

## WHO IS ENTITLED TO A SPECIAL VICTIMS' COUNSEL?

Eligible individuals are active duty Regular Army Soldiers, members of the Army Reserve and Army National Guard in a Title 10 status or an active duty for training status, their dependents and Army Civilians. These individuals are eligible to receive legal services for sex-related offenses, domestic violence offenses and related retaliation, not including sexual harassment.

Victims are eligible if the perpetrator is a U.S. service member on active duty or in an active duty for training status.

Even if an eligible victim has filed a restricted report, they are still entitled to Special Victims' Counsel (SVC) services to learn about the legal process and their rights.

### Rights

In addition to a victim's right to assistance from an SVC in a court-martial, a victim has the right to:

- Be treated with fairness and respect with regard to a victim's dignity and privacy
- Be protected from the accused offender
- Be notified of court proceedings
- Be present at all public court proceedings related to the offense, unless the court determines that the victim's testimony would be materially affected if the victim heard other testimony at trial
- Be heard and have an attorney speak on the victim's behalf during certain hearings
- Meet with the prosecuting attorney
- Information about the conviction, sentencing, imprisonment, and release of the offender

### Attorney-Client Confidentiality

Victim privacy and confidentiality are extremely important, and with very limited exceptions, an SVC cannot share victim-provided information with anyone without the victim's express permission. The SVC may discuss a victim's case with supervising attorneys and paralegals assisting in the case, but will do so only in representing the victim's interests while maintaining confidentiality.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES

DoD

## Safe Helpline

Sexual Assault Support for the DoD Community

The **DoD Safe Helpline** provides support for sexual assault survivors in the military community. It is anonymous, confidential, secure, and available 24/7 by phone at 877-995-5247 or online chat at [www.safehelpline.org](http://www.safehelpline.org). Trained professionals will walk you through your options, and connect you directly with local resources.

**Emergency Assistance:** 911

**Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP):**

[www.armyresilience.army.mil/SHARP](http://www.armyresilience.army.mil/SHARP)

**Army Special Victims' Counsel:**

[www.jagcnet.army.mil/SVCounsel](http://www.jagcnet.army.mil/SVCounsel)



ARMY RESILIENCE



SHARP  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ASSAULT  
RESPONSE AND PREVENTION

# SPECIAL VICTIMS' COUNSEL



**THIS IS OUR ARMY.**

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## WHAT IS A SPECIAL VICTIMS' COUNSEL (SVC)?

A Special Victims' Counsel is a lawyer specially trained to provide legal counsel to eligible victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. The Judge Advocate General of the Army certifies each SVC to serve in this critical assignment. SVCs are authorized by law to enter into attorney–client relationships with the victim and protect the victim's legal rights and interests.

The SVC's mission is to provide clients with confidential legal representation in sexual assault and domestic violence cases. Their primary duty is to the victim, representing them throughout the military justice process.

The reporting, administrative action, and court-martial processes can be difficult. Victims may feel anger, frustration, or fear as a result of their experience. Army SVCs are prepared to help victims through this process, looking out for their legal interests.

## SPECIAL VICTIMS' COUNSEL SERVICES

### SVCs offer consultation and assistance with:

- Navigating the military justice system, including accompanying and advising victims during interviews, examinations, and hearings, and representing them at a court-martial as permitted by law
- Explaining the responsibilities and support provided by Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs), SHARP Victim Advocates (VAs), and domestic abuse advocates, including privileged communications with the victim
- Eligibility and requirements for behavioral health counseling and other medical services
- Victim misconduct stemming from the sexual assault and assistance directing the victim to Trial Defense Service (TDS) if the victim is a U.S. service member
- Victim impact statement submissions
- Eligibility and requirements for obtaining transitional compensation benefits



## SPECIAL VICTIM SERVICES

The Army provides the following services to ensure victims receive comprehensive support:

### Special Victims' Counsel (SVC):

Specially-trained judge advocates (i.e., attorneys) who represent eligible victims of alleged sexually-based offenses at installations worldwide, seeking to ensure each victim's expressed interests are considered throughout the investigation and in any UCMJ or administrative action

### Legal Assistance Attorneys:

Assist clients, including victims of domestic violence, with Family law matters such as separation, divorce, financial nonsupport, child custody, and visitation

### Special Victim Prosecutors (SVPs):

Skilled trial attorneys who assist with prosecuting sexual assault and domestic violence crime cases

### Special Victim Paralegals:

Trained and skilled paralegals who work alongside the SVCs and SVPs

### Special Assault Investigators (SAIs):

Criminal Investigation Division (CID) investigators responsible for certain offenses, to include sexually-based offenses and special victims

### Victim Witness Liaisons (VWLs):

Trained facilitators and coordinators who provide information and assistance in obtaining victim and witness services

### Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs):

Serve as the single point of contact for coordinating appropriate and responsive care for sexual assault victims

### SHARP Victim Advocates (VAs):

Provide crisis intervention, support, referrals, ongoing nonclinical services, coordination between agencies, and explain reporting options, empowering victims to make informed and educated decisions