



# Reprisal



## WHAT Is Reprisal?

Reprisal is defined as taking or threatening to take an unfavorable personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, for making, preparing to make, or being perceived as making or preparing to make a protected communication.<sup>1</sup>

## WHY Should I Care About Reprisal?

Individuals should be able to make a protected communication without the fear of reprisal<sup>2</sup>.

Complaints include reports of harassment and whistleblowing complaints.



Protected communications include complaints or reports made to the following:

- a Member of Congress
- an inspector general
- a member of a Department of Defense audit, inspection, investigation, or law enforcement organization
- any person or organization in the chain of command<sup>3</sup>

## WHO Can Be Impacted by Reprisal?

Reprisal is a form of retaliation that impacts the individual, unit, and organization.



Decrease in health and increase in stress and anxiety<sup>4</sup>



Decrease in work productivity and retention<sup>5</sup>



## WHERE Does Reprisal Occur and What Can This Look Like?

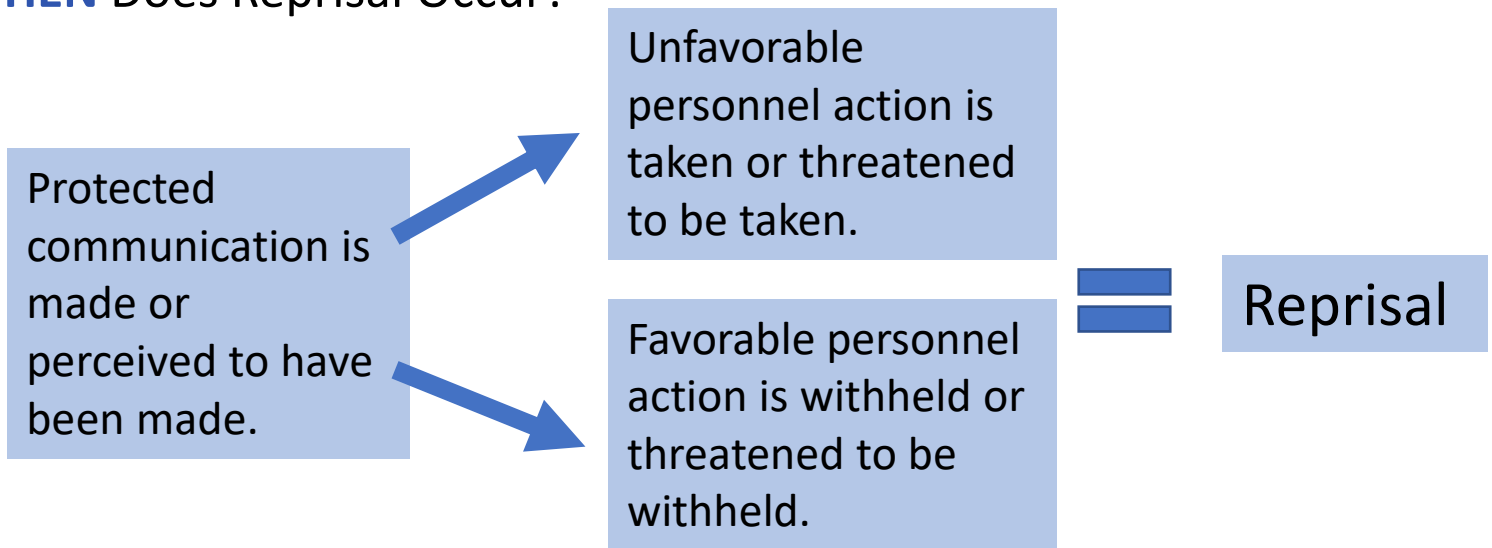
Taking unfavorable personnel actions:

- Removal from position
- Adverse evaluation
- Letter or reprimand
- Bar to reenlistment

Withholding favorable personnel actions:

- Promotion/award
- Positive evaluation
- Desirable assignment
- Career-enhancing training

## WHEN Does Reprisal Occur?



## HOW Can Reprisal Be Prevented?

①

### Primary Actions

Be aware of policies and create a positive reporting climate.

②

### Secondary Actions

Ensure reprisal reporting is efficient and provide resources to support targets.

③

### Tertiary Actions

Evaluate policies to meet the needs of the work environment.





# Reprisal Fact Sheet References



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3. Inspector General. (2017, April 18). Guide to investigating military whistleblower reprisal and restriction complaints. *Department of Defense*.  
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5. Liu, X., Lu W., Liu, S., & Qin, C. (2023). Hatred out of love or love can be all-inclusive? Moderating effects of employee status and organizational affective commitment on the relationship between turnover intention and CWB. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1–13.  
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