

Red Flags

The following examples of behavior may signal that you or a coworker are in danger of engaging in an inappropriate relationship (including sexual misconduct) with an offender:

- Isolation from fellow employees
- Spending too much time with one offender
- Noticeable changes in behavior/appearance
- Deviating from policy
- Sharing personal information
- Horseplay
- Doing favors for an offender/offender's family
- Consistently volunteering for a particular assignment or shift
- Coming to work early/staying late
- Flirting with an offender
- Standing too close to an offender
- Taking up an offender's cause or grievance
- Getting into a conflict with co-workers over an offender
- Bringing unauthorized items into the facility

Professional Behavior/Communications

DOC is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for all staff and offenders including LGBTI inmates. Do not use language that may perpetuate LGBTI stereotypes. Everyone should be treated with fairness, dignity and respect—including staff. The following behaviors will assist you in remaining professional:

- Focus behavior on duties and assignments
- Do not share your personal information with or around offenders
- When speaking about staff, refer to the person as Ms., Mrs., Mr. or their title and their last name (e.g., Mr. Smith or Counselor Smith)
- When speaking to an offender, refer to him/her as Offender or Inmate and their last name
- Do not accept gifts, letters, personal phone calls, or favors from any offender, their family or personal associates

Employee Resources

There are 5 staff counselors who provide confidential, voluntary, free and easily accessible services. Staff counselors can be reached at:

Lacey (360) 413-5444
Lacey (360) 486-2226
Seattle (206) 516-7634
Spokane (509) 277-7017
Walla Walla (509) 524-2403
Toll Free (888) 833-3726

Additional Resources

RCW 9A.44.160
RCW 9A.44.170
RCW 72.09/225

www.nicic.org

www.prearesourcecenter.org

www.nij.gov

The following DOC policies are available at www.doc.wa.gov:

- 490.800 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Prevention and Reporting
490.820 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Risk Assessments and Assignments
490.850 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Response
490.860 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Investigation

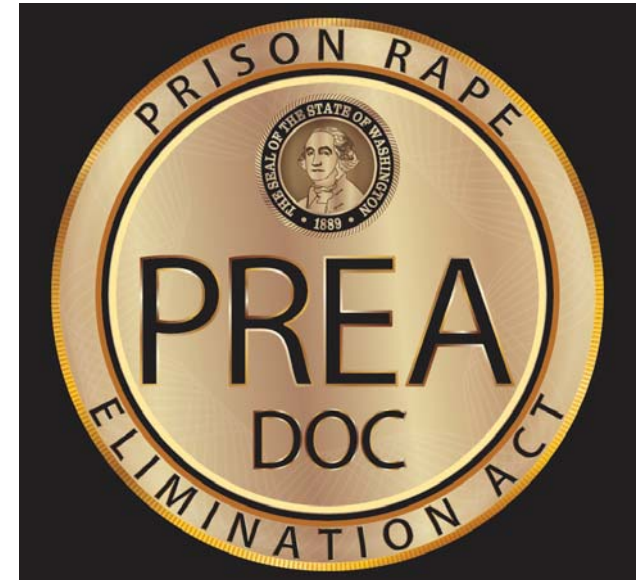
Department of Corrections

P.O. Box 41100

Olympia, WA 98504-1100

Phone: (360) 725-8213

PREA Hotline: 800-586-9431



**INFORMATION FOR
STAFF, CONTRACT
STAFF AND
VOLUNTEERS**



What is PREA?

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) is federal law that went into effect in September 2003 and prohibits sexual misconduct in correctional settings such as prisons, jails, lock-ups, juvenile facilities and Immigration Services/ICE detention facilities.

An Abuse of Power and Victimization

Due to the imbalance of power between offenders and employees in a correctional setting, sexual interaction between an employee (power) and an offender (who lacks power) is unprofessional, unethical and illegal. Some offenders may become sexually involved with staff in an effort to equalize the imbalance of power. Occasionally, an offender may try to use sex to improve his/her standing or circumstances (e.g., better job, avoid disciplinary action, gain privileges, etc.). Because of the imbalance of power between offenders and employees, contractors, and volunteers, there can never be a consensual relationship between offenders and persons working or volunteering for the Department. The law states “consent” is not a defense to prosecution.

Some people don’t think of offenders as ‘victims’ of staff sexual misconduct particularly when the offender appears to be a willing participant or even the initiator of the sexual or romantic interaction with a staff member.

The offender is always the victim because of the imbalance of power.

Signs of Abuse

Offenders may be anxious about reporting sexual abuse/harassment for a number of reasons including fear of retaliation from other offenders and/or staff. Some signs an inmate may be sexually abused/harassed include: withdrawal, hypervigilance, refusing to shower, afraid to sleep, requests for protective custody, etc. Offenders who experience sexual abuse may experience depression, be in emotional shock or disbelief, feel guilty, be in denial or suffer self-blame or shame.

If an inmate is at risk of imminent sexual abuse, they must be separated from the alleged perpetrator and kept safe.

Zero Tolerance

Offenders have a right to be free from sexual abuse and sexual harassment while incarcerated. DOC has zero tolerance for all forms of sexual misconduct and will impose disciplinary sanctions for such misconduct, up to and including dismissal for staff and serious infractions for offenders who victimize other offenders. Incidents of sexual misconduct will be referred to law enforcement when applicable. DOC policies regarding sexual misconduct apply to all offenders, both incarcerated and on community supervision. They also apply to employees, contract staff, volunteers and any other person providing services in Department facilities or offices. Offenders and staff also have the right to be free from retaliation for reporting sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

Duty to Report

You must immediately report any knowledge, suspicion, or information received regarding an incident of sexual abuse, sexual solicitation, sexual harassment or sexual coercion, or any staff neglect or violation of responsibilities that may have contributed to such an incident.

Staff receiving any information regarding an allegation or incident of sexual misconduct must deliver the information confidentially and immediately to the Shift Commander (prisons), the Work Release/Residential Program Administrator/Duty Officer (Work Release) or the appropriate Appointing Authority/Duty Officer (all others). Any knowledge of retaliation must be reported in the same manner.

**THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
recognizes that the vast majority of
EMPLOYEES DO NOT ENGAGE IN
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT WITH OFFENDERS.**

Things to Consider

Amorous or sexual relationships with offenders are seldom a secret. They are inappropriate and illegal. Your personal and professional reputation may be jeopardized because of inappropriate conduct with an offender. Your career, and even your family, can be negatively impacted or destroyed. Once in a relationship, professional judgment becomes clouded and the normal defenses that exist to protect you will be compromised. You will face the loss of employment and may be prosecuted resulting in a felony conviction and imprisonment. If you see warning signs, talk with the staff member. Don’t let them “fall off the cliff” and then tell everyone “I could have told you that was going to happen.”

Risk factors that may lead to an inappropriate relationship with an offender

- Assignment to an isolated/remote post
- A personal crisis (financial, marital, etc.)
- Little or no social life—work is the main focus
- Anger, resentment, bitterness toward, or dispute with administration