

**Department of the Air Force (DAF)  
Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) Informal Complaint Process Flowchart  
February 2026**

The DAF implements the MEO program on prohibited discrimination, discriminatory harassment (including sexual harassment), and other forms of harassment (bullying and hazing) against Active Duty Airmen and Guardians, United States Air Force Academy Cadets, and Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard members under Title 10 status on the basis(es) of a protected class as described in [Department of Defense Instruction \(DoDI\) 1350.02](#), *DoD Military Equal Opportunity Program*, and [DoDI 1020.03](#), *Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces*.

For additional information on the DAF's MEO complaint process, please refer to [DAFI 36-2710](#), *Equal Opportunity Program*, and/or contact your servicing [installation EO office](#) and/or the DAF Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment Hotline (1-888-231-4058).

Alleged Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment, and/or Other Harassment (Bullying/Hazing) Incident

Military member can elect to file an informal complaint<sup>1</sup> with Equal Opportunity (EO). While there is no time limit to file an informal complaint, military members are encouraged to promptly file complaints as early as possible to help ensure timely access to witnesses, bystanders, and other pertinent information regarding the incident(s).

**Informal Complaint Options<sup>2</sup>**

**Informal Complaint Elected -**

Complainant completes MEO complaint intake and signs DAF Form 1587-1, *Military Equal Opportunity Informal Complaint* to initiate informal complaint process.

**Notification to Commander(s) -**

EO notifies the complainant's commander and the alleged offender's commander of the informal complaint within 48 hours of receipt and inform them of their responsibilities.

**Commander's Responsibilities -**

Commander initiates informal resolution procedures or commander directed investigation<sup>4</sup> within 3 duty days of receipt of complaint and resolves within 30 duty days.

**Complaint Resolved -**

Commander takes corrective, administrative, and/or disciplinary actions, if any, and notifies EO.

**Follow-Up -**

EO conducts a final follow-up with the complainant no later than 14 duty days after final action has been taken to ensure no reprisal or retaliation<sup>6</sup> has occurred.

**Complaint Not Resolved -**

Complainant may elect to file a formal complaint.

**Formal Complaint -**

Complainant may elect to file a formal complaint (see formal complaint flowchart).

**Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Elected<sup>3</sup> -**

Complainant completes MEO complaint intake and signs DAF Form 1587-1 to initiate the ADR process and determine suitability. Facilitation is the only ADR method used for military members.

**Complaint Suitability Determination -**

Prior to approving facilitation, EO consults with installation SJA to determine suitability of the complaint for ADR.

**Not Suitable for ADR -**

Complainant may seek informal resolution via chain of command or elect to file a formal complaint.

**Suitable for ADR -**

All parties (complainant and alleged offender) must agree to the facilitation.

**Negotiation and Dispute Resolution (NDR) Practitioner Designation<sup>5</sup> -**

A certified NDR practitioner is identified and conducts resolution efforts within 15 duty days of designation.

**No Resolution -**

Complainant may elect to file a formal complaint. EO informs responsible commanders within 3 duty days that resolution was not reached.

**Resolution Reached -**

Complainant, alleged offender, and approving authority sign agreement. EO informs responsible commanders within 3 duty days that resolution was reached.

**Follow-Up -**

EO conducts follow-up with complainant at least once within 30 duty days after resolution to ensure no reprisal and retaliation<sup>4</sup> has occurred and both parties are adhering to the agreement.

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**Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Military members also have the right to go directly to their chain of command to report these allegations for informal resolution or file a formal with EO. Military members can report anonymous complaints by means such as, but not limited to, calling the Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment Hotline (1-888-231-4058), submitting a report anonymously through the DoD IG (1-800-424-9098) or DAF IG (1-800-538-8429) hotlines, sending an anonymous email to the installation EO office, and other means that do not disclose the PII of the military member submitting the complaint.
- <sup>2</sup> The informal complaint process is for military members who elect to use the chain of command and/or other informal resolution processes (e.g., alternative dispute resolution [ADR]) that are available. If an informal complaint is not or cannot be resolved within 30 duty days or the complainant is not satisfied with the determination, the complainant may file a formal complaint.
- <sup>3</sup> Facilitation is not authorized for formal complaints of sexual harassment which must follow requirements set forth pursuant to the procedures in 10 USC § 1561. Facilitation is not appropriate if it has an adverse impact on morale, readiness, or the mission; a determination is made that the complaint is reserved for command action (i.e., administrative or UCMJ); or there is a potential for violence in the workplace to occur.
- <sup>4</sup> Where a commander determines that it is necessary to investigate an informal complaint of sexual harassment to further the readiness of the unit, DAFI 36-2710 requires the complaint, and any related investigation, to be processed as a formal complaint of sexual harassment, pursuant to procedures in 10 USC § 1561. A complainant will not be compelled or directed to participate in an investigation of sexual harassment when a commander, in consultation with the SJA, determines an informal complaint warrants a formal investigation.
- <sup>5</sup> Through the Negotiation and Dispute Resolution (NDR) Program, the DAF uses ADR techniques or procedures to prevent the escalation of workplace conflict through the use of neutral third parties to assist the parties in resolving their dispute(s), and ensure long lasting, effective solutions toward mission accomplishment. While the DAF EO Program does not have policy oversight of the DAF NDR Program, installation EO offices may house the installation NDR program in which installation EO directors and EO practitioners may serve as NDR managers and practitioners if they meet qualification standards in accordance with DAFI 51-1201, *Negotiation and Dispute Resolution Program*.
- <sup>6</sup> If the complainant alleges reprisal, EO will conduct a non-EO contact referral to the IG office for processing in accordance with DAFI 90-301, *Inspector General Complaints Resolution*. If the complainant alleges retaliation, EO will immediately conduct a non-EO contact referral to the military member's commander to take appropriate action in accordance with AFI 36-2909, *Professional and Unprofessional Relationships and Conduct*.

**Resources:**

- DAFI 36-2710, *Equal Opportunity Program*
  - [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/saf\\_mr/publication/dafi36-2710/dafi36-2710.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/saf_mr/publication/dafi36-2710/dafi36-2710.pdf)
- DAF Equal Opportunity Website
  - <https://www.af.mil/Equal-Opportunity/>
- DAF Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment Hotline
  - 1-888-231-4058

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Alleged Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment, and/or Other Harassment (Bullying/Hazing) Incident

Military member must elect to file a formal complaint with Equal Opportunity (EO) within 90 duty days after the alleged incident occurred unless the installation commander approves in writing to accept a formal complaint beyond the designated timeline for good cause.<sup>1</sup> *Exception: There are no timeline requirements for military members to file a formal complaint of sexual harassment pursuant to the procedures in 10 USC § 1561.*

**Formal Complaint Options<sup>2</sup>**

**Formal Complaint (Excluding Sexual Harassment) Elected -**

Complainant completes MEO complaint intake and signs DAF Form 1587, *Military Equal Opportunity Formal Complaint*, to initiate formal complaint process.

**Notification to Commander(s) -**

EO notifies the complainant's and alleged offender's commander(s) within 3 duty days of receipt of the formal complaint.

**Complaint Clarification and Determination -**

EO ensures a formal complaint clarification is completed no later than 30 duty days after the date the clarification was initiated.<sup>3</sup>

**Legal Sufficiency Review -**

Installation SJA conducts a legal sufficiency review for substantiated and not substantiated formal complaints.

**Commander's Decision -**

Commander takes corrective, administrative, and/or disciplinary actions, if any, and notifies EO.

**Outbrief -**

EO outbriefs complainant on the clarification determination and rights to appeal where applicable. Complainant signs DAF Form 1587 to acknowledge outbrief.

**Follow-Up -**

EO contacts complainant within 14 duty days after the complainant signs DAF Form 1587 for a final follow-up to ensure no reprisal or retaliation<sup>4</sup> has occurred against them.

**Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment Elected<sup>5</sup> -**

Complainant completes MEO complaint intake and signs DAF Form 1587 to initiate the formal complaint process. All formal complaints of sexual harassment are referred to an independent investigator within 72 hours for independent investigation pursuant to procedures in 10 USC § 1561, *Complaints of sexual harassment: independent investigation.*

**Notification to Commander(s) -**

EO will notify the complainant's and the alleged offender's commander(s) of the formal complaint within 24 hours of receipt of the formal complaint.

**Independent Investigation<sup>6</sup> -**

To the extent practicable, independent investigations are completed no later than 14 calendar days after the date on which the investigation is initiated.

**Legal Sufficiency Review -**

Upon completing the investigation, the independent investigator submits a report of investigation (ROI) to the servicing SJA for a legal sufficiency review.

**Command Disposition -**

The first O-6 in the chain of command<sup>7</sup> makes a substantiation determination and notifies EO.

All substantiated complaints are referred for Office of Special Trial Counsel<sup>8</sup> determination on whether to prefer charges to a special or general court martial or defer to the alleged offender's commander to take corrective, administrative, and/or disciplinary action.

**Outbrief -**

The complainant's or alleged offender's commander notifies complainant on whether the allegations were substantiated or not substantiated at the conclusion of the independent investigation.

**Follow-Up -**

EO contacts complainant within 45 calendar days after completion of the ROI for a final follow-up to ensure no reprisal or retaliation<sup>4</sup> has occurred against them.

**Formal Complaint Appeal -**

The complainant or military offender may appeal the finding of an MEO complaint or sexual harassment complaint pursuant to 10 USC § 1561 within 30 duty days of receiving notice of the formal complaint determination.<sup>9</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> Military members who were deployed at the time the alleged incidents occurred and were unable to file a formal complaint due to extenuating circumstances at the deployed location, will have 90 duty days to file a formal complaint from their deployment return date.
- <sup>2</sup> For formal complaints (except sexual harassment), complainants may use ADR (facilitation only) to resolve concerns at any stage of the complaint process prior to completion of the clarification report.
- <sup>3</sup> If the overall formal complaint clarifications are not completed within the 30 duty days, EO may obtain an extension in writing from the installation commander for not more than 30 calendar days.
- <sup>4</sup> If the complainant alleges reprisal, EO will conduct a non-EO contact referral to the IG office for processing in accordance with DAFI 90-301. If the complainant alleges retaliation, EO will immediately conduct a non-EO contact referral to the military member's commander to take appropriate action in accordance with AFI 36-2909.
- <sup>5</sup> The preferred DAF mechanism for filing a formal complaint for sexual harassment is through the installation EO office. Military members are encouraged to file a formal complaint with their installation EO office but may report a formal complaint of sexual harassment directly to a commander or security forces.
- <sup>6</sup> AF/A4S via the Sexual Harassment Investigations Division is designated as the responsible agency for the DAF's independent investigations of formal complaints of sexual harassment filed by military members pursuant to procedures in 10 USC § 1561.
- <sup>7</sup> The first O-6, or in cases where the accused military member or DAF civilian employee does not have an O-6 in the chain of command, then the first civilian equivalent in the alleged offender's chain of command, in consultation with the SJA, will make a substantiation determination (i.e., substantiated or not substantiated).
- <sup>8</sup> Formal complaints which are substantiated against military member alleged offenders are a covered offense under 10 USC § 801(17) and under the exclusive authority of the Office of Special Trial Counsel.
- <sup>9</sup> Complainants and military offenders, referred to as appellants, who are dissatisfied with the action on their appeal to a formal MEO complaint have 30 duty days from receipt of an appeal determination to appeal to the next higher level. Appeal authorities may approve the processing of an appeal beyond the 30 duty days for good cause based on a memorandum with sufficient justification provided by appellants and submitted through EO.

**Resources:**

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