

# FACT SHEET: PREVENTING WORKPLACE SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

*USAID has zero tolerance for sexual misconduct, including harassment, exploitation or abuse of any kind among staff or implementing partners.*

## What is Sexual Misconduct?

Sexual misconduct is an umbrella term that encompasses *any* inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature or that is sex-based, including sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, stalking, voyeurism, and any other such conduct that is nonconsensual or has the purpose or effect of threatening, intimidating, denigrating, or coercing a person. The misconduct need not rise to the level of civil or criminal illegality to warrant corrective or disciplinary action. Whether an action constitutes sexual misconduct does not depend on the intent of the alleged perpetrator, but rather, is evaluated from the objective standpoint of a reasonable person. Actions that constitute sexual misconduct include, but are not limited to: physical, verbal, non-verbal, and/or written acts, including comments, jokes, gestures, the posting of images, sexual advances, the offering of sexual incentives, and the threat of consequences for the refusal of sexual advances. Categories of sexual misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- **Inappropriate Sexual Conduct:** Any behavior that is: (1) inappropriate and (2) either sexual in nature or sex-based.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
- **Sexual Assault:** Any non-consensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.
- **Sexual Exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse [by aid workers] of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Misconduct of a sexual nature or related to a person's sex, which is so frequent or severe as to create a hostile or offensive work environment or which results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted). It can include verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature, as well as offensive remarks related to a person's sex.

## Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Harassment

USAID takes all forms of sexual misconduct seriously, including, but not limited to, behavior that violates EEO law or Agency EEO policy. EEO harassment is unwelcome conduct that is so pervasive or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or results in a negative employment action. The behavior must also be related to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, sexual orientation or transgender status), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status,



veteran status, status as a parent, political affiliation or reprisal for engaging in protected activity. For more information, please consult [ADS 110 Equal Employment Opportunity](#).

## Reporting and Response

All allegations of internal workplace sexual misconduct at USAID, including sexual harassment and EEO harassment — regardless of hiring mechanism — can be reported through the [Misconduct Reporting Portal](#) on [LaunchPad](#) (launchpad.usaid.gov). USAID staff can also report internal misconduct through the Service Central Helpdesk at (202) 712-1234.

All USAID supervisors and management officials (e.g., Administrative Management Officers, Executive Officers, and Regional Legal Advisors) are required to report allegations of internal sexual misconduct within 24 hours of becoming aware of them to the [Misconduct Reporting Portal](#).

The Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCRD) and Office of Employee and Labor Relations (HCTM/ELR) review reported allegations and determine next steps, which may include conducting an administrative inquiry and/or providing guidance to management officials on interim measures to maintain the safety of employees and the efficiency of operations. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action, but cannot be guaranteed.

USAID strictly prohibits retaliation of any kind and will take action to address such behavior. If it is determined that a violation of law or policy occurred, OCRD and/or HCTM/ELR will review the findings and determine the appropriate course of action. The range of appropriate actions is case-dependent, but can include coaching/counseling, training or disciplinary action — up to and including removal for cause. For more, see: [Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy 3 FAM 1525](#), [Discriminatory Harassment Policy 3 FAM 1526](#), and [Policy on Consensual Relationships 3 FAM 1527](#).

## Sexual Assault

Sexual assaults that occur in the United States generally fall under the jurisdiction of the State or locality where the assault occurred. Anyone experiencing sexual assault in the United States should: (1) go to a safe place away from the perpetrator; and (2) reach out for help, which could include: accessing emergency medical services; contacting local authorities; contacting USAID's [Staff Care Center](#) at +1 877-988-7243; contacting the Office of Security at +1 202-712-0990; and/or contacting USAID's Misconduct Reporting Hotline at +1 202-712-1234 (from 8:30 a.m.-5:00pm EST).

The Regional Security Officer (RSO) at post is the first responder for sexual assaults overseas involving Chief of Mission personnel or facilities. Anyone experiencing sexual assault overseas should: (1) go to a safe place away from the perpetrator; (2) reach out for help, including accessing emergency medical services through the Embassy's Medical Unit and/or contacting the RSO and/or local authorities and/or USAID's [Staff Care Center](#). If a victim overseas wants to report a sexual assault to law enforcement authorities, but prefers not to report it at post, he or she can contact Diplomatic Security's Office of Special Investigations (DS/DO/OSI) at +1 571-345-3146 or [DS-OSIDutyAgent@state.gov](mailto:DS-OSIDutyAgent@state.gov). The



DS/DO/OSI duty agents are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can investigate an allegation independent of post management.