



Legal Information Paper Office of the Staff Judge Advocate 19th ESC and Area IV



Special Victim Counsel (SVC) Program

What is the SVC Program?

- The SVC Program provides a no-cost military attorney to victims of sexual assault who qualify for SVC services.

What does a SVC do?

- A SVC is a licensed attorney who can advise you on a range of legal and economic matters you may have as a victim of sexual assault. An SVC can be your legal guide, so you don't have to walk alone as you meet with investigators, prosecutors, and other people involved in the military justice process.

Who qualifies for SVC services?

- In general, if you are a victim of sexual assault and fit into one of the following categories, you may qualify for SVC services through the Legal Assistance Office:
 - Soldier (no matter whether the offender was a Soldier or not)
 - Family Member of a Soldier (if you have a military ID and the offender was a Soldier)
 - ROTC cadet on contract (if the offender was a Soldier or fellow cadet)
 - Deployed or OCONUS DoD Civilian employee (if the offender was a Soldier)
 - Foreign military personnel (if the offender was a Soldier)
- If you are a Reserve or National Guard Soldier, you may qualify for services under your component's own SVC Program. If you are an Army Family Member sexually assaulted by a member of another branch of the Armed Forces, you may qualify for SVC services through that other branch (e.g., Navy, Air Force).

Do I have to file an unrestricted report to be eligible for SVC services?

- No! If you qualify for an SVC, you don't have to make an unrestricted (open) report of sexual assault. Your SVC can explain to you the difference between restricted and unrestricted reporting. In fact, you can get the advice of an SVC attorney and then choose not to report at all. It is completely up to you.

Will the things I say to a SVC be kept confidential?

- An SVC is an attorney and is bound by the strictest rules of confidentiality. Whatever you tell your SVC in confidence will be kept in confidence by the SVC, unless and until YOU decide that someone else should know.

What if I did something illegal before, during, or after the sexual assault?

- Victims of sexual assault are people, too. This means that sometimes they mess up and do things that are unethical or illegal. This is called collateral misconduct, which can take the form of underage drinking, drug use, or inappropriate relationships. Some people who have experienced sexual assault feel they don't have a right to report the assault because of their own collateral misconduct, or they may be worried about getting in trouble. An SVC can give you the confidential advice you need to make an informed decision on whether to report. If you have experienced sexual assault, you always have the right to report it, no matter what else you may have been doing at the time.

How do I contact a SVC?

- Call the Legal Assistance Office at 763-4401 to set an appointment.