



Academic Program Year 2024-2025 Annual Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at the United States Merchant Marine Academy

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Annual Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment
at the United States Merchant Marine Academy*

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I. Foreword

The Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, codified at 46 U.S.C. § 51318(d), requires the United States Merchant Marine Academy (Academy or USMMA) to conduct an annual assessment to determine the effectiveness of the Academy's policies, procedures, and training program for the prevention and response of sexual misconduct. This Annual Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment covers Academic Program Year (AY) 2024-2025; July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

Since 2012, the Academy contracted with the Office of People Analytics (OPA) to conduct the Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR) survey. The results of the SAGR survey conducted in 2024 were published by OPA in February 2026. The most recent focus group sessions conducted by OPA were held virtually in AY 2020-2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic utilizing a mixed methods study which included an online survey and virtual focus groups. Subsequent focus group sessions were conducted in AY 2023-2024 by TNG Consulting as part of their independent review of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program.

OPA had adjusted their model of data collection to replace focus groups with the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS); however, focus group sessions with USMMA and the other Federal service academies will resume in the Spring of 2027. Contracting with OPA to conduct both the quantitative SAGR survey and the qualitative focus groups will enable the Academy to compare results with the other four Federal service academies to analyze trends, identify deficiencies, and better align prevention and response efforts.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2023 requires USMMA to hold one-on-one, confidential interviews with Midshipmen after completion of their final sailing period. In AY 2024-2025, the Academy's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program's Maritime Safety and Welfare Officer, who is a victim advocate, began conducting the confidential exit interviews. The interviews were conducted following a protocol developed by USMMA SAPR, with the assistance of experts in conducting data analysis relating to sexual misconduct in higher education. The Academy has collected and analyzed Sea Year exit interview data from the Class of 2026, the first full cohort to date.

This report describes the Academy's SAPR policies and procedures to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct. It includes an action plan for AY 2025-2026 which outlines the actions the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the Maritime Administration (MARAD), and the Academy are taking to prevent violence and mitigate harm to the victim-survivors of sexual misconduct. Pursuant to Congressional requirements, this report is provided to the following members of Congress:

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chair, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Chair, Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
Ranking Member, Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chair, House Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies

The Honorable James E. Clyburn
Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies

Should you require additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact OST's Office of Congressional and Public Affairs at (202) 366-1716.

II. Executive Summary

The Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 requires the Academy to prescribe a policy on sexual harassment and sexual violence and conduct an assessment at the Academy during each Academic Year (AY) to determine the effectiveness of sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention policies, training, and procedures. This report begins with the legislative requirement and continues with a description of the most recent Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR) survey and post Sea Year confidential exit interviews conducted at the Academy. Policies and procedures related to the Academy's sexual misconduct prevention and response program in place during AY 2024-2025 are listed as well as a description of the prevention and outreach programming conducted by the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) staff and Midshipmen Peer Educators. To better protect the privacy of Complainants, a narrative of the dispositions of incident reports made to USMMA in AY 2024-2025 is provided. Finally, the action plan for AY 2025-2026 is outlined in this report.

Midshipmen reported a total of 31 incidents of sexual assault, sexual harassment, sex-based harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and retaliation to the Academy in AY 2024-2025, an increase from 24 incidents reported in AY 2023-2024. In AY 2022-2023, 31 total incidents were reported, 21 in AY 2021-2022, and 15 in AY 2020-2021. Summary data for incidents reported in AY 2024-2025 is provided below:

Reported Incidents in AY 2024-2025

Incident Type	Incidents in AY 2024-2025
Sexual Assault, including Rape and Other Sexual Offenses	8
Sexual Harassment, including Sex-Based Harassment, and Retaliation	20
Stalking	1
Relationship Violence	2
Total	31

A notable data point is the decrease in unrestricted reports over the reporting period: 35 percent of reports in AY 2024-2025 were unrestricted compared to 70 percent of reports in AY 2023-2024. Conversely, 65 percent of the AY 2024-2025 reports were restricted compared to 30 percent of AY 2023-2025 reports. An unrestricted report may result in an investigation while a restricted report does not. Given the small sample size, it is difficult to draw accurate conclusions from these numbers.

The most recently available SAGR data from collection periods in March, August, and December of 2024, based on the USMMA Sea Year cohort schedule, found an estimated unwanted sexual contact rate of 13.7 percent for USMMA women (22 Midshipmen) and 1.4 percent for USMMA men (11 Midshipmen). The same survey found an estimated 48 percent of USMMA women (75 Midshipmen) and 9 percent of USMMA men (64 Midshipmen) experienced sexual harassment in the past academic program year (AY 2023-2024). This data

constitutes a statistically significant reduction of 12.5 percent for unwanted sexual contact and 12 percent for sexual harassment as reported anonymously by USMMA women compared to survey results in 2022. The above comparative results for men also represent a favorable reduction compared to the survey results in 2022 by 1.4 percent for unwanted sexual contact and 2 percent for sexual harassment. USMMA is cautiously optimistic that sustained prevention efforts can reduce the prevalence of sexual misconduct and serve to build trust in systems where Midshipmen feel supported in reporting all forms of sexual misconduct when it occurs.

As one of the five Federal service academies, USMMA educates and graduates leaders of exemplary character who are committed to serve the national security, marine transportation, and economic needs of the United States as licensed Merchant Marine Officers and commissioned officers in the Armed Forces. Unique to the Academy, even amongst other maritime academies, is Sea Year. The practical experience that Midshipmen receive during Sea Year is an integral part of the Academy experience and Midshipmen identity. While participating in Sea Year, Midshipmen assume the title of Cadet. The Sea Year requires USMMA Midshipmen to spend approximately 25 percent of their Academy experience onboard a U.S. flagged merchant marine vessel as a Cadet. Sea Year is divided into two separate sailing periods, lasting four and eight months, respectively.

The 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requires USMMA to conduct confidential post-Sea Year exit interviews with all Midshipmen after completion of Sea Year requirements. These efforts began with the creation of a new Strategic Sealift Officer (SSO) position on the Academy staff, and the Maritime Safety and Welfare Officer, who is also a credentialed Victim Advocate. Credentialed Victim Advocates are the only sources of restricted reporting at USMMA, allowing a victim or witness to disclose information without triggering an investigation while continuing to receive support services.

Subject matter experts across sexual violence prevention, maritime operations, and data analytics collaborated to craft the semi-structured post-Sea Year interview questionnaire. The first two questions of the questionnaire were designed to gauge the overall experience of the Cadet, as well as the culture onboard their assigned vessels. Subsequent questions presented the Cadets with scenarios of increasing severity to gauge the likelihood that Cadets felt comfortable reporting a range of policy violations onboard.

One-on-one, confidential interviews were conducted with Midshipmen returning from their sea year assignments beginning in the second trimester of AY 2024-2025. All Midshipmen returning from their second sailing period were required to attend a post-Sea Year brief. Participation in one-on-one interviews, after consuming the introduction brief, was optional for all Midshipmen.

Analysis of the interviews indicated that the majority of USMMA Midshipmen viewed the culture of the maritime industry positively. Results from AY 2024-2025 will be compared to future Sea Year results to identify trends and inform future Sea Year preparations.

The USMMA Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Ambassador Program continues to expand its Midshipman-led education and prevention initiatives. SAPR staff and SAPR Ambassadors attended the National Discussion on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at the

U.S. Air Force Academy in September of 2024. Five Midshipmen Peer Educators attended the conference and gained knowledge in the prevention of sexual misconduct from national subject matter experts and discussed best practices in prevention and outreach efforts with peers from the other Federal service academies.

On December 15, 2021, MARAD released Every Mariner Builds A Respectful Culture (EMBARC) Standards. Since that time, the Department, MARAD, and USMMA have required all U.S.-flag vessel commercial operators who employ USMMA Midshipmen to adopt and follow the EMBARC Standards—a set of policies, programs, procedures, and practices to help strengthen a culture of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response and support appropriate responses to incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

The Safer Seas Act of 2022, part of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) funding and operations measures from the 2023 NDAA, amended the reporting requirements of sexual misconduct and possible sanctions imposed for sexual assault and sexual harassment on U.S. vessels. Additional safety measures on vessels included requirements of video and audio surveillance; master key control; displaying information regarding vessel owner policies; and displaying procedures and resources on how to report sexual misconduct. In March 2025, Military Sealift Command (MSC), through a Memorandum of Agreement with USCG, committed to comply with the Safer Seas Act requirements to prevent sexual misconduct in the U.S. maritime industry and provide employees with Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) contact information to report sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Senior DOT staff will continue to meet regularly with USMMA leadership to oversee coordination of sexual misconduct prevention and response efforts on campus and at sea.

III. Legislative Requirement

This report is submitted in compliance with the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, codified at 46 U.S.C. § 51318 (c) and (d),:

(c) Annual Assessment.—

(1) In general.—The Secretary, in cooperation with the Superintendent, shall conduct an assessment at the Academy, during each Academy program year, to determine the effectiveness of the policies, procedures, and training program of the Academy with respect to sexual harassment and sexual assault involving cadets or other Academy personnel.

(2) Biennial survey.—For each assessment of the Academy under paragraph (1) during an Academy program year that begins in an odd-numbered calendar year, the Secretary shall conduct a survey of cadets and other Academy personnel

(A) to measure-

(i) the incidence, during that program year, of sexual harassment and sexual assault events involving cadets or other Academy personnel, on or

off the Academy campus, that have been reported to officials of the Academy; and

(ii) the incidence, during that program year, of sexual harassment and sexual assault events involving cadets or other Academy personnel, on or off the Academy campus, that have not been reported to officials of the Academy; and

(B) to assess the perceptions of cadets and other Academy personnel on-

(i) the policies, procedures, and training programs of the Academy on sexual harassment and sexual assault involving cadets or other Academy personnel;

(ii) the enforcement of the policies described in clause (i);

(iii) the incidence of sexual harassment and sexual assault involving cadets or other Academy personnel; and

(iv) any other issues relating to sexual harassment and sexual assault involving cadets or other Academy personnel.

(3) Focus groups for years when survey not required.—In any year in which the Secretary is not required to conduct the survey described in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall conduct focus groups at the Academy for the purposes of ascertaining information relating to sexual assault and sexual harassment issues at the Academy.

(d) Annual Report.—

(1) In general.— For each Academy program year, the Superintendent shall submit to the Secretary a report that provides information about sexual harassment and sexual assault involving cadets or other Academy personnel.

(2) Contents.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include, for the Academy program year covered by the report—

(A) the number of sexual assaults, rapes, and other sexual offenses, including sexual harassment, involving cadets or other Academy personnel that have been reported to Academy officials;

(B) the number of the reported cases described in subparagraph (A) that have been substantiated;

(C) the policies, procedures, and training implemented by the Superintendent and the leadership of the Academy in response to incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault involving cadets and other Academy personnel; and

(D) a plan for the actions that will be taken in the following Academy program year

regarding prevention of, and response to, incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault involving cadets and other Academy personnel.(3) Survey and focus group results.—

(A) Survey results.— Each report under paragraph (1) for an Academy program year that begins in an odd-numbered calendar year shall include the results of the survey conducted in that program year under subsection (c)(2).

(B) Focus group results.— Each report under paragraph (1) for an Academy program year in which the Secretary is not required to conduct the survey described in subsection (c)(2) shall include the results of the focus group conducted in that program year under subsection (c)(3).

(4) Reporting requirement.—

(A) By the superintendent.—For each incident of sexual harassment or sexual assault reported to the Superintendent, the Superintendent shall provide to the Secretary and the Board of Visitors of the Academy a report that includes—

(i) the facts surrounding the incident, except for any details that would reveal the identities of the people involved; and

(ii) the Academy’s response to the incident.

(B) By the secretary.— Not later than January 15 of each year, the Secretary shall submit a copy of each report received under subparagraph (A) and the Secretary’s comments on the report to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

IV. Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR) Survey and Focus Group Results

The Duncan Hunter Act requires that during academic years beginning with an odd year, *e.g.*, AY 2023-2024, the Academy collect survey data, a requirement fulfilled by contracting with the U.S. Department of Defense’s Office of People Analytics (OPA) to provide the Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR) Survey and a quantitative assessment of this survey data collected from students. The Duncan Hunter Act requires that during academic years beginning with an even year, *e.g.*, AY 2024-2025, the Academy conduct focus group sessions, which provide a qualitative interpretation of the previous year’s survey data.

OPA published its *2024 U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Service Academy Gender Relations Survey Overview Report* on its website in February 2026, covering survey administrations in March, August, and December 2024,¹ with August and December sessions scheduled for

¹ Service Academy Gender Relations Survey pre-dates Executive Order 14168, *Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government*. The SAGR used the term “gender” to describe men and women and should be interpreted to mean “sex.” This report is accessible at:

Midshipmen at sea during the initial March data collection. Due to the extended data collection period required by USMMA to accommodate Midshipmen at sea, the results are delayed compared to other Federal service academies.

During the data collection periods, all Midshipmen are required to attend the briefing provided by staff from the Office of People Analytics, however, completion of all or part of the survey is voluntary. For the SAGR data collection in AY 2023-2024, the weighted response rates for USMMA Midshipmen were 90 percent, with participation by 88 percent of men and 99 percent of women Midshipmen.

The SAGR data in AY 2023-2024 found an estimated unwanted sexual contact rate in the academic program year of 13.7 percent for USMMA women (22 Midshipmen) and 1.4 percent for USMMA men (11 Midshipmen). The same survey found an estimated 48 percent of USMMA women (75 Midshipmen) and 9 percent of USMMA men (64 Midshipmen) experienced sexual harassment in the same academic year. This data constitutes a statistically significant reduction of 12.5 percent for unwanted sexual contact and 12 percent for sexual harassment as reported anonymously by USMMA women compared to survey results in 2022. The above comparative results for men also represent a favorable reduction compared to the survey results in 2022 by 1.4 percent for unwanted sexual contact and 2 percent for sexual harassment.

Survey results from unwanted sexual contact data included questions concerning a participant's most serious experience. Survey questions included the sex of the alleged offender and the nature of any pre-existing relationship with the offender. The findings indicate that compared to survey data in 2022, more Female Midshipmen had been in a casual relationship with the offender before the incident and that the offender was more often a USMMA Midshipmen; often a male Midshipmen in the same class year. For nearly half of USMMA men that experienced unwanted sexual contact, the alleged perpetrator was a man, but it was less likely that they knew the individual through a class or activity compared to SAGR data from 2022. For USMMA women, there was an increase in location of incidents taking place on academy grounds while the results show a decrease in incidents on campus from 2022 for men.

The 2024 SAGR survey found that 48 percent of USMMA women and nine percent of USMMA men experienced sexual harassment in AY 2023-2024, with 30 percent of women and 5 percent of men reporting that they experienced sex discrimination during the same period. Although the rates for sexual harassment constituted a statistically significant reduction for both women and men, from 60 percent to 48 percent for women and 11 percent to 9 percent for men, there was not a statistically significant reduction for sex discrimination for USMMA women or men.

Finally, the SAGR survey assesses the climate and culture for prevention efforts at the Academy and Midshipmen's perceptions of key factors such as alcohol use; bystander intervention; leadership setting good examples; and level of effort made to stop sexual misconduct, which all have an influence on prevalence rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Though alcohol

<https://www.opa.mil/research-analysis/health-well-being/sexual-assault-prevention-and-response/2024-survey-of-sexual-assault-and-sexual-harassment-at-the-military-service-academies/survey-of-sexual-assault-and-sexual-harassment-at-the-u-s-merchant-marine-academy-overview-report/>

does not cause sexual harassment or assault, it does play a significant role in reducing inhibitions and in hindering the ability to communicate effectively when both asking for and providing consent. Rates of binge drinking and alcohol-related memory loss appear to have decreased overall since 2022; however, USMMA women reported an increase in consumption from 33 percent in 2022 to 41 percent in 2024, while USMMA men reported a decrease in consumption from 24 percent to 17 percent in 2024. Fewer USMMA students reported witnessing situations where unwanted behavior was occurring, compared to the 2022 SAGR survey; however, both men and women reported that their willingness to intervene if they had been a witness to a situation had also gone down from 52 percent of women and 50 percent of men in 2022 to 45 percent of women and 46 percent of men in 2024. At the same time, the majority of USMMA women and men, 52 percent and 60 percent respectively, reported their perception that Midshipmen watch out for one another.

An important indication of a victim's willingness to report is based on a midshipmen's perception of the climate and culture surrounding reporting and receiving services. Positive indications of change from the 2024 SAGR survey include increased trust in the Academy to protect their privacy, being treated with dignity and respect, and ensuring their safety if they were to experience a sexual assault. Workplace hostility remains a challenge as does the perception that individuals who harass others will not be held accountable for their actions. Rates of promoting a climate of mutual respect and trust within each USMMA company has decreased since the 2022 SAGR by 4 percent for both men and women.

SAGR 2024 survey results indicate that prevention education efforts are reducing overall prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact and sexual harassment. Overall reporting rates have increased, and victim survivors are documenting allegations and receiving services at an increased rate. This development may indicate that prevention education efforts have increased Midshipmen awareness of reporting requirements as well as their awareness of behaviors that constitute sexual misconduct. SAGR 2024 survey results indicate that there is greater trust in Academy leadership and the validity of sexual assault/sexual harassment reports. However, survey results also indicate that challenges to reporting remain in the form of gossip and a belief that, if reported, others will not be held accountable for their behavior.

V. Post-Sea Year Interview

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 requires USMMA to conduct confidential exit interviews of all Midshipmen who have completed Sea Year. One-on-one, confidential interviews were conducted with Midshipmen returning from their Sea Year assignments beginning in the second trimester of AY 2024-2025 and, for the class of 2026, completed in the fall of AY 2025-2026. Signing up for an interview was required for Midshipmen returning from their second sailing term and optional for those returning from their first sailing. Participating in the interview, after receiving the initial brief, was optional for all. The confidential Sea Year Interviews were conducted by the Maritime Safety and Welfare Officer, a victim advocate and confidential source at USMMA. By participating in the confidential interviews, Midshipmen consented to the use of their responses to provide information to USMMA, MARAD, DOT and other involved parties in an effort to improve

policies, address common concerns amongst students, and to improve the experience of cadets and all mariners in the industry.

The interviews are conducted following a protocol developed by individuals with expertise in the maritime industry, sexual violence prevention and response, and data analytics by partnering with OPA who conduct the SAGR survey at USMMA and other Federal service academies. The data set from the USMMA class of 2026 can be compared with future classes which will help USMMA gain a better understanding of how added safety measures, reporting requirements, and quality of life improvements are affecting the sailing experiences and influencing the future career goals of Midshipmen.

There were 178 interviews conducted with the class of 2026; 152 men and 26 women. 86 percent of the class participated in the interviews. When asked to describe their sailing experience 84.5 percent of all participants described it as an overall positive experience, with 4.5 percent describing it as negative and 11 percent as neutral. 85 percent of participating men stated their experience was positive and 82 percent of participating women stated that their experience was positive. Of participating men, 4 percent stated that their experience was negative while 7 percent of participating women described their sailing experience as negative. Neutral responses were 11 percent for both men and women.

Each participant was given the same definition of culture when asked to compare experiences on their different ship assignments. Of all participants, 72.5 percent stated that the cultures onboard were similarly positive, 25 percent stated that they had both positive and negative experiences, and 2 percent stated that the cultures onboard were similarly negative across all of the vessels they sailed. There was a significant difference between the experiences of men and women with 76 percent of participating men stating that the cultures onboard were similarly positive compared to 50 percent of participating women. Of participating men, 23 percent stated they experienced both positive and negative cultures compared to 39 percent of participating women. Of participating men, 0.7 percent stated that the cultures onboard were similarly negative compared to 11.5 percent of participating women.

Participants were presented with a three-part question using scenarios to assess their level of comfort in reporting to someone on the vessel. The first scenario gauged the participants' level of comfort reporting a safety concern in which someone onboard could be physically harmed. A total of 91 percent of participants stated that they would be comfortable reporting a safety concern, 4 percent of participants said that they probably would, less than 1 percent of participants were unsure, and 4 percent of participants said that they would not have been comfortable reporting. The breakdown for men and women stating that they would not be comfortable reporting a physical safety issue to someone on the vessel was not statistically significant, at 4 percent of men and 0 percent of women.

The second scenario gauged the participants' level of comfort in addressing a regulatory violation they witnessed. Of all participants, 70 percent stated that they would be comfortable reporting the regulatory concern, 19 percent said that they probably would, less than 1 percent of participants were unsure, and 10 percent of participants said that they would not have been comfortable reporting. The breakdown for men and women stating that they would not be

comfortable reporting a regulatory issue to an officer in their chain of command was significant, with 7 percent for men and 22 percent for women.

The third scenario gauged the participants level of comfort in addressing an incident in which they were a victim of sexual harassment or in which they witnessed sexual harassment of another person. Of all participants, 88 percent stated that they would be comfortable reporting the sexual harassment, 9 percent said that they probably would report the incident, 0.5 percent of participants said they were unsure, and 2.5 percent of participants said that they would not have been comfortable reporting. The breakdown for men and women stating that they would not be comfortable reporting sexual harassment to an officer in their chain of command was significant, with 1 percent for men and 11 percent for women.

The general findings indicate that the Sea Year experience may be different for men and women, with women reporting more negative cultural aspects of sailing as well as feeling less comfortable reporting both regulatory violations and sexual harassment. However, when reporting their overall experience at sea during the entire Sea Year training, both men and women reported positive experiences at 85 percent and 82 percent respectively.

VI. Policies and Procedures in AY 2024-2025

Policies, procedures, and processes related to sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response during the AY 2024-2025 reporting period are listed below. These policies and procedures were either available to Midshipmen and Academy personnel on the Academy's Intranet or are available upon request from USMMA.

- Superintendent Instruction 2013-10, *Statement of Student Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*
- Superintendent Instruction 2025-05, *Sexual Assault Review Board (SARB)*
- Superintendent Instruction 2025-06, *Sexual Assault, Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Policy*
- Superintendent Instruction 2025-07, *Reporting, Investigating and Resolving Complaints of Sexual Assault, Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment, Relationship Violence, and Stalking Against Midshipmen*
- Superintendent Instruction 2025-08, *Reporting, Investigating, and Resolving Complaints of Retaliation Against Midshipmen*
- Superintendent Instruction 2025-11, *Midshipman Regulations*
- Superintendent Instruction 2025-09, *Plan to Combat Retaliation*
- Superintendent Instruction 2025-10, *Campus Security Authority*
- Superintendent Instruction 2024-07, *Regimental Honor Program*
- Superintendent Instruction 2025-19, *Sea Year Safety and Security and Sea Year Handbook²*
- Superintendent Instruction 2023-01, *Midshipmen Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) and Medical Disenrollments*

² The USMMA Sea Year Handbook, Revision 18, is included as an attachment to this Superintendent Instruction.

- Superintendent Instruction 2023-05, *Compliance with NCAA Board of Governors Policy on Campus Sexual Violence*
- Superintendent Instruction 2025-13, *Fraternization Policy*
- Superintendent Notice 2025-04, *Collateral Misconduct (Amnesty)*
- Superintendent Notice 2023-07, *Superintendent Notice to Improve Midshipman Mental Health Support*
- Superintendent Notice, 2024-15, *USMMA Student Advisory Board*
- Superintendent Notice 2025-05, *Restricted Reporting Sources for Academic Year 2024-2025*
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) Standard Operating Procedure for Investigating Unrestricted Reports of Sexual Assault, Sexual or Sex-Based Harassment, Relationship Violence or Stalking at the United States Merchant Marine Academy
- SAPRO Standard Operating Procedure for a Superintendent's or Executive Board Disciplinary Hearing in the Case of Sexual Assault, Sexual or Sex-Based Harassment, Relationship Violence, and/or Stalking
- SAPRO Standard Operating Procedure for the Maintenance of Reports and Training Materials in the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office at USMMA
- SAPRO Standard Operating Procedure for Processing a Restricted or Unrestricted Report of Sexual Assault, Sexual or Sex-Based Harassment, Relationship Violence or Stalking Against a Midshipman at the United States Merchant Marine Academy
- SAPRO Standard Operating Procedure for Use of Satellite Phone and Satellite Texting Devices
- SAPRO Standard Operating Procedure for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Ambassador Program

VII. Incident Reports Made to USMMA in AY 2024-2025

Midshipmen may make a restricted or unrestricted report of sexual misconduct, with restricted reporting allowing the Complainant to seek medical treatment, counseling services, and victim advocacy support and referrals as requested, without triggering an investigation. Unrestricted reports of sexual misconduct initiate an administrative investigation, and at the request of the Complainant, a criminal investigation by law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction. Unrestricted reporting allows the Complainant to seek medical treatment, counseling services, victim advocacy support and referrals, as with restricted reporting. Additional protective measures, such as no contact directives, can be implemented to increase physical and emotional safety when Complainants choose unrestricted reporting.

Complainants may convert a restricted report to an unrestricted report at any time while they are enrolled at the Academy. Nonclinical safety assessments and a safety plan are conducted with all Complainants. Complainants are also advised of limitations to confidentiality when there is an indication of a serial perpetrator or in the interest of safety and a duty to warn.

During Academic Year 2024-2025, the Academy received eight reports of sexual assault, including rape and other sexual offenses.. Six reports were restricted and two were unrestricted; four Complainants were female and four were male. One of the Respondents was a female

Midshipman, three were male Midshipmen, three were male crewmembers, and one was a male stranger.

USMMA received twenty reports of sexual harassment, sex-based harassment, and retaliation in AY 2024-2025. Thirteen of the reports were restricted and seven were unrestricted. Fourteen of the reports were sexual harassment, six of the reports involved sex-based harassment and there were no reports of retaliation. Three of the Complainants were male Midshipmen, sixteen were female Midshipmen, and one was an anonymous female. Fifteen of the reports were identified as involving one male Respondent. Four reports involved multiple Respondents, two of which involved a male and a female Respondent and two with multiple male Respondents. In the four reports with more than one Respondent, the Respondents were Midshipmen. In four other reports, the Respondents were male crewmembers and in two cases the Respondents were male employees.

The Academy received one report of stalking and two reports of relationship violence in AY 2024-2025. The stalking report was restricted, the Complainant was a female Midshipman, and the Respondent was a male stranger. One of the relationship violence reports was restricted and one was unrestricted. In both reports, the Complainant was a female Midshipman and the Respondent was a male Midshipman.

Disposition of the unrestricted reports:

Table 1: Disposition of Unrestricted Reports of Sexual Misconduct in AY 2024-2025				
Type of Incident	Number of reports	Respondent	Investigation	Result
Sexual Assault, including Rape and Other Sexual Offenses	2 ³	1 Crewmember 1 Midshipmen	1 investigation (administrative)	1 Pending
Sexual Harassment	5 ⁴	2 Crewmembers 3 Midshipmen	4 investigations (administrative)	2 substantiated 2 unsubstantiated
Sex-based Harassment	2 ⁵	2 crewmembers	0 investigations	
Relationship Violence	1	1 Midshipmen	1 investigation (administrative)	1 unsubstantiated

VIII. ACTION PLAN FOR USMMA in AY 2025-2026

³ Midshipman chose not to participate, no investigation warranted.

Anonymous Complainant chose not to participate, no investigation warranted.

In one case the company deemed that no investigation was warranted and in the other case the Complainant chose not to participate.

The Duncan Hunter Act requires the Academy to provide, in each Annual Report, an annual plan setting forth the actions to be taken in the following Academy program year to prevent and respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment involving Midshipmen and Academy personnel.

Provided below is an outline of actions that the Academy and DOT are taking or have taken in AY 2025-2026, to continue to address sexual violence at the Academy, encourage victim-survivors to report incidents, educate USMMA and maritime industry community members, and further develop USMMA capabilities in appropriately responding to sexual misconduct, including sexual assault and sexual harassment.

SAPR Program Assessment, Policy, and Programmatic Revisions: SAPR policies and procedures continued to be updated during AY 2025-2026. Highlights of the changes include more specific timelines to speed the reporting, investigation, and resolution of complaints of sexual misconduct. Program assessment efforts with data collection and analysis from the post-Sea Year confidential interviews have become more robust with an increase in sample size. Closer collaboration with the Office of the Academic Dean during AY 2025-2026 has improved Complainant requests for reasonable accommodations and access to new student information systems data improves SAPR staff efficiency.

Prevention Education: In AY 2025-2026, SAPR continued its work in coordination with the Academy community, USMMA's Sexual Assault Review Board, and Academy senior leadership to communicate its commitment to preventing and appropriately responding to sexual misconduct. SAPR made the following improvements to sexual misconduct prevention training:

- Provided SAPR training to USMMA freshmen (Plebes) throughout the academic year to build upon summer SAPR Indoctrination training.
- Emphasized foundational bystander intervention training for all Midshipmen throughout the academic year.
- Provided peer-led prevention education discussions in small groups.
- Increased the number of educational outreach events led by SAPR Ambassadors and encouraged faculty and staff to participate.
- Trained Midshipman on the use of satellite phones issued to each Cadet before Sea Year to ensure immediate access to USMMA staff.
- Trained faculty and staff in-person during professional development day before the start of the academic year.
- Shared previous AY reporting statistics and trends with the Academy community during faculty and staff training, ensuring a whole community approach to prevention.
- Conducted monthly Sexual Assault Review Board meetings with senior leaders to discuss current trends and prevention efforts.

In AY 2025-2026 all Midshipmen received a minimum of two units of instruction on preventing and responding to sexual misconduct, while faculty and staff received one unit. Plebe Candidates received two units of instruction during their Indoctrination to the Academy before the beginning of the academic year. Groups of Midshipmen, faculty, and staff likely to interact with Complainants, *e.g.*, Midshipman SAPR Ambassadors, Midshipman Human Resource Officers, Midshipman Emergency Medical Technicians, and Sexual Assault Sexual Harassment Hearing Officers, received specialized, supplemental instruction.

The prevention curriculum for Midshipmen builds on previous units of instruction, starting with a focus on the basics of sexual and relationship violence awareness, the elements of healthy relationships, and bystander intervention for Plebes (freshmen), with additional instruction on healthy personal and professional relationships, preparing for Sea Year, reporting sexual misconduct, satellite phone and SAPR hotline operation, EMBARC requirements, barriers to reporting and retaliation, and reintegrating into the Regiment of Midshipmen, among other topics for third-class (sophomore) and second-class (junior) Midshipmen. Learning objectives for first-class (senior) Midshipmen focus on leadership skills necessary for identifying the warning signs of an unhealthy work environment and strategies to influence positive change. They are provided with instruction in trauma informed leadership, knowledge of appropriate assistance resources, and reporting requirements for junior level officers who have knowledge of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, and suicidal ideation. Whenever appropriate and possible, training is co-facilitated in smaller groups by professional staff together with SAPR Ambassadors and other Midshipman leaders.

In AY 2025-2026, USMMA invited a nationally-recognized speaker on sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention present to the entire Regiment of Midshipmen during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. In April 2026, Ben Murrie, the Director for Program Management at Catharsis Production presented “Got your Back,” a bystander intervention focused program.

Growing the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Ambassador Program: In AY 2025-2026, SAPR Ambassadors peer educators continued to engage in prevention education and outreach efforts. Ambassadors assisted with over 70 percent of SAPR training and planned awareness themed events throughout the year. Developing SAPR Ambassadors’ skills as peer educators in future academic years will include certification through the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Peer-Education Program.

Strengthening the USMMA Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office: An optimally staffed SAPR requires the Director, a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, two Victim Advocate Prevention Educators, and two U.S. Navy Strategic Sealift Officers in the roles of a Maritime Safety and Welfare Officer and a Sea Year Victim Advocate Prevention Educator. In AY 2024-2025, SAPR onboarded a Maritime Safety and Welfare Officer, a new position to meet the 2023 NDAA requirement of post-Sea Year confidential interviews. As of August 2026, current staffing consists of a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, a Victim Advocate Prevention Educator, and a Maritime Safety and Welfare Officer.

Meeting the Medical and Counseling Needs of Midshipmen: The Academy previously explored a mobile application to address the mental health needs of Midshipmen. However, the availability of existing National and local mental health support services was determined to be more accessible to all Midshipmen. The Commandant of Midshipmen has communicated with the Regiment regarding access to the 24-hour mental health support available for Midshipmen via hotlines such as the National 24-hour Suicide Hotline, 988 and local 24-hour resources. Additionally, USMMA Emergency Medical Services are accessible to Midshipmen on campus 24/7/365 and those Midshipmen enrolled in the USMMA Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) can call “CareConnect” behavioral health clinicians 24/7/365 via telephone or connect via the

app “Wellfleet.” Department of Health Services Medical and Counseling office hours have been expanded to support Midshipmen mental health and medical care. Midshipmen now have access to telehealth at sea during Health Services business hours. Health Services also engages Midshipmen monthly through mental health awareness flyers and other public health announcements. Finally, a USMMA publicly accessible counseling services website was created to provide information on access to care, access to after-hours care, and Frequently Asked Questions.

SAPR Ambassadors work closely with USMMA Midshipman Human Resource Officers to facilitate and attend training to encourage their fellow Midshipmen to engage in help seeking behaviors in all areas of health and wellness, including physical health, behavioral health, spiritual health, and resiliency. These efforts continued in AY 2025-2026 in coordination with USMMA’s Office of Health Services and the USMMA Chaplain.

IX. Conclusion

The Department of Transportation is overseeing and supporting USMMA policies and programs related to sexual assault, sexual and sex-based harassment, stalking, relationship violence, and retaliation. DOT, and USMMA are committed to, and understand the urgency of, supporting the safety of USMMA Midshipmen. Preventing and appropriately responding to sexual misconduct remains an immediate priority. Mitigating the impact of sexual misconduct at USMMA, and in the maritime industry, continues to be a long-term effort by DOT and USMMA. In doing so, DOT and USMMA will continue to strengthen the safety and quality of the working, living, and learning environment of USMMA Midshipmen and all mariners.