

What do I do?

If you know or suspect that sexual behavior has occurred, either staff-on-inmate or inmate-on-inmate, you must notify a supervisor, designee, or manager immediately.

YOU HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO REPORT SEXUAL ABUSE; FAILURE TO DO SO IS A WORK RULE VIOLATION.

The DOC PREA Office may be reached directly at 802-793-4586 or 802-734-1823

Recognizing Symptoms

People respond to sexual pressure and trauma in a variety of ways, such as:

- Change in sleeping habits
- Hanging out by themselves instead of with others
- Change in eating habits
- Change in who they hang out with
- Asking to be moved to another cell
- Change in physical appearance
- Asking for a different caseworker or probation officer

Victim Safety is Important!

- Separate involved inmates
- Place the victim in a safe & secure location
- Refer to medical/mental health
- Refer to Victim Services
- Document the incident
- Refer to the Vermont State Police

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What if an inmate/offender willingly participates in sex with staff?

A. No matter who initiates the contact or how "consensual" the relationship is, when you have a relationship with an inmate/offender it is an abuse of power by staff.

Q. What if an inmate/offender propositions a staff member? Is this staff sexual misconduct?

A. No. If an inmate/offender propositions you, you should report it immediately, so it can be handled through the disciplinary process. Acting on the proposition is misconduct.

Q. Are there inmates/offenders who "ask for it" or "deserve" to be sexually abused?

A. No! All sexual contact is against the rules. Being sexually assaulted to "teach them a lesson" is not part of any inmate/offender's sentence.

Q. What if I hold an inmate/offender accountable and they accuse me of sexual misconduct as retaliation?

A. False allegations can occur in this line of work. The Department fully supports a thorough investigative process to protect inmates from being victimized and staff from false allegations.

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Vermont Department
of Corrections

SEXUAL
ABUSE
AWARENESS

A guide for facility and
field staff, contractors,
and volunteers

Know Your
Responsibilities

This brochure was prepared by the Prison Rape
Elimination Act Office of the VTDOC.

The Vermont Department of Corrections is committed to the prevention of sexual abuse, and the promotion of safety and security for all inmates/offenders and staff. Staff includes, but is not limited to, teachers, medical providers, caseworkers, law enforcement officers, correctional officers, maintenance staff, and volunteers.

WHAT IS IT? Sexual abuse in facilities or in the field is any behavior used to pressure another to participate in relationships and/or sexual activities, including the use of threats, intimidation, and touch. This includes staff pressuring inmates in facilities or offenders under supervision, or inmates pressuring other inmates. Sexual abuse compromises the safety and security of our work sites.

Staff Sexual Misconduct is any behavior of a sexual nature by staff directed toward an inmate/offender that is prohibited by federal law, state statute (13 VSA 3257), Agency of Human Services policies, Department work rules or policies. This includes, but is not limited to, propositions, undue attention, inappropriate touching, indecent exposure, voyeurism, and sex.

Some examples of misconduct:

- A medical provider offers to bring in contraband in exchange for sex
- A volunteer tells an inmate/offender that they are the only reason they volunteer
- A caseworker says "good game" and slaps your buttocks
- A mental health provider shows nude photographs of themselves
- A teacher looks at pornographic materials during class

Sexual misconduct is a violation of the professional boundaries between staff and inmates/offenders. When these boundaries are violated, there is a confusion of roles, putting inmates/offenders and you into potentially dangerous situations.

A wide range of behaviors are inappropriate and boundary violations for staff to engage in. Some are against the DOC staff work rules and policies and some may be against the law. Even though this brochure is intended to address sexual abuse between staff and inmate/offenders, abuse also includes behaviors between staff that encourage a sexualized environment.

Some examples of these include:

- Sharing sexual jokes
- Disclosing details about your personal relationships
- Offering to pay an inmate/offender to pose for photographs
- Sending love letters to an inmate/offender
- Discussing sexual preferences
- Repeated use of profanity and/or derogatory comments
- Providing special favors for inmate/offenders
- Non-work related calls, texts, emails or social networking with inmates/offenders

**ANYONE INTENTIONALLY
PROVIDING A FALSE STATEMENT
OF SEXUAL ABUSE MAY BE
CHARGED CRIMINALLY**

No one can predict when connections will occur between two people. If you think that you are at risk of crossing boundaries, talk to your supervisor immediately. Crossing boundaries by becoming involved with an inmate/offender is unprofessional, unacceptable, and against the law.

If you need to talk with someone, please contact the free Employee Assistance Program toll-free at 1-888-834-2380 or www.vtstate.investeap.org.
Web password: vteap

**SEXUAL ACTIVITY BETWEEN INMATES
IS NEVER CONSENSUAL**

Inmate sexual abuse is when an inmate(s) is involved in or attempt a sexual act with another inmate. Sexual abuse is against facility rules and regulations, and the perpetrator should be held accountable through the disciplinary process. Some sexual abuse by an inmate may be a crime and will be referred to the VT State Police.

While there are some behaviors that are against the law, wide ranges of behaviors are inappropriate and are against facility rules.

Some examples of these include:

- 2 inmates lying in bed together
- Performing oral sex on another inmate in exchange for tobacco
- Engaging in sex as payment for borrowed commissary
- Masturbating uncovered, for someone to see
- Showering under the same shower head with another inmate
- Forcing another inmate to dress or alter their appearance in a certain way