**Investigating Sexual Harassment Charges - Questions to Ask the Alleged Victim**

Tell the alleged victim that confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible, and that a true, accurate, and complete account of the incident(s) is needed.

1. Who? What? When? Where? Get details. Pin down times, places, and events as precisely as possible.
2. How did the conduct affect you?
3. How did you react? What was your response? Did you let the person know his/her behavior was unwelcome? (This could be verbal or the way the alleged victim reacted.)
4. How frequent was the conduct? Is it still ongoing?
5. Were there witnesses? Did you tell anybody about it? Did anyone see you visibly upset after episodes of alleged harassment?  If so, who?
6. Has this happened to others? Are there others who you believe were harassed by the same person?
7. Is there any documentation regarding the incident(s)?
8. Do you know of any other relevant information?
9. How would you like to see the situation resolved?

**Investigating Sexual Harassment Charges - Questions to Ask the Alleged Harasser**

Maintain the anonymity of the alleged victim. If the offender tries to identify the victim, let him/her know who is making the accusation is not important. What is important is the situation that has been described to you.

Inform the alleged harasser that a complaint has been made against him/her. Take care in describing the incident(s). To the extent possible, the name of the alleged victim should not be revealed. If the person's identify is known, it should be made clear to the alleged harasser that no retaliatory action will be tolerated. The accused Marine should also be told not to discuss the matter either with co-workers or with the alleged victim.

1. What is your response to the allegation?
2. If the harasser claims that the allegation is false, ask why the complainant might lie.
3. Are there other persons who have relevant information?
4. Is there any documentation regarding the incident(s)?
5. Do you know of any other relevant information?

Let the accused harasser know you take the allegations seriously.

* Do not make jokes or otherwise indicate you consider the incident to be inconsequential.
* Keep to the point and focus on the harasser's behavior. It is normal for the harasser to try to shift the blame to the person he/she thinks initiated the complaint. If the harasser tries to put the blame on the victim, let him/her know you are concerned only with his/her (the harasser's) behavior.
* Remain neutral. Stay away from committing yourself to either side.
* If there is an indication that the harasser did behave as accused, let him/her know that type of behavior must stop and will not be tolerated.
* Warn the alleged harasser about retaliating against the victim, regardless of the outcome of the investigation.

**Investigating Sexual Harassment Charges - Gather Additional Information**

**Check Personnel Records**

* Have there been other complaints about the same alleged harasser?
* Has there been a high turnover of the alleged harasser's female/male subordinates? If so, this could identify other witnesses, targets.

**Make Credibility Determinations**

Often there are no witnesses to the actual conduct, so making a credibility determination is often the crux of the case. Factors to consider in determining the credibility of either party (all are relevant):

**Inherent plausibility**

Is the testimony believable on its face?

**Demeanor**

Did the person seem to be telling the truth or lying?

**Motive to Falsify:**

Did the person have a reason to lie?

**Corroboration**

Is there witness testimony or physical documentation that corroborates the person's testimony?

**Past Record**

Did the alleged harasser have a history of similar behavior in the past?