

How to Report Sexual Misconduct by Law Enforcement

The Department of Justice is proud of its longstanding partnership with law enforcement agencies across the country, who work every day to ensure that justice is served for victims of sexual violence. The vast majority of our country's law enforcement enforces the law and upholds the Constitution with integrity. However, those in law enforcement who commit sexual misconduct during the course of their employment take advantage of their authority, destroy community trust earned by their colleagues, and violate federal law.

Sexual misconduct by police officers, probation officers, corrections officers and other employees of jails and prisons, as well as judges, prosecutors, and other federal, state, and local law enforcement and public officials, acting in their official capacity, is a federal crime. The Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice (CRT), in cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and local United States Attorney's Office (USAO), investigates and, where appropriate, prosecutes sexual misconduct by law enforcement.

The Department of Justice prosecutes instances of sexual misconduct under color of law, including: sexual assault without consent (rape); sexual contact procured by force, threat of force, or coercion; and unwanted or gratuitous sexual contact such as touching or groping. The Department of Justice also prosecutes law enforcement officers for obstruction of justice, for example, attempting to prevent the victim from reporting sexual misconduct; lying to federal officials during the course of a federal investigation into sexual misconduct; and writing a false police report to cover up sexual misconduct.

Because victims of sexual misconduct by law enforcement may be in the custody or under the authority of the perpetrators, these incidents often go unreported. Many times victims do not know to whom to report. Yet despite reluctance to officially report, victims often disclose their assaults to family, friends, clergy, hospital staff, legal aid groups, tribal leaders, national and local civil rights organizations, attorneys, mental health counselors, substance abuse counselors, rape crisis centers, and other trusted contacts.

If someone discloses to you that they been the victim of sexual misconduct by a law enforcement officer, probation officer, corrections officer, or anyone acting under color of law, the Department of Justice encourages you to work with the victim/survivor to report the allegations to local or federal authorities.

To make a confidential report or for more information, please contact:

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Local FBI Field Office
www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field