



**HEADQUARTERS, MARINE CORPS
JUDGE ADVOCATE DIVISION
MARINE CORPS VICTIMS' LEGAL COUNSEL
ORGANIZATION**

**INFORMATION FOR
VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE, AND OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES**

MISSION. The mission of the Marine Corps Victims' Legal Counsel Organization (VLCO) is to provide legal advice, counseling, and representation to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and other qualifying offenses, while ensuring that victims' rights are protected at all stages of the investigation and throughout the military justice process.

GENERAL INFORMATION. The Marine Corps is dedicated to providing support services to those affected by sexual assault, domestic violence, and other crimes. The Marine Corps established the VLCO in 2013 to meet statutory requirements to ensure legal advice and representation were provided to victims of sexual assault pursuant to 10 U.S.C. §§ 1044e and 1565b. The VLCO also extended services to victims of other offenses, including domestic violence, who met the basic legal assistance requirements under 10 U.S.C. § 1044. Today, various statutes and regulations provide eligible victims of sexual assault and domestic violence with the right to the assistance of Victims' Legal Counsel (VLC) upon request. All victims of alleged sex-related and domestic violence offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), as well as victims of other serious crimes* who desire VLC services are encouraged to contact the responsible VLCO office below to determine eligibility for services.

*Other serious crimes include actual, suspected, or alleged major criminal offenses committed by one person against another, that are punishable under the UCMJ by more than one year of confinement (e.g., aggravated assault, maiming, robbery, kidnapping and homicide offenses).

MARINE CORPS VLC. Marine Corps VLC are attorneys with experience in military justice. Prior to serving as VLC, they complete a specialized legal course on special victim representation, and must successfully undergo a sensitive screening process and be certified to serve as VLC by the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. VLC represent the interests of the victim (client), even where those interests may differ from the Government's interest in prosecuting the accused in the case. VLC are supervised by the responsible supervisory Regional VLC who answers to the Chief VLC of the Marine Corps at Headquarters (HQ), VLCO. The VLCO chain-of-command is functionally independent and does not answer to anyone outside the VLCO, including convening authorities, staff judge advocates, and/or trial and defense counsel.

CONFIDENTIALITY. Conversations between VLC and clients (as well as prospective clients) are confidential and privileged communications. The relationship between a VLC and client is that of an attorney and client.

VLCO SERVICES. The VLCO provides consultation and assistance with:

- Understanding the military justice system - Explanation of victims' rights under the UCMJ, investigative process, roles and responsibilities of commanders/convening authorities, trial and defense counsel, purpose of preliminary hearings (a.k.a. Article 32 hearings), referral and referral of charges, and trial procedures and evidentiary matters.
- Various legal procedure and options - Making Restricted or Unrestricted reports of sexual assault; seeking military protective orders/civilian restraining orders; addressing issues of harassment, intimidation, retaliation, reprisal, or coercion against the client; coordinating expedited transfer

requests in sexual assault cases; facilitating the return of victim property collected during an investigation; and obtaining testimonial or transactional immunity for victims regarding collateral misconduct.

- **Legal representation** - Ensuring victim rights under the UCMJ are fully secured and exerted. This includes the right to be present at military justice proceedings; to provide a victim preference to the convening authority regarding initial disposition of an offense and venue; to not be compelled to make statements or produce evidence in certain situations; to attend and be heard regarding admissibility of evidence under Military Rules of Evidence 412, 513, and 514; to receive a copy of the Record of Trial; and to be heard through VLC in court-martial proceedings where otherwise warranted. VLC accompany clients to various interviews and court proceedings, and represent the clients in court through written motions and oral arguments, and by assisting with post-trial matters.

Note. VLCO services supplement, but do not replace, services provided by other entities such as the Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP), Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program (SAPR), Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), Family Advocacy Program (FAP), and Victim Advocates (uniformed and civilian).

ELIGIBILITY OF SERVICES. VLC services are not provided to all victims automatically upon the start of an investigation into an offense, upon referral of court-martial charges, or upon any other procedural trigger. Rather, a victim must be eligible to obtain VLC services under pertinent statutes and regulations and must voluntarily seek out these services. Eligible victims include active duty military personnel, dependents, reservists on active duty, retirees and others.

If you have questions regarding your eligibility, please contact the VLCO office at your installation or the VLCO office closest to you.

THE VLCO OFFICES. The VLCO operates offices at the installations listed below.

Office	Phone	Email
Quantico, VA	(703) 784-4514	VLCO-NCR@usmc.mil
Camp Lejeune, NC	(910) 451-8519	VLCO-East@usmc.mil
MCAS Cherry Point, NC	(252) 466-5649	VLCO-East@usmc.mil
MCRD Parris Island, SC	(843) 228-3581	VLCO-East@usmc.mil
MCAS Yuma, AZ	(928) 269-3411	VLCO-West@usmc.mil
MCAGCC 29 Palms, CA	(760) 830-5162	VLCO-West@usmc.mil
Camp Pendleton, CA	(760) 725-8521	VLCO-West@usmc.mil
MCAS Miramar, CA	(858) 577-9210	VLCO-West@usmc.mil
MCB Kaneohe Bay, HI	(808) 257-2274	VLCO-PAC@usmc.mil
Camp Butler, Okinawa	**(315) 645-4457	VLCO-PAC@usmc.mil
MCAS Iwakuni, Japan	**(315) 253-4398	VLCO-PAC@usmc.mil

** denotes DSN prefixes

If you need any assistance getting in touch with your installation VLCO office or nearest VLCO office, please contact HQ, VLCO at (703) 693-9526/6306 and/or VLCO@usmc.mil.

