

Commanding Officer, Marine Attack Squadron 223

Sexual Assault Policy



Sexual assault is a criminal act that erodes unit cohesion and contradicts Marine Corps core values. Sexual assault is defined as intentional sexual contact, characterized by the use of force, physical threat of force or abuse of authority; or when the victim does not or cannot consent. The VMA-223 SAPR program focuses on prevention and response and provides education and training, response capability, victim support, reporting procedures, and the processes to hold offenders accountable.

Prevention. For this program to be effective, it requires an all-hands effort. All personnel will:

- Ensure their conduct and exhibited behavior is representative of our Marine Corps ethos and core values
- Foster a climate that treats everyone with dignity and respect (through individual actions and leadership)
- Be an active bystander when witnessing an actual or attempted sexual assault

Response. In addition to all-hands prevention efforts, all VMA-223 personnel will immediately report all incidents of sexual assault that come under their observation to PMO/law enforcement and their chain of command. Victims of sexual assault have two reporting methods under the SAPR program, Unrestricted or Restricted. While Unrestricted Reporting is preferred, in order to hold offenders accountable, Restricted Reporting offers a confidential avenue for reporting sexual assaults that enables the provision of victim services but without command and/or law enforcement notification. A victim may convert a Restricted Report to Unrestricted at any time. Regardless of reporting option, all VMA-223 personnel will treat victims of sexual assault impartially, with dignity, and without prejudice. All leaders will foster an environment that encourages reporting of sexual assaults (both victims and witnesses) without fear of retaliation, reprisal, ostracism, or maltreatment.

Every Marine shall be aware of what constitutes sexual assault and the consequences of such behavior. Through our "Step Up" and "Take a Stand" training, every Marine will gain and utilize the identified tools to safely and effectively intervene when witnessing high-risk behaviors that may result in a sexual assault. I expect everyone to take care of each other and always protect our Bulldog family.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arthur Q. Bruggeman'.

Arthur Q. Bruggeman
Lieutenant Colonel, United States Marine Corps
Commanding Officer, Marine Attack Squadron 223