

**E-Manual Reference**

Chapter 3 Human Resources

Sub-Chapter 3.11 Conduct and Disciplinary Measures

Report Sexual Misconduct

Relevant documents:

POL 3.11.7 Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct

POL 3.11.7 Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct - Annex A - Accountability
for the Prevention and Response to Sexual Misconduct

Language	Available	Last Updated	Page Number
English	Yes	19 October 2026	Pg. 4
Español	No		
Português	Não		
Français	Non		

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[Return to Global Table of Contents](#)

Status of SOP

Status	Definition
A	Tested / reflects current policy
B	Possible gaps / may not reflect latest policy / users need to apply due diligence
C	Outline / being updated / users should cross-reference other materials (job aids, training resources)
D	Draft / consider as being under development
E	Work in progress / template created



Table of Contents

1.	Context and scope of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).....	4
2.	Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (SEA) reporting and disclosure	4
3.	Sexual harassment (SH) reporting and disclosure	5
4.	Informal resolution of certain forms of SH for PAHO personnel.....	5
5.	Reference material	6

1. **Context and scope of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** PAHO has established reporting and disclosure mechanisms for sexual misconduct.
- 1.2. This SOP sets out the operational procedures for reporting, assessing, and handling sexual misconduct allegations consistent with POL 3.11.7.
- 1.3. For definitions of the terms used in this SOP, refer to the Terms and Definitions section POL 3.11.7.

2. Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (SEA) reporting and disclosure

- 2.1. All concerns or suspicions of SEA committed by PAHO personnel and/or collaborators must be reported at the earliest opportunity and with as much detail as possible. PAHO personnel and collaborators are required to report SEA; therefore, the failure to report SEA may constitute misconduct and or breach of contract for personnel or collaborators who are not victims of SEA.
- 2.2. Victims of SEA may formally report their concerns at any time they feel safe and comfortable, and there is no time limit for victims to report an allegation of SEA.
- 2.3. Reporting of SEA allegations may be done on an anonymous or non-anonymous basis. PAHO personnel are encouraged to use one of the formal reporting channels:
 - Through the [Speak Up! Reporting Portal](#); or
 - By email to investigations@paho.org.
- 2.4. Reports can also be made through:
 - The PRSEAH Advisor(s) at hqprseah@paho.org or PRSEAH Focal Points at the country level, who in turn have the duty to report the allegations to the Office of Investigations (INV);
 - A manager or senior official at PAHO, who in turn has the duty to report the allegations to INV; or
 - Where available, local complaint channels, including inter-agency hotlines or government-run hotlines or reporting channels, established within the framework of the UN Country Team/UN Humanitarian Team and PSEA network.
- 2.5. The formal investigation process begins only upon receipt of a complaint by INV.
- 2.6. Credible allegations of SEA received by INV will be transmitted to PAHO's Office of the Legal Counsel (LEG) for consideration of referral to local authorities for criminal accountability, subject to the victim's consent.

3. Sexual harassment (SH) reporting and disclosure

- 3.1. For concerns or suspicions about sexual misconduct that may fall within the definition of SH, two separate resolution pathways are available: (1) a formal process, and (2) for eligible personnel, an informal resolution process. Informal resolution cannot be used for allegations of SEA or for certain forms of SH that are determined to be unsuitable for informal resolution (*see*, POL 3.12.2 *Informal Resolution and Mediation* (in development)). Such allegations must follow the formal resolution process to ensure proper accountability and to safeguard the well-being of personnel, collaborators, and community members.
 - 3.1.1. SH victims who are PAHO personnel can choose to follow either a formal or informal resolution pathway. SH victims who are not PAHO personnel may submit a formal report via relevant channels but are not eligible for the informal resolution process.
 - 3.1.2. To begin the formal resolution pathway, a report of SH must be submitted through the [Speak Up! Reporting Portal](#) or by email at investigations@paho.org, which may lead to an investigation and a disciplinary process.
- 3.2. Reports can also be made through the PRSEAH Advisor(s) at hqprseah@paho.org who with the victim's consent will transmit the report to INV.
- 3.3. There is no deadline or time limit for reporting SH or seeking support or resolution.

4. Informal resolution of certain forms of SH for PAHO personnel

- 4.1. The informal resolution process through the Office of the Ombudsperson (OMB) is an optional pathway available for PAHO personnel who experience certain forms of sexual harassment and who feel safe and comfortable pursuing an informal resolution. This process begins with a confidential discussion with the Ombudsperson (ombudsperson@paho.org), who assesses whether informal resolution is appropriate and supports the victim in identifying the safest and most constructive way forward. Victims are never required to participate in a facilitated discussion with the subject unless they explicitly choose to do so and feel safe and comfortable with that option. Accessing informal resolution pathways does not preclude the victim from pursuing a formal resolution.
- 4.2. In the exercise of their functions, the Ombudsperson may identify patterns, trends, or recurring concerns that suggest a potential systemic issue that may be contributing to or enabling sexual misconduct or undermining a safe and respectful work environment. In

such cases, and without conducting an investigation or making findings of misconduct, OMB may refer the matter, in a manner that preserves confidentiality and to the extent possible does not disclose identifying information, to the relevant office(s) for review and appropriate organizational follow-up.

- 4.3. Throughout the informal process, victims may access support services upon request, in line with a victim-centered approach. Accordingly, no informal or formal resolution shall proceed if the victim does not wish to do so.
- 4.4. The victim may initiate a formal resolution process by reporting the matter to INV at any stage of the process. However, parties may continue to engage and seek support from OMB.
- 4.5. Bystanders who witness or have knowledge of SH can contact PRSEAH Advisor(s) or the Ombudsperson for advice on how to report concerns of SH in accordance with a victim-centered approach.
- 4.6. In circumstances where SH involves any actual or attempted abuse of a position of power or trust, or where the act could amount to SA or SE, the informal resolution process is not appropriate and is inconsistent with this Policy.

5. Reference material

5.1. E-Manual policies

POL 3.11.7 Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct

POL 3.11.7 Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct - Annex A
- Accountability for the Prevention and Response to Sexual Misconduct

POL 3.12.2 Informal Resolution and Mediation (in development)

5.2. SOPs

5.3. Job Aids

5.4. Forms