



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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DOJ OIG Releases Report on the Handling of Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Allegations by the Justice Department's Civil Division

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) announced today the release of a report on the handling of sexual harassment and misconduct allegations by the DOJ's Civil Division, as well as a Management Advisory Memorandum to Justice Department leadership that identifies potential systemic issues related to DOJ components' handling of sexual harassment and misconduct allegations.

In today's report, the DOJ OIG concluded that the Civil Division must address significant weaknesses in its tracking of allegations, as well as inconsistencies among penalties imposed for substantiated allegations, to ensure that it adheres to the DOJ's zero tolerance policy for harassment, including sexual harassment.

The specific findings in today's report include:

- The Civil Division does not have its own internal policies governing the handling of sexual harassment and misconduct allegations, opting instead to follow broad federal law and regulations and DOJ policies. While we found that the Civil Division's handling of allegations conformed to most applicable regulations and policies, it was not consistent among cases or with the DOJ's zero tolerance policy.
- The Civil Division does not consistently and effectively track, record, or maintain adequate information on allegations of sexual harassment and misconduct. The Civil Division also does not have guidance to ensure that all allegations are reported to Human Resources, and it lacks a consistent standard for reporting sexual harassment and misconduct allegations to the OIG and to its own leadership.
- The Civil Division does not have penalty tables or guidelines for handling substantiated cases of sexual harassment and misconduct, which we believe affects the Civil Division's ability to impose consistent penalties. Our review found that, in general, the penalties for substantiated allegations made against supervisory or senior attorneys were limited to written reprimands, title changes, and reassignment.

- Some Civil Division employees received performance awards in public award ceremonies while they were the subject of an ongoing sexual harassment or misconduct investigation or while disciplinary actions were in effect, which we believe could deter the reporting of future allegations.

Today's report, which includes descriptions of three cases the OIG reviewed, makes four recommendations to the Civil Division to ensure appropriate handling and reporting of allegations and to better enforce the DOJ's zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment. The Civil Division agreed with all of the recommendations.

In addition, based on the findings of our review, as well as the findings of two 2015 OIG reports on the DOJ law enforcement components' handling of substantiated allegations of sexual harassment and misconduct, the OIG issued a Management Advisory Memorandum to the DOJ so that Justice Department leadership could consider whether to undertake corrective action in response to potential systemic issues. In the Memorandum, the OIG notes that "a culture of zero tolerance for sexual harassment and misconduct requires enforcement of [DOJ] policy equally across all components," which in turn requires "coordinated, high level action within the [DOJ] to address misconduct reporting requirements, penalty guidelines, and other policy enforcement issues."

Report: Today's report is available under "Recent Reports" on the OIG's website and at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2017/e1703.pdf>.

Management Advisory Memorandum: The OIG's Management Advisory Memorandum is available at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2017/1705-v2.pdf>

Podcast: To accompany today's report, the OIG has released a 9-minute podcast featuring the Deputy Inspector General. The podcast and a downloadable transcript are available at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/multimedia/podcast-06-01-17.htm#top>.