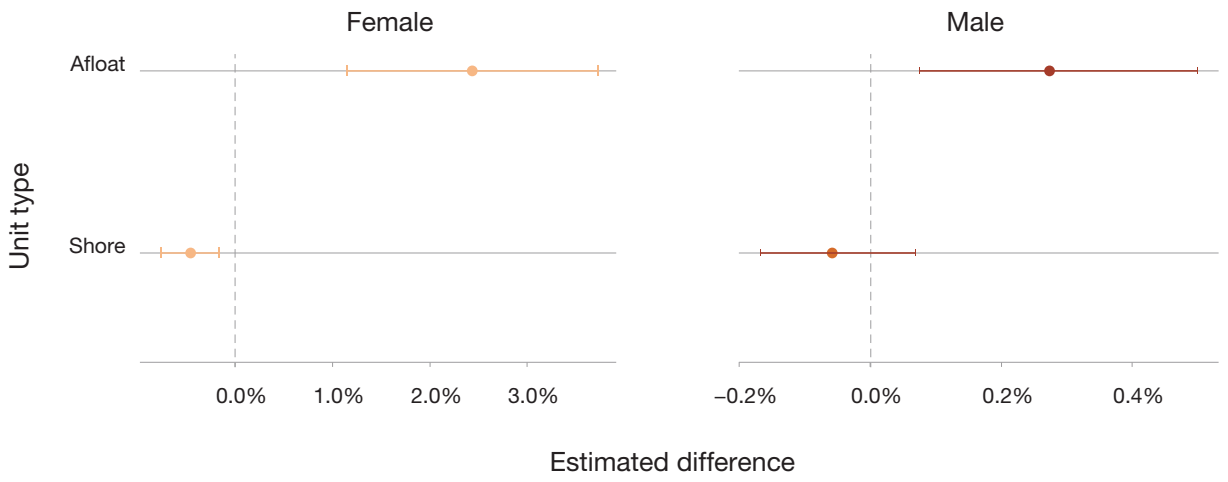
Adjusted Sexual Assault Risk, by Job Family and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.13

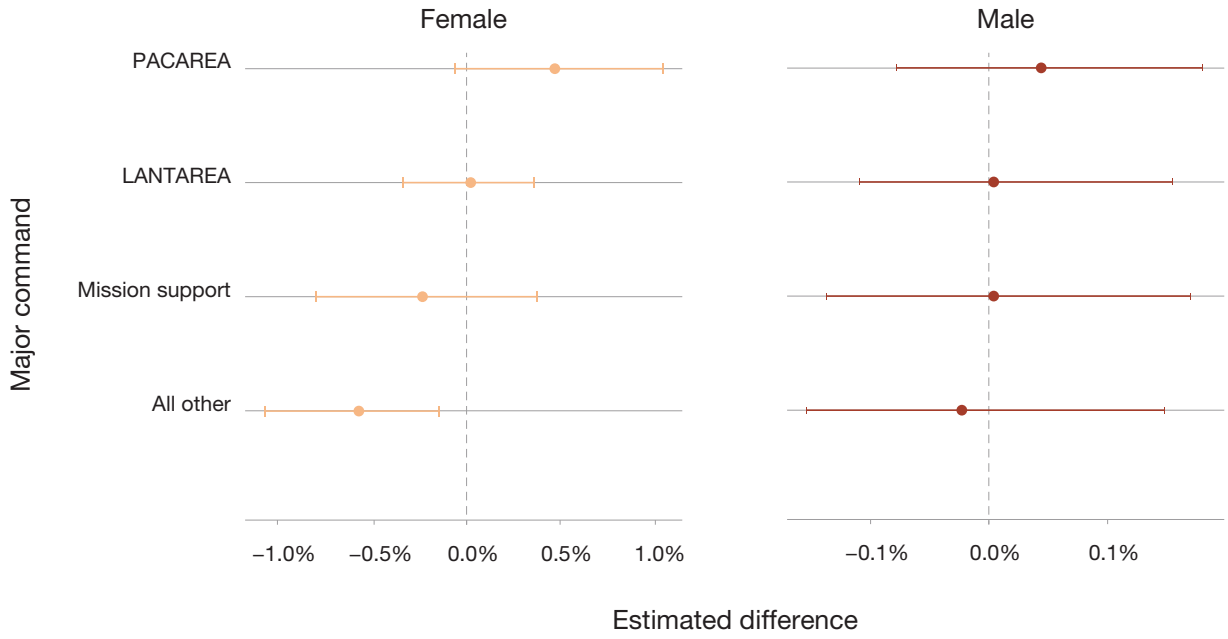
Adjusted Sexual Assault Risk, by Unit Type and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.14

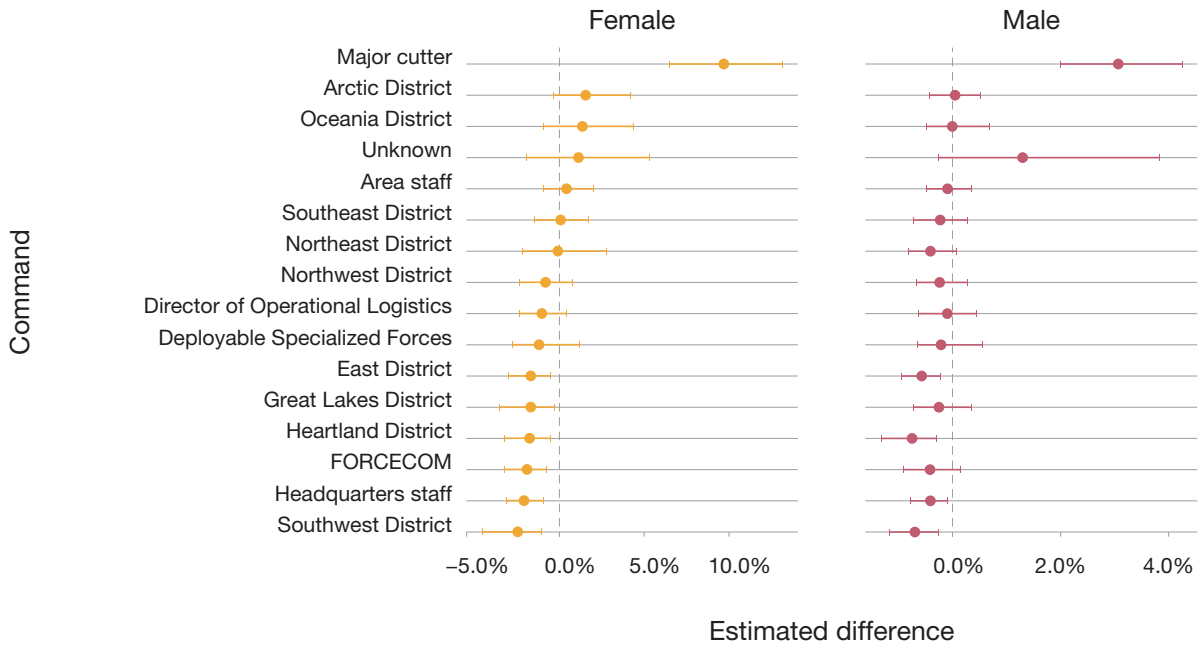
Adjusted Sexual Assault Risk, by Major Command Grouping and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.15

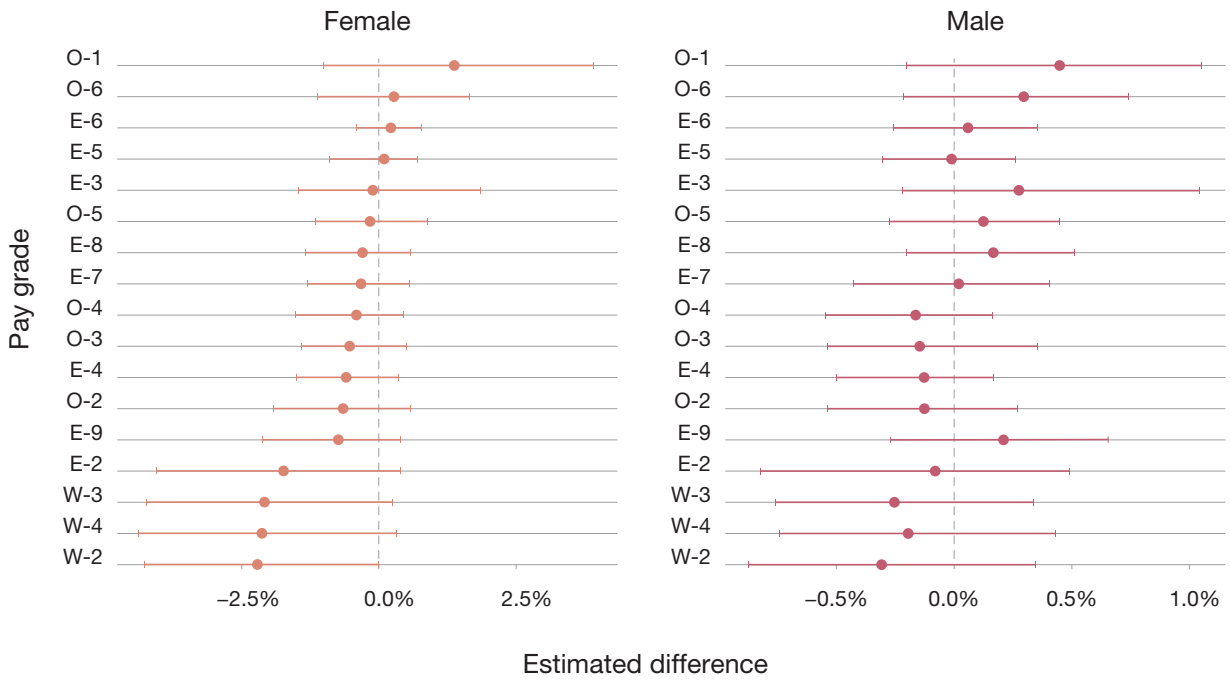
Adjusted Sexual Assault Risk, by Large Command and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.16

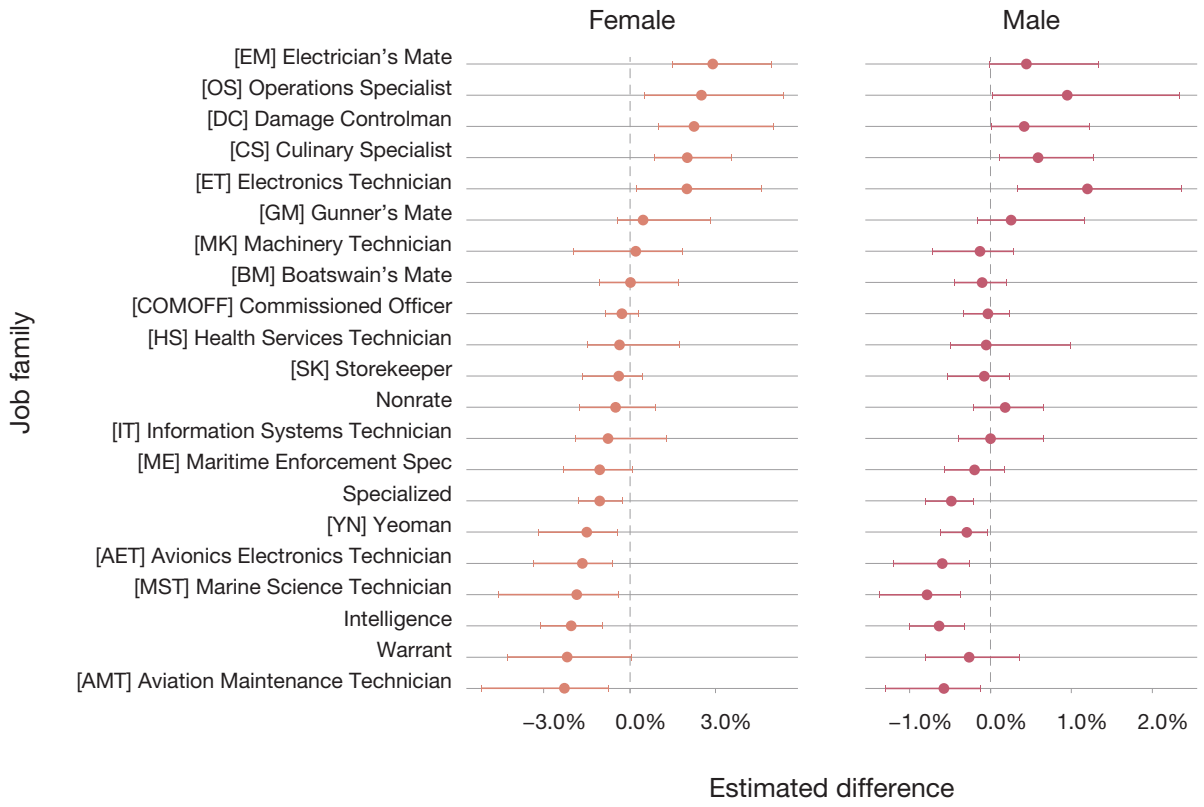
Adjusted Sexual Harassment Risk, by Pay Grade and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.17

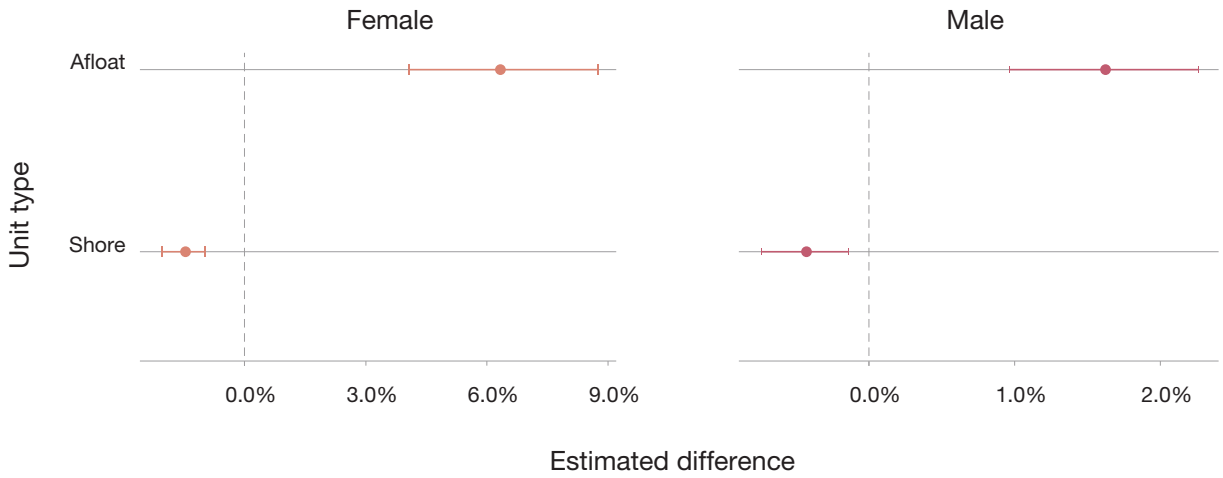
Adjusted Sexual Harassment Risk, by Job Family and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.18

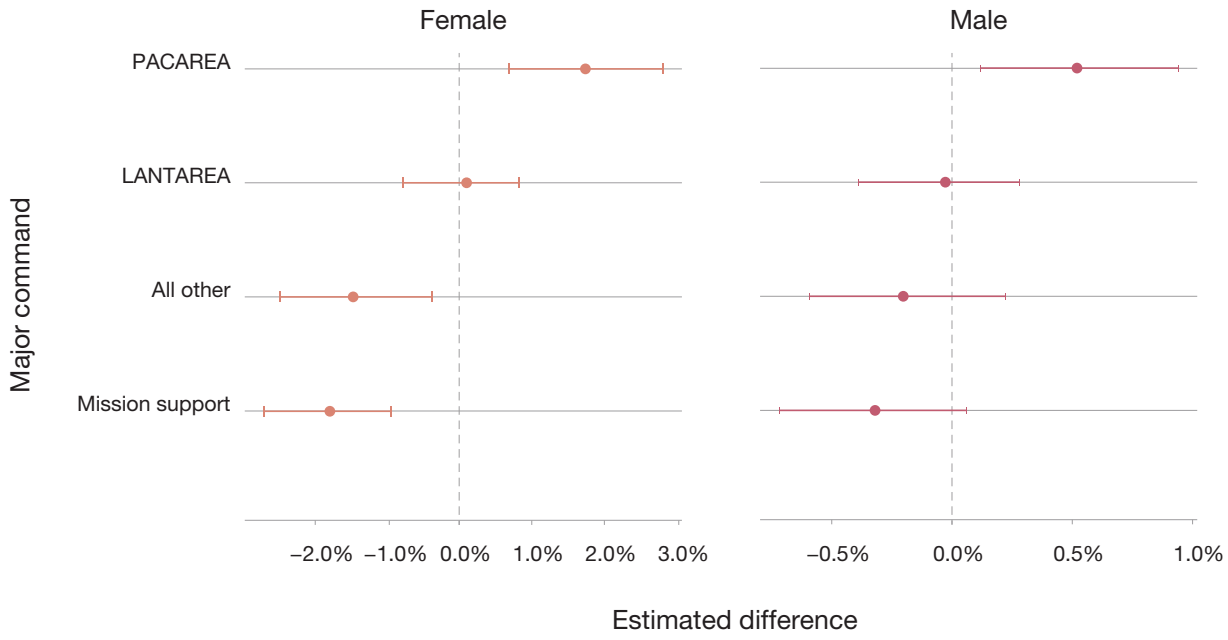
Adjusted Sexual Harassment Risk, by Unit Type and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.19

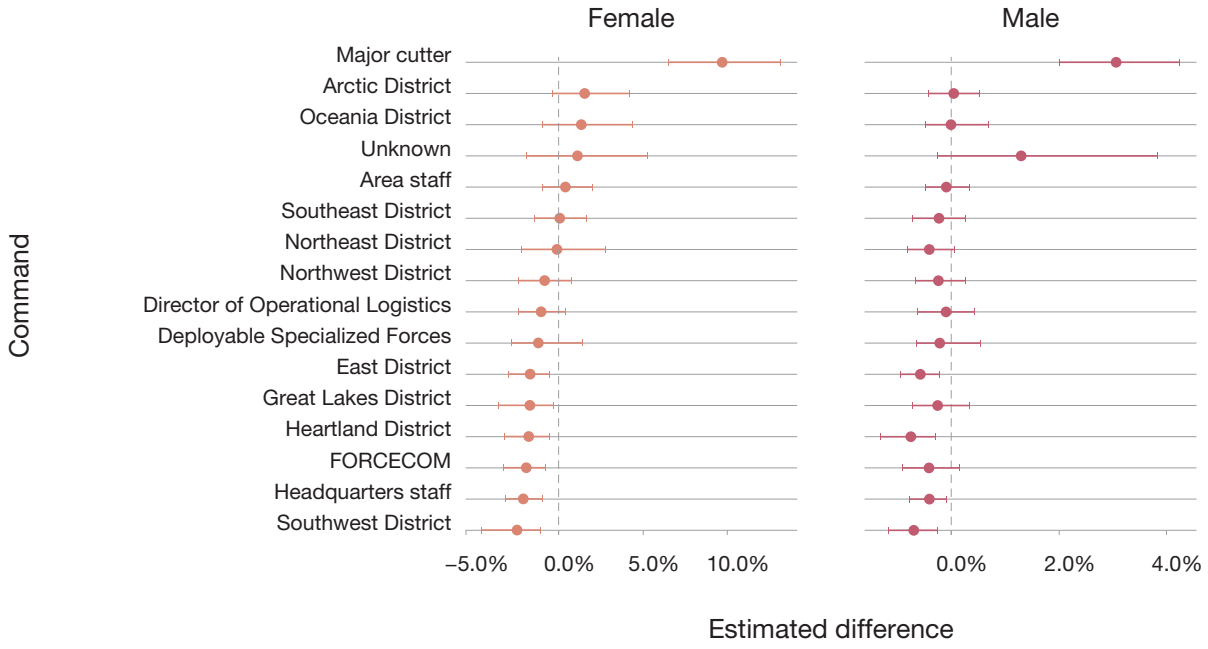
Adjusted Sexual Harassment Risk, by Major Command Grouping and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

FIGURE C.20

Adjusted Sexual Harassment Risk, by Large Command and Sex



NOTE: Error bars show 95-percent confidence intervals. Scales differ by sex. Categories are organized from highest to lowest risk to women.

APPENDIX D

Subject-Matter Expert Review of Recommendations and Policy Options

Respondents reviewed seven preliminary areas that we recommended for improving the Coast Guard's prevention of and response to SASH. We gathered structured and open-ended feedback on those areas from SMEs (see Appendix A for method). Respondents were distributed across districts, Headquarters, Training Centers, Specialized Commands, and the Coast Guard Academy. Respondents included FAS, Legal (including but not limited to Investigations, Prosecutions, and SVC), SARCs, VAPS, and VVAs.

Overview of Perceptions

Difficulty and Impact

Respondents rated how difficult it would be to address each recommended area and the extent to which addressing each would affect prevention and response outcomes. Figure D.1 plots the mean difficulty rating on the horizontal axis and the mean anticipated impact rating on the vertical axis, with each point representing one issue.[1]

The scatterplot shows a clear overall pattern: Respondents generally expected addressing each recommended area to have a positive impact and viewed most recommendations as only neutral to somewhat difficult to implement. Additional information on respondent perceptions is provided in the next section.

According to the ratings (–3 to +3, see Appendix A), the strongest perceived opportunity was to address *resource constraints* that create a reactive system. It received the highest average impact rating, 2.62, while its average difficulty rating was only 0.08, essentially neutral. Respondents therefore appeared to see expanding or better targeting SASH support capacity as both highly consequential and comparatively feasible.

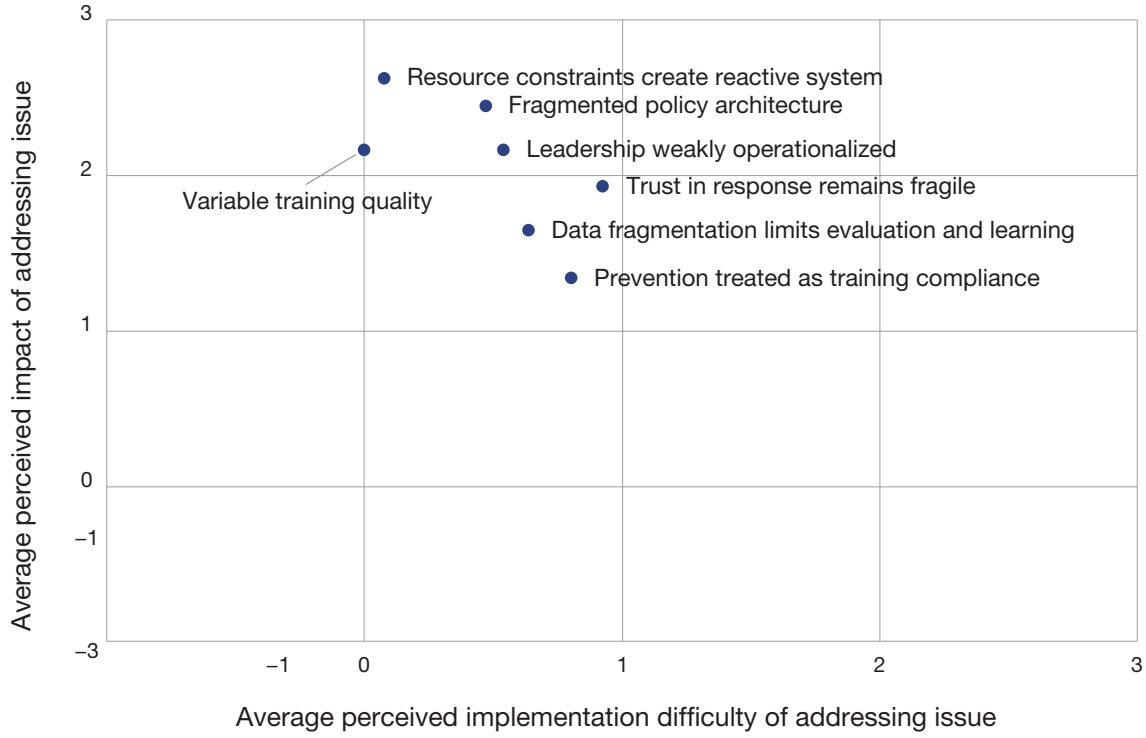
Addressing *fragmented policy architecture* also was perceived as having high impact. Its mean impact rating was 2.44, the second highest, while its mean difficulty rating was 0.47. This suggests that respondents generally believed establishing a clearer policy center of gravity or governance structure could substantially improve SASH prevention and response without being viewed as prohibitively difficult.

Addressing *variable training quality* and *leadership accountability* received identical mean impact ratings of 2.15 but differed somewhat in their perceived difficulty. Addressing training quality was rated essentially neutral in difficulty, 0.00, whereas operationalizing leadership expectations was rated 0.54, indicating modestly greater implementation difficulty. Respondents therefore appeared to regard both as potentially important but may have seen changes to training standards or targeting as somewhat easier to implement than embedding behavioral expectations and accountability into leadership systems.

Addressing *trust, transparency, and response-system efficiency* received a positive impact rating of 1.92 but also the highest difficulty score, 0.92. Although this is still below "somewhat difficult" on average, it suggests

[1] Respondents were not asked to consider fiscal or budget constraints when addressing the difficulty rating.

FIGURE D.1
SME Ratings of the Perceived Impact and Difficulty of Addressing Issues



NOTE: Impact was measured with the following question: "To what extent, if any, would implementation of the above recommendation impact the U.S. Coast Guard's prevention and response to sexual assault and sexual harassment?" with the scale defined as –3 (major negative impact) to +3 (major positive impact). Difficulty was measured with the following question: "How difficult or easy would it be for the U.S. Coast Guard to implement the above recommendation?" with the scale defined as –3 (extremely difficult) to +3 (extremely easy).

that respondents perceived improving communication, investigative timelines, and workflow transparency as more challenging than the other proposed changes.

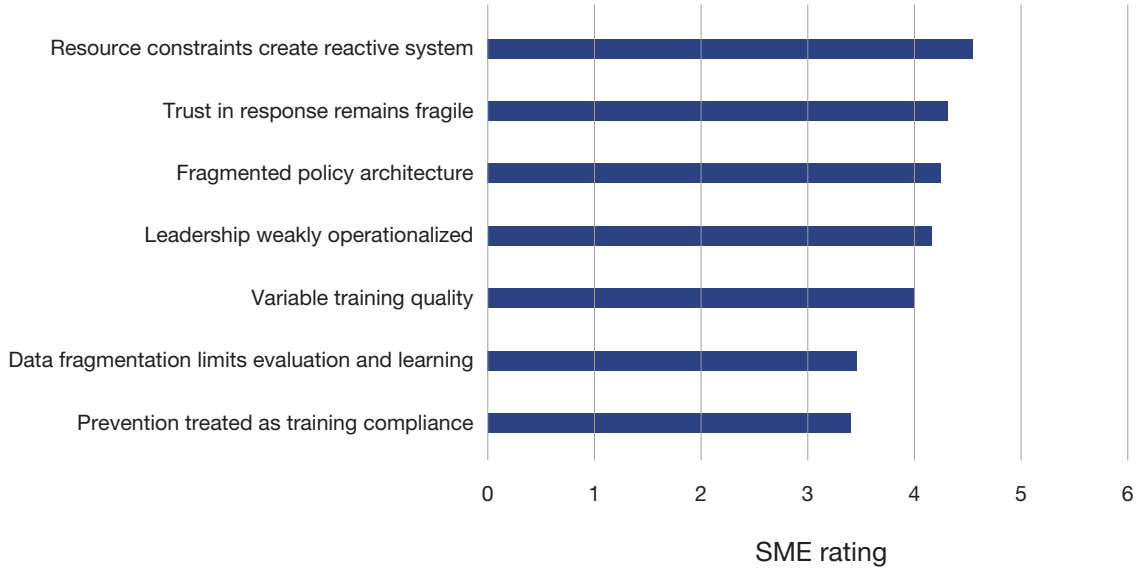
Addressing *data fragmentation* occupied the middle-to-lower range of impact, with an impact score of 1.64 and a difficulty score of 0.64. Respondents saw it as beneficial but less impactful than addressing resources, policy coherence, training, or leadership. This may indicate that data integration is viewed as an enabling capability whose benefits are less direct or less visible, even though it supports evaluation, accountability, and continuity of victim support.

The weakest-rated in relative terms was *shifting prevention away from training compliance and toward measurable capability*. It received the lowest mean impact rating, 1.33, and the second-highest difficulty score, 0.80. Importantly, this does not indicate that respondents viewed it negatively; the mean still indicates a positive expected impact. Rather, compared with the other proposals, respondents may have been less convinced that changing prevention metrics and developing logic models would produce a large practical effect, or they may have anticipated substantial difficulty defining and measuring prevention capability across programs.

Prioritization

Participants also rated the priority of each recommended area for strengthening the Coast Guard's prevention of and response to SASH (0 to 6; see Appendix A). As shown in Figure D.2, all areas received average prioritization ratings above the midpoint of the scale, indicating that participants generally viewed each as at least a moderate-to-high priority. Addressing resource constraints received the highest average priority rating, fol-

FIGURE D.2
SME Prioritization Ratings of Addressing Issues



NOTE: Individuals responded to the following question: "To what extent should this recommendation be a higher or lower priority for the U.S. Coast Guard's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment?" with the scale defined as 0 (not a priority at all) to 6 (top priority).

lowed by focusing on trust in the response system, fragmented policy architecture, leadership accountability, and variable training quality. Addressing data fragmentation and the treatment of prevention as a training-compliance activity received comparatively lower ratings, though both were still viewed as important.

Most Critical to Address

When asked to identify the most critical recommended area to address, respondents most often selected consolidating or formally coordinating SASH program authorities within a unified policy framework. Expanding SASH support capacity, including targeting resources to higher-risk units and strengthening support for sexual harassment cases, was the next most frequently selected recommendation. Strengthening leadership accountability was the third most selected. The remaining recommendations—risk-informed training, greater response-system transparency and efficiency, and shifting prevention toward measurable outcomes—were each selected once. Overall, the responses suggest that participants placed the greatest emphasis on clarifying policy authority and increasing operational support capacity.

SME Feedback

In addition to providing ratings for each of the recommended areas, respondents had the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback on each area.

Fragmented Policy Architecture Limits Coherence, Clarity of Authority, and Accountability

A consistent qualitative theme among those who addressed challenges with fragmented policy architecture was the practical cost of fragmentation. Respondents indicated that programs operate under distinct

directives, instructions can take years to draft and implement, and those without a direct operational stake sometimes hold revision authority at the final stage. Several respondents noted that the separate handling of SASH across SAPRR, FAP, and AHPO creates confusion for commanders and practitioners and can result in unequal support, depending on the nature of the harm experienced. One respondent said,

> Instructions often take years to be drafted and implemented with individuals who are not stakeholders having revision authority until the last moment. To smoothly implement this, there would need to be a shift towards centralizing and a focus on stakeholders having final revision authority. (Legal)

Respondents across roles were broadly supportive of consolidation, though opinions differed on approach. Some respondents favored a single superseding directive, while others emphasized that the Coast Guard's tendency to adapt DoD frameworks without fully tailoring them to its own operational context adds complexity without improving clarity. One respondent noted,

> Implementing a clear policy would promote consistency in program execution within both the DHS and DoW [U.S. Department of War]. This will clarify any confusion amongst leadership and would increase accountability. Given the Coast Guard's unique operational environment, including units embedded on Navy installations and other joint-service locations, a unified policy will ensure consistent guidance and will minimize any administrative barriers that could potentially arise when an incident is reported. (SARC)

Prevention Is Treated Primarily as Training Compliance Rather Than as a Sustained Capability

A concern among respondents addressing prevention as training compliance was the gap between training completion and demonstrated behavioral change. Respondents described a "check-the-box" culture in which mandatory trainings delivered via PowerPoint or click-through online formats are unlikely to produce the skills or behavioral norms that prevention requires. Several respondents noted that developing and delivering effective training is specialized work that should not fall to field SARCs or VAPS as a collateral duty. Addressing this issue, a respondent wrote,

> Even though SAPRR is so vital, it is not unusual for the Coast Guard workforce to treat important trainings as just a requirement. This seems to be often due to the delivery. If there is not funding available for the Coast Guard to send an expert to train all units in person, then the requirement to train usually falls either as an online program that people are inclined to just "click through," or as a collateral duty to someone at the unit, in which case it is easier to just give a PowerPoint than to facilitate real, meaningful discussion. (VVA)

A minority of respondents expressed skepticism about the reform itself. Two respondents questioned whether the Coast Guard has the institutional capacity to develop genuinely effective alternatives, and one argued that, absent greater OCP accountability for case outcomes, training improvements alone will have limited impact on member behavior. One said,

> If a more formalized training were required, then professional training personnel or staff need to be hired or assigned to implement rather than assigning additional duties to a SARC or VAPS. (SARC)

Variable Training Quality, Consistency, and Focus Limit Prevention Effectiveness

Open-ended responses identified structural and operational constraints as the primary implementation challenge for addressing training quality. Respondents noted that the units with the greatest needs (e.g., cutters, small boat stations, and high-risk afloat environments) are also those with the greatest time and attention constraints. They also said that prevention training must compete with operational demands and that, in high-tempo environments, nonmission activities are frequently deferred. For example, a respondent wrote,

> The main difficulty is that the highest-risk areas like small boat stations and cutters also have the greatest time and attention constraints. That said, emphasizing training in these places is a matter of weighing competing priorities versus capacity. (Legal)

Despite this dynamic, most who provided comments supported a tiered or risk-targeted training approach. Directing resources toward junior members and high-risk units was viewed as both practical, given staffing limitations, and strategically appropriate, given where incident risk is concentrated. Notably, several respondents argued for a consistent baseline across the force, stating that all members benefit from the same foundational information regardless of assignment. One commented,

> This initiative would empower units to build a strong culture and would protect the Coast Guard's most vulnerable members. (VVA)

Leadership Expectations Are Central to Outcomes but Are Not Consistently Operationalized

Qualitative responses consistently described a gap between nominal support for SASH policy among leaders and substantive accountability. Respondents noted that when an incident is reported, higher-level leaders are notified but typically have no required ongoing involvement. Respondents said that the current system allows leaders to fulfill minimal procedural requirements without engaging with case progress, unit climate, or prevention outcomes. One respondent said,

> Most leaders are supportive and in alignment with SAPR[R] policy; however, there is room for improvement for higher-level accountability for reporting. When a ship or cutter gets a SA [sexual assault] report, the next level or O-6 is notified; however, they often have zero involvement beyond that notification. (SARC)

Several respondents raised the practical challenge of changing behavior at the most senior levels. A recurring concern was that leadership development courses devote less than a day to SAPRR responsibilities. A concrete suggestion offered by respondents was to improve the training through the incorporation of SMEs and senior leader reinforcement on SASH topics into existing command preparation schools, particularly Prospective Commanding Officer and Prospective Executive Officer (PCO/PXO) school, to reach commanders at the right career moment without requiring additional resources for delivery. For example, one person commented,

> Most leaders have to go through a Leadership Development Course before taking Command. Right now, it is a small aspect of the training, less than a day. This training should be revamped to include training from the SARC and someone from leadership at the O-6 level or higher to reinforce the accountability piece as well as what is expected of them regarding the program. (SARC)

Response Systems Have Improved, but Trust Remains Fragile Due to Communication, Transparency, and Timeline Challenges

Another theme in qualitative responses centered on OCP timelines and prosecutorial transparency. Respondents described investigative and adjudication processes as slow, with survivors waiting months to years for case resolution without meaningful status updates. Several noted that OCP's practice of sheltering case information under prosecutorial discretion leaves SARCs and survivors without the information needed to plan or make decisions about their cases.

Multiple respondents called for enforceable timelines for both CGIS investigations and OCP adjudication decisions. There was also support for enabling simultaneous command and legal action, rather than holding command action in abeyance until OCP completes its process. Improved communication about case status, even when outcomes cannot be changed, was described as a concrete and achievable step that could meaningfully reduce victim uncertainty. The following two statements from respondents addressed these issues:

> The main issue is the timelines themselves . . . OCP moves at a glacial pace when the ball is in their court . . . A major point of frustration is that command action is held in abeyance until OCP acts. Even though command action could be fast and adequate for a victim's needs, they often must wait until OCP acts, which can drag out the timeline considerably. The process would be much smoother and more transparent for victims if command action could proceed simultaneously, with final disposition held pending OCP action. (Legal)

> Reducing bottlenecks and redundancies and clearly communicating case status and updates to survivors could be literally lifesaving for survivors of sexual assault and harassment. It's not a hyperbole to say that feeling a loss of agency for a second time through the military justice process (the assault or harassment being the first loss) can contribute to major mental health crises and self-destructive behaviors that can undermine the already precarious well-being of an individual in this scenario. (VVA)

Resource Constraints Create a Reactive System with Limited Capacity for Prevention and Sustained Engagement

Staffing vacancies and geographic coverage were concerns among those who addressed resource constraints. Respondents described long-standing gaps in SARC and VAPS billets and a slow federal hiring process that compounds the problem. Multiple respondents noted that government shutdowns placed additional pressure on already strained SAPRR personnel and that subsequent staff departures have worsened understaffing. One commented,

> Hire more SARCs and VAPS and address the retention and high turnover of these extremely high-stress roles related to the immense workload due to understaffing. The responsibilities of the position continue to compound as new and wonderful initiatives are proposed and carried out. However, doing more with less is not going to be effective. Do more with more is a reasonable expectation. (SARC)

Respondents described the VVA network as an insufficient substitute for professional staffing, citing inconsistent availability and uneven capability. Although there was support for augmentation strategies (e.g., reservists, technology-enabled remote support, and geographic redistribution of personnel), respondents consistently framed these initiatives as supplements to, not replacements for, adequate professional staffing. For example, one said,

> I worked in [a district] for [many years] as a SARC with [most] of those years by myself . . . The best model is to have 2 SARCs to handle caseloads, and a VAPS at each SECTOR to be there for response and prevention to the field. (SARC)

Data Fragmentation and Governance Challenges Limit Evaluation, Oversight, and Organizational Learning

A qualitative theme among those who addressed data fragmentation was the tension between data integration and survivor privacy. Respondents acknowledged the operational value of a more connected system but emphasized that any implementation must treat survivor confidentiality as a primary constraint rather than a secondary consideration. Unintended disclosure was identified as a significant risk, with potential consequences for survivors' legal recourse, mental health, and willingness to report. Respondents also pointed to the need for dedicated professional data analysts rather than adding data management responsibilities to field staff. One respondent wrote,

> A professional data analyst or someone who understands how to manage the numbers can ensure that the various programs and entities are aligned, with the understanding that balancing data with victim privacy should be highest priority. Adding this as an additional duty or requirement for the field SARCs to have to manage would not be an effective plan. (SARC)

One respondent noted that integration with DSAID may be technically simpler to implement than commonly assumed, observing that the Coast Guard and DoD systems may already be connectable. Another noted that decisions are made on incomplete data, limiting the effectiveness of both policy planning and resource allocation. One respondent commented,

> Absolutely. Add it to DSAID and for the love of God someone hit the switch to integrate the legal information into the CG's DSAID data. It is a very helpful feature to ensure the continuity of information across systems. I've been told it is literally a button someone has to click to connect the systems. Why haven't we done this? (SARC)

Summary

Overall, SME feedback indicated broad support for addressing all seven recommended areas for improvement, with respondents placing the greatest emphasis on strengthening SASH support capacity and clarifying policy authority. Respondents generally viewed these changes as likely to improve prevention and response outcomes without being prohibitively difficult to implement. Open-ended responses reinforced the quantitative findings, highlighting fragmented program authorities, uneven training quality, limited leadership accountability, lengthy and opaque response processes, staffing shortages, and disconnected data systems as persistent barriers. Although respondents differed on the specific mechanisms for reform, their feedback consistently pointed to the need for clearer governance, more-targeted professional resources, stronger leadership engagement, improved communication with survivors, and better integration of data and evaluation while protecting survivor confidentiality.

APPENDIX E

Accountability and Transparency Review Comparison

This appendix describes the extent to which the U.S. Coast Guard's directed actions in response to the ATR align with the recommendations developed through this study (U.S. Coast Guard, 2023). It is intended to provide a structured accounting of what the Coast Guard has formally committed to addressing, the status of those commitments as of May 17, 2026, and where the study's findings identify needs that the directed actions do not fully address.

In 2023, the Coast Guard conducted an ATR to evaluate the service's culture, policies, climate, and processes related to SASH prevention, response, and recovery. The ATR provided an overview of the actions undertaken by the Coast Guard between the time of the incidents investigated at the Coast Guard Academy under Operation Fouled Anchor and the time of the report (November 2023). The ATR identified 44 recommended actions across six domains: climate and culture, prevention, accountability, transparency, victim support, and awareness. Subsequently, the Commandant of the Coast Guard directed 33 specific actions for the service to complete. Status information for each action was drawn from three sources: two internal dashboards, dated July 18 and July 23, 2024, and the Coast Guard's publicly available directed actions webpage, which reflects the most current status available as of May 17, 2026 (U.S. Coast Guard, undated-b). Where sources conflict, both statuses are noted. According to the webpage as of this writing, 27 of the 33 directed actions are completed, four are in progress, and two are pending.

Our recommendations are organized around seven priority issues (Chapter 6). These recommendations are structured differently from those in the ATR; however, in this appendix, we examine each recommendation against the ATR directed actions to characterize the relationship as one of three types: a gap, in which no directed action addresses the recommendation; a partial match, in which one or more directed actions address related material but do not fully satisfy the recommendation; or an exact match, in which a directed action and recommendation are substantively equivalent (Box E.1).[1] No recommendation was found to be an exact match with a directed action. Five of our items identify needs that the Coast Guard has not formally addressed. Where partial matches exist, the Gap Type Summary section in Box E.1 characterizes the nature of the difference. In every area of overlap, our recommendations extend beyond what the ATR directed actions require. This reflects the study's focus on measurable outcomes, formal governance structures, and data-driven implementation rather than the establishment of programs and policies alone.

[1] This appendix was developed with assistance from Claude Code, an artificial intelligence tool used to assist in structuring the tables in this appendix (Anthropic, undated). We conducted the substantive analysis, reviewed the source materials, determined the mappings, and made all judgments regarding alignment.

BOX E.1

Summary of ATR Directed Actions and Alignment with Our Recommendations

ATR Directed Actions

- Total directed actions: 33, organized across six categories.
- Completed: 27, as of May 2026.
- In progress: 4.
- Pending: 2, contingent on Core Values Project completion.

ATR Alignment with Our Recommendations

- Total recommendations: 14, organized across seven priority issues.
- Gap—no corresponding ATR action: 5 areas not formally addressed by the Coast Guard.
- Partial match—our recommendation extends beyond ATR: 9 areas in which ATR acted but our recommendations go further.
- Exact match—fully addressed by ATR: 0.

Gap Type Summary (Partial Matches Only)

- Outcome accountability: 10 ATR actions. ATR establishes programs; our recommendations require measurable results.
- Formalization: 16 ATR actions. ATR acts informally; our recommendations require enforceable standards.
- Risk differentiation: 6 ATR actions. ATR applies uniform approach; our recommendations require risk-based targeting.
- Systems integration: 7 ATR actions. ATR acts in silos; our recommendations require cross-system coordination.
- Scope extension: 9 ATR actions. ATR is limited in application; our recommendations require broader implementation.

NOTE: Gap type counts sum to more than the number of partial matches because items may carry more than one gap type. ATR status reflects the USCG directed actions webpage as of May 17, 2026 (U.S. Coast Guard, undated-b).

Detailed Comparisons

Table E.1 presents the full inventory of the 33 ATR directed actions, organized by category, with current implementation status as of May 17, 2026, and an assessment of whether and how each action is addressed in this report. Of the 33 actions, 27 partially addressed one or more of our recommendations, and six fall outside the study's defined scope and were not reviewed. No ATR directed action was found to be fully addressed by our recommendations, consistent with the finding that our recommendations consistently extend beyond ATR commitments. Actions designated as "Not Reviewed" reflect deliberate scope boundaries in the study design rather than omissions; these include actions specific to individual accountability mechanisms, Academy governance, and physical security. The Gap Type column characterizes the specific nature of the difference between each ATR action and the corresponding recommendation.

Table E.2 then maps each of our recommendations and policy options to the ATR directed actions, characterizing the relationship as a gap, partial match, or exact match. Five have no corresponding ATR directed

actions, representing areas in which the study identified needs that the Coast Guard has not formally committed to addressing. The remaining nine are partial matches, meaning that although the Coast Guard has taken related action, our recommendations and policy options extend beyond what the ATR requires in scope, formalization, or expected outcomes. An ATR action that is listed as partial does not indicate that it is partially implemented, only that it partially supports this report's recommendations. The Gap Type column identifies the specific nature of the difference in each case, organized into five categories:

- outcome accountability, in which the ATR establishes a program but our recommendations require measurable results
- risk differentiation, in which the ATR applies a uniform approach but our recommendations require targeting based on empirical risk data
- formalization, in which the ATR takes action without codifying it in enforceable policy or standards
- systems integration, in which the ATR acts within existing program silos but our recommendations require coordination across organizational structures or data systems
- scope extension, in which our recommendations extend beyond the ATR directed actions.

TABLE E.1

ATR Directed Actions and Alignment with Study Recommendations

ATR #	ATR Action Title	ATR Status (Website)	RAND Study Coverage	Gap Type	Notes
a. Workforce Training, Culture, and Professional Development					
a.i	ATR Implementation Summit	Completed	◗ Partial	Formalization; scope extension	The ATR Implementation Summit was a one-time event that engaged senior leaders on SASH themes. RAND recommendations go further by requiring formalized behavior standards and pipeline-wide embedding that includes routine senior leader engagement and review of measurable outcomes (RAND recommendation 4).
a.ii	Preparatory Course for New Recruits	Completed	◗ Partial	Risk differentiation; outcome accountability	Preparatory Course for New Recruits addresses training for a specific population. RAND recommendation 3.A would situate this within a tiered model with explicit risk-based differentiation. Although the ATR action targets an at-risk population, it relies on baseline training rather than enhanced training and does not establish metrics or data collection standards (RAND recommendation 7A).
a.iii	Workforce In-Person Training Modules	Completed	◗ Partial	Outcome accountability; risk differentiation	As implemented, the tailored Workforce In-Person Training Modules only provide universal workforce training. RAND recommendation 3A would require tiering to distinguish universal vs. enhanced delivery based on empirical risk profiles. The in-person aspect satisfies some of the evidence-informed approaches, but a universal curriculum is not appropriately tailored for positions that are not part of a higher-risk environment and, as developed, does not measure results.
a.iv	Develop More Effective Career Leadership Courses	Completed	◗ Partial	Formalization; scope extension	Develop More Effective Career Leadership Courses aligns with embedding prevention expectations in leadership development. As implemented, the courses do not provide a tailored curriculum for leadership positions that focus on leadership responsibilities (RAND recommendation 4A).
a.v	Senior Leader Engagement 2024 Commanding Officers' Conference	Completed	◗ Partial	Formalization; scope extension	Senior Leader Engagement engages senior leaders on climate and leadership. This approach provides a targeted and tailored curriculum aligned with EBA; however, RAND recommendation 4 requires formalizing specific SASH behaviors and systematic embedding across the full leadership pipeline.
a.vi	Bystander Intervention Training	Completed	◗ Partial	Risk differentiation; outcome accountability	BIT is a specific training type addressed by RAND recommendation 3A's tiered model, which would distinguish universal bystander training from enhanced delivery in highest-risk units. The Coast Guard's implementation of BIT is partially aligned with RAND recommendation 2A for interactive and skill-based approaches but does not include measurable outcomes.
a.vii	In-Person Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery (SAPRR) Training	Completed	◗ Partial	Risk differentiation; outcome accountability	In-Person SAPRR Training provides targeted SAPRR delivery addressed by RAND recommendations 2A and 3A, which would situate this as a universal baseline training within a tiered structure but does not differentiate by population and operational context or provide measurable outcomes.
a.viii	Online Mandated Training	Completed	◗ Partial	Outcome accountability; risk differentiation	Online Mandated Training reestablished a stand-alone SAPRR module, separating it from general Resiliency Training—a substantive improvement over the prior bundled model. RAND recommendation 2A builds on this by calling for a shift from completion-based measurement to outcome measurement; recommendation 3A would layer it into a tiered delivery structure.

Table E.1—Continued

ATR #	ATR Action Title	ATR Status (Website)	RAND Study Coverage	Gap Type	Notes
b. Integrated Primary Prevention (IPP) Program					
b.i	Workforce Resiliency Organizational Structure	Completed	◗ Partial	Scope extension; systems integration	The Workforce Resiliency Organizational Structure action builds organizational capacity. RAND recommendation 6B goes further by specifying volunteer pipelines, certification streamlining, and remote support models. Although listed as completed, this action did not address the fragmented policy architecture outlined in RAND recommendation 1.
b.ii	Victim Recovery	Completed	◗ Partial	Scope extension; formalization	Victim Recovery directed evaluation of options to improve coordination and continuity of care for victims—a significant programmatic commitment, but one that does not appear to have any documented changes. RAND recommendations address response process efficiency (5) and scalable capacity augmentation (6) more broadly.
b.iii	Victim Mentor	Completed	◗ Partial	Scope extension	Victim Mentor created a novel survivor-pairing model within the existing Coast Guard Mentorship Program, enabling victims to connect with VVA-certified mentors. RAND recommendations address structural response timelines (5) and scalable capacity models (6) beyond individual mentor roles.
b.iv	Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery (SAPRR) Strategic Plan	Completed	◗ Partial	Outcome accountability; formalization	The SAPRR Strategic Plan establishes the enterprise-level planning framework for SAPRR programs. RAND recommendations require outcome-based metrics (2A) and formal logic models for each program (2B). The current strategic plan references the use of actionable data to measure effectiveness but has not yet been realized (U.S. Coast Guard, 2026).
c. Core Values					
c.i	Expand Core Values Campaign	In Progress	◗ Partial	Scope extension; formalization	Expand Core Values Campaign provides cultural reinforcement relevant to embedding prevention expectations. RAND recommendation 4B specifically names SASH prevention content within leadership pipelines as a more effective method than broad values messaging.
c.ii	Enlisted Performance Qualifications (EPQs)/Rating Performance Qualifications (RPQs)	In Progress	◗ Partial	Formalization; scope extension	Enlisted Performance Qualifications (EPQs)/Rating Performance Qualifications (RPQs) incorporates core values expectations into qualification standards. RAND recommendations require explicit SASH-specific behavioral standards (4A) tied to accountability and embedded in development (4B). Although EPQs and RPQs provide baseline knowledge, such knowledge is nonroutine and inconsistently applied.
c.iii	Officer Evaluation System	Pending	◗ Partial	Formalization	Officer Evaluation System reform is directly relevant to linking leader behavior to accountability. RAND recommendations specify that concrete SASH behaviors must be formalized and evaluated. Note that this action is pending because it depends on completion of the Core Values Project (c.i), which remains in progress.

Table E.1—Continued

ATR #	ATR Action Title	ATR Status (Website)	RAND Study Coverage	Gap Type	Notes
c.iv	Enlisted Evaluation System	Pending	◗ Partial	Formalization	Enlisted Evaluation System has the same relationship as c.iii. RAND recommendations apply across officer and enlisted leadership accountability mechanisms. Note that this action is pending because it depends on completion of the Core Values Project (c.i), which remains in progress.
d. Accountability					
d.i	Highest Grade Held	Completed	◗ Partial	Outcome accountability; formalization	Highest Grade Held policy relates to leader accountability for sub-threshold performance and helps improve trust, as described in RAND recommendation 5, but does not have an EBA corollary to measurable outcomes. RAND recommendation 4 focuses on formalizing specific SASH leader behaviors and oversight mechanisms more broadly.
d.ii	Characterization of Service	Completed	◗ Partial	Outcome accountability; formalization	Updates to the Characterization of Service policy relate to leader accountability for sub-threshold performance and help improve trust, as described in RAND recommendation 5, but do not have an EBA corollary to measurable outcomes. RAND recommendation 4 focuses on formalizing specific SASH leader behaviors and oversight mechanisms more broadly.
d.iii.a	Safe-to-Report Policy	Completed	○ Not Reviewed		No RAND recommendation addresses safe-to-report policy protections for collateral misconduct. Although the policy appears conceptually sound, there is insufficient empirical evidence demonstrating that its implementation produces measurable outcomes.
d.iii.b	Administrative Separation Board—Victim Rights	Completed	○ Not Reviewed		No RAND recommendation addresses victim rights in administrative separation proceedings. Although the policy appears conceptually sound, there is insufficient empirical evidence demonstrating that its implementation produces measurable outcomes.
d.iv	Addressing Improper Conduct	Completed	◗ Partial	Formalization	Addressing Improper Conduct relates to leader accountability for sub-threshold conduct. RAND recommendation 4A focuses on formalizing specific SASH leader behaviors and oversight mechanisms more broadly.
e. Coast Guard Academy					
e.i	Coast Guard Academy Reporting Structure	Completed	○ Not Reviewed		No RAND recommendation addresses Academy-specific reporting structures. ATR action was not within the study's scope.
e.ii	Academy Board of Visitors and Board of Trustees	Completed	○ Not Reviewed		No RAND recommendation addresses Academy governance bodies. ATR action was not within the study's scope.
e.iii	Cadet Swab Summer	Completed	◗ Partial	Risk differentiation	Cadet Swab Summer training is for a specific high-risk population warranting enhanced delivery. RAND recommendation 3A would situate this training within a tiered model. Although the ATR action targets an at-risk population, it relies on baseline training rather than enhanced training and does not establish metrics or data collection standards (RAND recommendation 7A).

Table E.1—Continued

ATR #	ATR Action Title	ATR Status (Website)	RAND Study Coverage	Gap Type	Notes
e.iv	Cadet Oversight	Completed	◗ Partial	Systems integration	Cadet Oversight touches leadership accountability. RAND recommendation 4A focuses on servicewide integration of SASH leader behaviors, which encompasses Academy command contexts.
e.v	Cadet Conduct System	Completed	○ Not Reviewed		No RAND recommendation addresses the Academy's cadet conduct adjudication system. ATR action was not within the study's scope.
e.vi	Cadet Victim Support	Completed	◗ Partial	Systems integration; scope extension	Cadet Victim Support provides substantial victim support in an Academy context. RAND recommendations also address communication standards (5A), response efficiency (5B), and capacity augmentation (6B) as servicewide frameworks.
e.vii	Physical Security in Chase Hall	Completed	○ Not Reviewed		No RAND recommendation addresses physical security measures. ATR action was not within the study's scope.
f. Information, Data & Transparency					
f.i	Coast Guard-wide Climate Survey	Completed	◗ Partial	Outcome accountability; systems integration	Coast Guard-wide Climate Survey supplies data for training triggers (3B) and feeds the integrated data environment (7A). RAND recommendations go further by requiring threshold-based triggers and cross-system data governance.
f.ii	Survey Analysis and Trend Development	In Progress	◗ Partial	Formalization; systems integration	Survey Analysis and Trend Development directed exploration of survey and environmental data to develop climate trend indicators, including resources for commands to receive assistance interpreting and improving climate. RAND recommendations require this to be systematized with defined thresholds and unified governance (3B, 7A).
f.iii	Direct Access	In Progress	◗ Partial	Systems integration; formalization	Direct Access is a human resources data system relevant to the integrated SASH data environment. RAND recommendations require improved data governance across all SASH systems (7A) and assigned stewardship responsibility (7B).
f.iv	Command Transparency Toolkit	Completed	◗ Partial	Formalization; outcome accountability	Command Transparency Toolkit provides unit-level data visibility. RAND recommendations require this to be systematized as formal trigger thresholds (3B) to improve prevention effectiveness and linked to formalized leader behavior standards with oversight (4A).
f.v	Resources Hub	Completed	◗ Partial	Systems integration; formalization	Resources Hub provides improved awareness and access to policies but does not address fragmentation and confusion. RAND recommendation 1 requires an integrated comprehensive approach to a policy architecture.

◗ Partial = RAND recommendation extends beyond ATR directed action; ○ Not Reviewed = outside study scope; ✕ Gap = no corresponding ATR directed action (gaps appear in Table E.2 only).

NOTE: Action numbering (a.i, b.ii, etc.) follows Enclosure 1 of the Commandant's Directed Actions memorandum (U.S. Coast Guard, 2023). ATR status reflects the USCG Directed Actions webpage as of May 17, 2026 (U.S. Coast Guard, undated-b).

TABLE E.2

RAND Study Recommendations and Alignment with ATR Directed Actions

Rec #	Priority Issue	Recommendation Title	Match Type	Gap and Alignment Notes
Priority Issue 1: Policy Architecture				
1A	Policy Architecture	Establish Single Authoritative SASH Instruction	✕ Gap	RAND recommendation 1A (Establish Single Authoritative SASH Instruction) has no ATR equivalent. ATR actions operate within existing siloed program structures without consolidating SAPRR, FAP, AHPO, and Civil Rights guidance into a single unified directive.
1B	Policy Architecture	Formal Governance Overlay Across Instructions	✕ Gap	RAND recommendation 1B (Formal Governance Overlay Across Instructions) has no ATR equivalent. No ATR action creates a formal policy hierarchy or coordination layer across existing SASH instructions. The closest are b.i (Workforce Resiliency Organizational Structure), which targets staffing (not policy governance), and f.v, which provides a centralized resource hub but does not address fragmentation.
Priority Issue 2: Prevention Framework				
2A	Prevention Framework	Define Prevention as Enterprise-Wide Capability	◗ Partial match	RAND recommendation 2A (Define Prevention as Enterprise-Wide Capability) is partially addressed by a.i, a.iii, a.vi, a.vii, a.viii, and b.iv. ATR actions establish training programs and a strategic plan but do not redefine prevention as a measurable enterprise capability or shift success metrics from training completion to outcomes.
2B	Prevention Framework	Require Program-Specific Logic Models	◗ Partial match	RAND recommendation 2B (Require Program-Specific Logic Models) is partially addressed by b.iv (SAPRR Strategic Plan). The Strategic Plan may include programmatic intent, but ATR does not require formal logic models articulating causal pathways from activities to risk reduction across all programs.
Priority Issue 3: Training Model				
3A	Training Model	Tiered SASH Training Model (Baseline + High-Risk Enhanced)	◗ Partial match	RAND recommendation 3A (Tiered SASH Training Model) is partially addressed by a.ii, a.iii, a.vi, a.vii, and a.viii. ATR directs expanded in-person training across populations but does not establish a formal tiered model distinguishing universal baseline training from empirically risk-targeted enhanced delivery.
3B	Training Model	Data-Driven Triggers for Enhanced Training	◗ Partial match	RAND recommendation 3B (Data-Driven Triggers for Enhanced Training) is partially addressed by f.i, f.ii, f.iii, and f.iv. ATR funds climate surveys and trend analysis, but no ATR action establishes predefined thresholds that automatically trigger enhanced training at specific commands.
Priority Issue 4: Leadership Accountability				
4A	Leadership Accountability	Define Specific Leader Behaviors for SASH, Link to Accountability	◗ Partial match	RAND recommendation 4A (Define Specific Leader Behaviors for SASH, Link to Accountability) is partially addressed by a.i, a.v, c.iii, c.iv, d.i, d.ii, and d.iv. ATR actions include senior leader engagement, service characterization, and evaluation updates but do not formalize a specific set of concrete SASH leader behaviors tied to accountability mechanisms as an enforceable standard and reinforce episodic engagement instead of continuous commitment.

Table E.2—Continued

Rec #	Priority Issue	Recommendation Title	Match Type	Gap and Alignment Notes
4B	Leadership Accountability	Embed SASH Prevention in Leadership Development, Mentoring, and Evaluation	◗ Partial match	RAND recommendation 4B (Embed SASH Prevention in Leadership Development, Mentoring and Evaluation) is partially addressed by a.iv, a.v, c.i, c.ii, c.iii, and c.iv. ATR addresses career leadership courses, senior engagement, core values, and evaluation systems but does not name SASH prevention as a coherent embedded element across the full leadership development pipeline consistently.
Priority Issue 5: Response System				
5A	Response System	Standardize Communication Practices Across Response System	✕ Gap	RAND recommendation 5A (Standardize Communication Practices Across Response System) has no ATR equivalent. No ATR action standardizes communication timelines or expectations for CGIS, OCP, and commands to update victims during the response process. Command Transparency Toolkit (f.iv) addresses command-side messaging only.
5B	Response System	Improve Efficiency Within Existing Response Processes	◗ Partial match	RAND recommendation 5B (Improve Efficiency Within Existing Response Processes) is partially addressed by b.i, b.ii, and b.iii. ATR builds support structures (resiliency organization, victim recovery, mentor), but no ATR action targets bottleneck analysis, handoff clarity, or timeline reduction within the overall response process.
Priority Issue 6: Resource Targeting				
6A	Resource Targeting	Target Resources to Higher-Risk Units and Locations	✕ Gap	RAND recommendation 6A (Target Resources to Higher-Risk Units and Locations) has no ATR equivalent. No ATR action directs SARCs, VAPS, FAS, or mental health providers toward highest-risk commands (cutters, afloat units, remote locations) based on empirical risk data.
6B	Resource Targeting	Expand Capacity Through Augmentation Strategies	◗ Partial match	RAND recommendation 6B (Expand Capacity Through Augmentation Strategies) is partially addressed by b.i, b.ii, and b.iii. ATR builds victim support capacity but does not establish volunteer pipelines, streamlined certification processes, or flexible remote support models as explicit augmentation strategies for capacity gaps.
Priority Issue 7: Data Infrastructure				
7A	Data Infrastructure	Integrated SASH Data Environment Across DSAID, CGCR, EO, and CGIS	◗ Partial match	RAND recommendation 7A (Integrated SASH Data Environment Across DSAID, CGCR, EO, and CGIS) is partially addressed by f.i, f.ii, f.iii, f.iv, and f.v. ATR actions invest in climate surveys and Direct Access data infrastructure but do not establish unified data architecture aligning definitions, reporting standards, and governance across all SASH case systems.
7B	Data Infrastructure	Clarify Data Stewardship—Assign Responsibility for SASH Data	✕ Gap	RAND recommendation 7B (Clarify Data Stewardship—Assign Responsibility for SASH Data) has no ATR equivalent. No ATR action explicitly assigns organizational responsibility for SASH data access, integration, and analysis. Action f.iii (Direct Access) targets human resources system functionality, not SASH case data stewardship.

✕ Gap = no corresponding ATR directed action; ◗ Partial match = ATR directed action exists, but our recommendation extends beyond it.

NOTE: Action numbering (a.i, b.ii, etc.) follows Enclosure 1 of the Commandant's Directed Actions memorandum (U.S. Coast Guard, 2023).

APPENDIX F

Rough Order of Magnitude Estimates

This appendix presents rough order of magnitude (ROM) cost estimates for the priority issue policy options described in Chapter 6.[1] ROM estimates are planning-level figures, not budget requests or appropriations targets, and they are intended to convey the broad scale of resource commitments. ROM estimates are appropriate when there are few available program details but an approximation is needed to frame decisionmaking (GAO, 2020).

What the Estimates Are, and How to Use Them

ROM estimates answer one basic question: Are we talking about thousands of dollars, hundreds of thousands, or millions? Such estimates are used early in the planning process, before a program has been formally designed or funded, to give decisionmakers a broad sense of scale. These estimates can be used to compare the relative scale of options (e.g., is Option 3A a $500,000 program or a $5 million program?) and to identify which options would require special congressional budget actions.

As described in more detail below, we use published federal pay rates, industry training benchmarks, and cost data from comparable federal programs to develop ROM estimates. According to AACE International's Cost Estimate Classification System, a Class 5 estimate, which is the lowest-maturity ROM category, carries an accuracy range that can extend from –50 percent to +100 percent (AACE International Recommended Practice No. 18R-97, 2016). This means that the actual cost of an option could be half the number shown (if implementation goes smoothly) or double it (if complications arise). That degree of uncertainty is normal and acceptable at this very early stage of planning, but these figures should not be used as precise figures for formal budget submissions. More-detailed cost estimates, which are outside the scope of this project, would be needed before funding could be formally requested. These estimates reflect maximized application and are variable, depending on the Coast Guard's level of effort in implementation. There is also significant variability if the Coast Guard reallocates existing billets (without backfill) or reprioritizes billet tasks to support initiatives.

Personnel Estimates

These estimates support policy options in this appendix that involve assigning or hiring people.

Salary Baseline and Benefits

All salary figures use the 2026 federal General Schedule (GS) pay tables (Office of Personnel Management [OPM], 2026). Federal employee benefits—such as health insurance and retirement contributions—are

[1] Claude Code, an artificial intelligence tool, was used to assist with the cost estimation methodology described in this appendix (Anthropic, undated).

loaded at 36.25 percent of base salary per Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-08-13 (2008), which established a standard civilian fringe benefit rate for federal cost estimation. A $100,000 salary therefore translates to approximately $136,250 in total cost to the government.[2]

Locality Pay

The federal government pays higher salaries in high-cost areas to keep pace with local private-sector wages. In this appendix, we considers two locality rates:

- *DC/NCR:* 33.94 percent above base salary. This was used for positions likely based at USCG Headquarters.
- *National field average:* approximately 17 percent above base salary. This was used for field-posted positions, such as SARCs and VAPS.

Where the locality assumption makes a material difference to an estimate, it is stated explicitly in the Basis/Notes column of the cost table.

Salary Ranges, by Grade

Base salary ranges were constructed around experience and performance level for specific pay grades, as defined in the OPM Salary Table. Low values were based on Step 1 experience and performance, and high values were based on Step 10 experience and performance. Total costs were calculated using base pay multiplied by the appropriate locality pay for the position and the employee fringe benefit rate. Staff positions were determined as follows:

- GS-11 VAPS (field). However, many VAPS positions are classified at GS-12, which would increase total costs. The correct grade should be confirmed through a CG-1 position classification review before any billet is included in a budget request.[3]
- GS-12 civilian SARC (field).
- GS-12/13 FAS (field), depending on supervisory responsibility.
- GS-14 SARC and SASH Manager (SARC, Washington, D.C.).
- GS-15 SASH Program Supervisor (Washington, D.C.).

Training Estimates

Creating a training program and delivering it to participants are two different activities with different price tags. Development costs are a one-time expenditure for designing, writing, and producing a training curriculum. This is measured in cost per instructional hour of content created. Delivery costs are the recurring

[2] This example reflects the benefit rate only and does not include locality pay. For a Washington, D.C./National Capital Region (DC/NCR) position, the fully loaded cost also applies the locality multiplier (× 1.3326), as described in the Salary Ranges by Grade.

[3] The Coast Guard's primary victim advocate coverage at the unit level comes from VVAs, who are active-duty and reserve service members who volunteer for this role. Per COMDTINST 1754.10F, each SARC is responsible for training, credentialing, and supervising all VVAs in their area of responsibility. Because the Coast Guard rotates personnel frequently (Permanent Change of Station rotations), VVA turnover is high, and SARCs must continually recruit and retrain new volunteers. VVA pipeline sustainment is a recurring baseline cost that is not captured in any option.

expenditures for running training sessions for participants. This is measured in cost per learning hour delivered or per participant.

Training Development Cost Benchmark

The primary source we used for training development costs was a 2010 Chapman Alliance study, which surveyed 249 organizations and reported average internal development costs per finished hour by content type:

- instructor-led training (ILT): $7,121
- Level 1 eLearning (basic, content pages and assessment): $12,064
- Level 2 eLearning (interactive, 25 percent or more interactive exercises): $22,300
- Level 3 eLearning (advanced, simulations, games): $60,445 (Chapman, 2010).

For SAPRR training, which combines ILT components with scenario-based and interactive elements, the relevant planning range is likely $7,121 (ILT) to $22,300 (Level 2 interactive) per finished hour, with simulation-heavy content approaching the Level 3 range.[4]

Delivery Cost Benchmark

Delivery costs vary depending on how and where training is delivered. This appendix disaggregates three delivery channels for the Coast Guard:

- Training Center Yorktown and Academy delivery: Training delivered through the Coast Guard's formal school infrastructure (i.e., Training Center Yorktown and the Coast Guard Academy) costs very little in marginal terms. The facilities and instructors are already funded within FORCECOM's existing budget. These costs are considered "sunk" and are not counted as incremental costs for any policy option.
- SARC field delivery at dispersed units: When a SARC travels to deliver training at remote or geographically dispersed units, the main cost driver is travel (i.e., Temporary Additional Duty). These costs vary widely by district.
- Computer-based training: Online or self-paced training has near-zero marginal delivery cost per additional participant once the content is developed.[5]

We derived delivery cost estimates for facilitated in-person training from Association for Talent Development State of the Industry Report (SOIR) benchmarks. We considered three consecutive years of data: the 2024 SOIR (reflecting 2023 data, $n = 498$) reports $123 per learning hour; the 2025 SOIR (reflecting 2024 data, $n = 539$) reports $165 per learning hour; and the 2026 SOIR (reflecting 2025 data, $n = 340$) reports an average organizational expenditure of $846 per employee but does not state an explicit per-learning-hour figure (Association for Talent Development, 2024, 2025, and 2026). We used the $165 per hour figure (2025 SOIR) as the primary benchmark here, as it is the most recent explicitly reported cost-per-learning-hour figure in the series. All costs exclude instructor salary, which is captured separately as SARC or contractor personnel

[4] These figures are 2010 data and have been adjusted upward by 20 percent for inflation to reach FY 2026 dollars (per U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012–2026).

[5] If personnel numbers remain static, the largest impact to deliver cost benchmarks is the opportunity cost when Coast Guard staff apply resources to SASH training in lieu of other training. Therefore, the primary costs involve hiring additional staff, which can be directly attributed to personnel costs.

cost. For a standard four-hour facilitated session, this implies a nonpersonnel delivery cost of about $20–40 per participant. This covers materials, facilities, and administrative overhead at average organizational rates.[6]

Information Technology System Estimates

Option 7A involves building a new computer system to improve how the Coast Guard tracks and analyzes sexual assault data. Two technical approaches are possible, and they carry different cost profiles.

Sub-scenario 7A-i involves building a Coast Guard module on top of the existing DoD system (DSAID). This might lower development cost, but the Coast Guard would depend on DoD's infrastructure, access agreements, and timeline. As previously discussed in the report, this dependence can be challenging.

Sub-scenario 7A-ii involves building a semi–stand-alone Coast Guard system. This would entail higher development cost and higher ongoing maintenance cost, but the Coast Guard would retain full control and have limited dependency on DoD—specifically, OPA—cooperation. These represent distinct architectural decisions that should be evaluated separately based on policy and technical priorities.

Below, we consider costs by scenario:

- 7A-i (DSAID integration): The Coast Guard adds its own data module on top of the existing DoD system.
  - One-time build cost: $5 million to $6 million. GAO reports that DoD planned to spend $3.59 million in FY 2017 to add new modules and capabilities to DSAID, which is the closest available comparison for what a Coast Guard integration module would cost (GAO, 2017). Adjusting that figure forward to FY 2026 dollars (using a 3.5–4.5 percent annual inflation rate over nine years, which is consistent with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Cost Index for civilian workers over this period) yields a base of approximately $4.9 million to $5.3 million (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012–2026), plus $200,000 to $500,000 for federal security certification (Authorization to Operate [ATO]/Risk Management Framework [RMF] accreditation) and accessibility compliance (Section 508), based on GAO-reported agency authorization costs of $69,000 to $400,000, adjusted upward for a new system build rather than adoption of an existing service (GAO, 2024).
  - Annual upkeep cost: $500,000 to $800,000 per year once the system is operational. For context, GAO reports that the 2012 revised estimate for the full DoD DSAID system (covering all military branches) was $17.9 million total, which included roughly $880,000 per year for ongoing operations and maintenance across FYs 2013–2018 (GAO, 2017). A Coast Guard module would bear only a fraction of that full-system cost. However, this is a planning estimate; it should be verified against current DoD DSAID hosting and support contract rates before use in a budget request.
- 7A-ii (semi-standalone): The Coast Guard builds a Coast Guard–owned system. This costs more upfront and more to maintain each year, but the Coast Guard would have full control—no dependency on DoD decisions, timelines, or access agreements.
  - One-time build cost: $10 million to $19 million. GAO reports that the original DoD estimate for building DSAID from scratch was $12.6 million (in FY 2010 dollars), and a revised 2012 estimate put the total at $17.9 million, which is for a system serving active-duty personnel across all military branches (GAO, 2017). The Coast Guard's active component is substantially smaller, so many of the variable costs would be lower. However, the fixed costs include security infrastructure, compliance certification, and database architecture. These are largely the same regardless of system size. Applying a 30–50 percent scaling factor to the DoD baseline and adjusting for inflation (3.5–4.5 percent per

[6] When a service member attends a training session, they are not performing their regular duties during that time. The value of those deferred duties is called an *opportunity cost*. This appendix excludes opportunity costs from all delivery cost estimates, which is standard practice for ROM-level planning.

year over 14 years from 2012) yields a base of $6 million to $17 million, plus $1 million to $2 million for Coast Guard–specific compliance overhead.
  - Annual upkeep cost: $800,000 to $1.5 million per year once operational. This is higher than 7A-i because the Coast Guard would bear the full cost of maintaining its own system rather than sharing infrastructure with DoD. No directly comparable figure is available for a Coast Guard–scale stand-alone system; this estimate is based on the federal information technology norm of spending 15–20 percent of development cost annually on operations and maintenance. It should be verified before use in a budget request.

Policy and Governance Estimates

Some options require writing or revising official Coast Guard policy instructions. A COMDTINST is the Commandant's official instruction. It is the binding policy document that governs how a program operates across the entire Coast Guard. Revising or creating one of these is a substantial staff undertaking, not a routine administrative task.

Drafting Cost

The cost of developing or revising a COMDTINST depends on the number of drafting hours required and the hourly cost of the staff doing the work. We could not find published federal sources that specify staff-hours for Coast Guard policy instructions; the estimates below are best guesses, reflect drafting time only, and should be understood as a floor. Total staff effort—including multi-office coordination, Judge Advocate General (JAG) legal review, Section 508 accessibility formatting, and Commandant clearance routing—will be higher and should be estimated separately before any figure is used in a formal budget request.

For a standard COMDTINST revision, drafting effort is estimated at 120–900 hours, reflecting the wide variation between a targeted amendment to an existing instruction and a substantially new policy and development of a manual.

- In-house (CG-114/JAG staff): At a fully loaded GS-14 hourly rate of $94–122 per hour (OPM Salary Table 2026-GS, DC/NCR locality, multiplicative method per para. 2312: GS-14 S1–S10 $196,082–254,914 ÷ 2,087 work hours per 5 U.S.C. 5504(b); OMB M-08-13 benefit rate of 36.25 percent), the drafting cost ranges from approximately $11,000 to $110,000.
- With contracted drafting support: Using U.S. General Services Administration CALC+ awarded ceiling rates for senior policy analyst labor categories, which typically run $125–185 per hour fully burdened, drafting cost ranges from approximately $15,000 to $167,000 (U.S. General Services Administration, 2025).

A COMDTINST Manual (a full program manual, substantially more extensive than a standard instruction, which is 25 pages or fewer) would fall at the high end of this range or above it. Option 1A involves significant revisions to COMDTINST Manuals and uses the high range of this estimate, whereas Option 1B involves minimum revisions and uses the in-house low-to-mid range of this estimate.

Governance Body

Some options involve creating a standing headquarters oversight body. This is a formal committee that meets quarterly to coordinate implementation, track outcomes, and ensure accountability across Coast Guard commands. The cost estimates below are built from three components: government staff time, secretariat support, and meeting logistics:

- Government staff time: A quarterly meeting chaired by a Senior Executive Service–equivalent with approximately ten to 15 members from headquarters staff (GS-13/GS-14 equivalent) is estimated to require 12–24 hours per GS-13/GS-14 participant per quarter for preparation, attendance, and documentation, yielding approximately 480–1,440 GS-13/GS-14 staff-hours per year. Senior Executive Service chair participation (estimated at eight hours per quarter, 32 hours per year) adds an additional cost.
- Secretariat support: This is estimated at 24 hours per quarter (96 hours per year) for agenda preparation, minutes, and action item tracking, using GS-12 salary rates.
- Meeting logistics: For a headquarters-only body with no participant travel, marginal meeting logistics costs (room, audio/visual, materials) are negligible within existing headquarters infrastructure and are not counted as incremental costs.
- Total estimated annual cost: Approximately $55,000–220,000 per year. This estimate covers a new body with development and approval of organizational charters. If an existing Coast Guard or DHS coordination structure can be amended to absorb this function, actual incremental cost would be lower. Before use in a formal budget request, staff count and hours-per-meeting assumptions should be verified with CG-114.

New Position

The fully loaded annual cost of the GS-14 headquarters coordinator billet ($196,000–255,000 per year at DC/NCR locality, applying 2026 OPM base pay and OMB M-08-13 benefit rate) is not included in the governance body estimate above. It is a separate billet cost and should be counted as an additional line item, not absorbed within the governance cost range.

Program Evaluation Considerations

Program evaluation means systematically measuring whether a policy option is achieving its intended outcomes. Evaluation is not just tracking activity (e.g., how many people were trained) but also measuring real change (e.g., whether misconduct rates declined, whether climate scores improved). OMB Circular No. A-11 (2025, Section 290) establishes the framework for agency evaluation budgeting under the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Pub. L. 115-435, 2019). Organizations have recommended that agencies invest at least 1 percent of program funds in evaluation as a baseline floor (e.g., Results for America, 2019). This floor generally applies to established programs with existing data systems and baselines. For new prevention programs for which no validated Coast Guard–specific measurement instruments exist, no command-level baseline data exist, and no evaluation infrastructure is in place, the 1 percent floor might not be sufficient to support meaningful outcome measurement in the first years of implementation. The appropriate evaluation investment for new programs in this situation would likely be higher, but no federal source specifies a standard percentage for new program startup evaluation costs.[7]

Table F.1 summarizes the ROM estimates, by priority issue.

[7] Notably, the Coast Guard is not the first defense component to face this challenge. GAO (2015) found that DoD's prevention-focused performance measures were missing more than half of GAO's ten key attributes for a well-designed performance measure. Missing metrics included measurable numerical targets, baseline and trend data, methodological clarity, and linkage between program activities and desired outcomes. Six years later, GAO confirmed that two of the priority recommendations from the 2015 report still had not been implemented: (1) linking prevention activities to specific outcomes and (2) developing fully specified prevention performance measures (Farrell, 2021).

TABLE F.1

ROM Estimates, by Priority Issue

Rec #	Priority Issue	Description	Cost Elements	One-Time Low	One-Time High	Annual Low	Annual High	Basis/Notes
1A	Priority Issue 1: Fragmented Policy	Establish a single authoritative SASH instruction consolidating SAPRR, FAP, AHPO, and related authorities into a unified directive.	Policy drafting (CG-114/JAG in-house primary; contractor support if RAND/HSOAC task-order used); program office staff time; legal review and clearance	$110,000	$500,000	$50,000	$65,000	One-time low = in-house policy drafting (GS-14 DC/NCR). One-time high = estimated RAND/HSOAC task-order. Recurring = 0.25 FTE GS-14 DC/NCR program oversight.
1B	Priority Issue 1: Fragmented Policy	Retain existing instructions; introduce formal governance overlay with dedicated coordinator billet to clarify roles, policy hierarchy, and coordination requirements.	Policy addenda to existing instructions; governance body setup; dedicated GS-14 headquarters coordinator billet (new position)	$75,000	$200,000	$250,000	$680,000	One-time = policy addenda drafting plus governance body charter development. Recurring low = one GS-15 billet (SASH Program Supervisor, DC/NCR). Recurring high = two-person office plus governance body operating costs.
2A	Priority Issue 2: Prevention as Compliance	Define prevention as enterprise-wide capability with minimum program design standards, required skill-based approaches, and validated common effectiveness indicators.	Standards development; curriculum redesign; evaluation framework; performance measure development and validation (new); enterprise monitoring function (1–2 FTEs); OPA-style climate survey	$450,000	$1.1M	$255,000	$775,000	One-time = policy and standards development, evaluation framework design, and new prevention effectiveness instrument development and validation. Recurring = 1–2 FTE enterprise monitoring plus OPA-style climate survey and OMB A-11 evaluation costs.
2B	Priority Issue 2: Prevention as Compliance	Maintain decentralized programs; require program-specific logic models articulating how activities reduce risk and how success is measured.	Logic model template development; program office technical assistance and review; light analytic support	$575,000	$1.5M	$70,000	$210,000	One-time = full implementation: headquarters template development plus logic model redesign across SAPRR, FAP, AHPO, and subordinate programs. Recurring = partial FTE program management plus light contractor support.
3A	Priority Issue 3: Variable Training Quality	Establish tiered training model: universal baseline for all members plus enhanced facilitated training for higher-risk units (cutters, afloat, junior enlisted, nonrates).	Enhanced curriculum development (adapt evidence-based program); facilitator training (train-the-trainer cascade); annual enhanced-tier in-person delivery; OPA-style climate survey for outcome evaluation	$225,000	$730,000	$3M	$9M	One-time = curriculum development (ILT only at low end; adds interactive content at high end), facilitator training, and evaluation setup. Recurring = annual enhanced-tier delivery for 4,000–12,000 higher-risk members plus OPA survey and OMB A-11 evaluation costs.

Table F.1—Continued

Rec #	Priority Issue	Description	Cost Elements	One-Time Low	One-Time High	Annual Low	Annual High	Basis/Notes
3B	Priority Issue 3: Variable Training Quality	Establish data-driven triggers for enhanced training based on climate surveys, reporting patterns, and risk indicators; triggered commands receive facilitated training and leadership coaching.	Governance/threshold framework; data monitoring capacity; on-demand facilitated delivery; SAPRR, AHPO, and FAP integration	$60,000	$180,000	$190,000	$500,000	One-time = governance and threshold framework development. Recurring = on-demand facilitated training delivery, trigger algorithm maintenance, and coordination. Requires Priority Issue 7 data infrastructure.
4A	Priority Issue 4: Leadership Operationalization	Define concrete leadership behaviors for climate management, peer-dynamic intervention, and prevention engagement; link to accountability mechanisms.	Behavioral standards development; policy revision; leadership training module; leadership behavior instrument development and validation (new); inspection and evaluation integration	$425,000	$1.2M	$120,000	$320,000	One-time = behavioral standards development, leadership training module, inspection integration, and new leadership behavior instrument development and validation. Recurring = PME delivery, program management, and OMB A-11 evaluation costs.
4B	Priority Issue 4: Leadership Operationalization	Embed prevention and climate management expectations into leadership development, mentoring, and evaluation processes rather than formal policy codification.	PME curriculum integration (Training Center Yorktown, Academy); mentoring program design; evaluation rubric development	$50,000	$150,000	$65,000	$180,000	One-time = marginal curriculum development for existing PME programs. Recurring = curriculum maintenance and monitoring. Delivery costs are sunk within FORCECOM budget.
5A	Priority Issue 5: Response Trust	Standardize communication practices across CGIS, OCP, commands, and victims: clear case-update timelines, structured evidentiary briefings, consistent information protocols.	Protocol development; training for CGIS, OCP, and command staff; communications materials; coordination overhead	$105,000	$250,000	$75,000	$175,000	One-time: protocol development; staff training. CGIS and OCP operational costs are separately appropriated. Overlap with 1A will reduce initial cost. Recurring: refresher training; maintenance; OMB A-11 evaluation estimates; coordination.
5B	Priority Issue 5: Response Trust	Improve efficiency within existing response processes by identifying bottlenecks, clarifying handoffs, and reducing redundancies to shorten timelines.	Process mapping and analysis (contracted or in-house); workflow implementation; monitoring	$50,000	$500,000	$60,000	$235,000	One-time: process mapping study (in-house or contracted); prerequisite baseline data extraction across CGIS, OCP, and Legal. Recurring: 0.25–0.75 FTE plus contractor support.

Table F.1—Continued

Rec #	Priority Issue	Description	Cost Elements	One-Time Low	One-Time High	Annual Low	Annual High	Basis/Notes
6A	Priority Issue 6: Resource Constraints	Target SARC, VAPS, FAS, investigator, and mental health resources to higher-risk and limited-access locations; reallocate existing billets before adding new ones.	Resource mapping and allocation analysis; billet reallocation (cost-neutral) or new billets (SARC GS-12, VAPS GS-11/12, FAS GS-12/13); VVA pipeline sustainment for new areas of responsibility; SARC TAD travel	$240,000	$320,000	$830,000	$1.4M	One-time = resource mapping and allocation analysis. Recurring = new billet costs (SARC GS-12, VAP GS-11/12, FAS GS-12/13, Rest of U.S. locality) plus SARC TAD travel. Low scenario = seven net new billets; high scenario = 21 net new billets. Reallocation-only scenario is cost neutral.
6B	Priority Issue 6: Resource Constraints	Expand capacity through augmentation: streamline VAPS certification, build remote or flexible support models, expand sexual harassment victim support mechanisms.	Certification/pipeline redesign; remote support infrastructure (telehealth/ virtual); volunteer training and support; sexual harassment advocacy expansion	$100,000	$300,000	$100,000	$320,000	One-time = VAPS certification pipeline redesign and remote support infrastructure. Recurring = 0.5–1.0 FTE GS-11/12 field position plus pipeline operations and materials.
7A-i	Priority Issue 7: Data Fragmentation	Sub-scenario i: USCG module integrated onto existing DoD/DSAID infrastructure. Lower development cost; dependent on DoD system access and interoperability agreements.	System integration and interoperability onto DoD infrastructure; data governance framework; stewardship position; ATO/ RMF accreditation; FITARA/ Section 508 compliance	$5M	$6M	$500,000	$900,000	One-time = USCG module development on existing DoD/DSAID infrastructure, inflated from GAO (2017) baseline, plus ATO/RMF accreditation. Recurring = USCG proportional share of DoD system O&M costs. Dependent on DoD access agreements.
7A-ii	Priority Issue 7: Data Fragmentation	Sub-scenario ii: Semi–stand-alone USCG system. Higher development cost; greater USCG control; no dependency on DoD infrastructure access.	Stand-alone system development; data governance framework; stewardship position; full federal IT compliance stack (ATO/RMF, FITARA, Section 508, FedRAMP if cloud-hosted)	$10M	$19M	$800,000	$1.5M	One-time = semi–stand-alone USCG system development, scaled from GAO (2017) DoD baseline with USCG cost factor, plus federal IT compliance stack. Recurring = 15–20 percent of development cost, per federal IT O&M norms.
7B	Priority Issue 7: Data Fragmentation	Clarify data stewardship by assigning responsibility for data access, integration, and analysis within an existing organizational function; resolve access bottlenecks incrementally.	Stewardship framework development; data governance policy; analyst/ steward capacity (1 FTE GS-12/13); data access protocols; contractor support	$350,000	$1.1M	$140,000	$350,000	One-time = working group staff effort and contractor support to develop data stewardship framework. Recurring = one GS-12/13 data steward plus contractor support.

NOTE: FITARA = Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act; FTE = full-time equivalent; IT = information technology; O&M = Operations and Maintenance; PME = professional military education; TAD = Temporary Additional Duty.

Abbreviations

AFQT	Armed Forces Qualification Test
AHHI	Anti-Harassment and Hate Incident
AHPO	Anti-Harassment Program Office
ATO/RMF	Authorization to Operate/Risk Management Framework
ATR	Accountability and Transparency Review
BIT	Bystander Intervention Training
CGCR	Coast Guard Central Registry
CGIS	Coast Guard Investigative Service
CI	confidence interval
CIT	Crisis Intervention Team
CO	commanding officer
COMDTINST	Commandant Instruction
CRT	Civil Rights Training
DC/NCR	Washington, D.C./National Capital Region
DEOCS	Defense Organizational Climate Survey
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
D-SAACP	Defense Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program
DSAID	Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database
DVIDS	Defense Visual Information Distribution Service
EBA	evidence-based approach
EO	equal opportunity
EPQs	Enlisted Performance Qualifications
FAP	Family Advocacy Program
FAS	Family Advocacy Specialist(s)
FORCECOM	Force Readiness Command
FY	fiscal year
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
GLM	generalized linear model
GS	General Schedule
HSOAC	Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center
ILT	instructor-led training
IPP	Integrated Primary Prevention
JAG	Judge Advocate General
LANTAREA	Atlantic Area
NACP	National Advocate Credentialing Program
OCP	Office of the Chief Prosecutor
OMB	Office of Management and Budget

OPA	Office of People Analytics
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PACAREA	Pacific Area
PTSD	posttraumatic stress disorder
REACT	Recognize, Evaluate, Assess, Confirm, and Take Action
ROM	rough order of magnitude
RPQs	Rating Performance Qualifications
SAPRR	Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery
SARC	Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
SASH	sexual assault and sexual harassment
SE	standard error
SHP	Sexual Harassment Prevention
SME	subject-matter expert
SOIR	State of the Industry Report
SPeL	Self-Paced e-Learning
SVC	Special Victims' Counsel
TIC	trauma-informed care
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
VAPS	Victim Advocate Program Specialist(s)
VVA	Volunteer Victim Advocate
WGR	Workplace and Gender Relations (Survey)
XO	executive officer

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