

# Advancing Safety at Sea

RVSS Updates: Chapter 6, Appendix E, and  
New Harassment Prevention & Reporting Best  
Practices

# Why these Updates Matter?

- **Federal law has changed.** The Safer Seas Act now requires immediate USCG reporting, surveillance near berthing and anti-retaliation protections.
- **Harassment prevention expectations have expanded.** Science parties and crew now require updated training, clearer reporting pathways, and consistent documentation.
- **Community Commitment.** UNOLS community commitment to creating safe & respectful research environments for all.



*These updates modernize RVSS expectations and strengthen safety, respect, and accountability across the Academic Research Fleet.*

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# RVSS Chapter 6: Current vs. Draft 2026

Personal Behavior & Individual Safety

Summary for UNOLS Safety Committee Review



# Chapter 6: What's New & What Changed

## Before (2021 Edition)

- ADA guidance was advisory, not operational.
- No Safer Seas Act requirements.
- No PII protections or preferred-name rules.
- No SMS requirements for harassment content.
- No explicit personal safety behavior expectations.

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## After (2026 Draft)

- Mandatory USCG reporting, surveillance, and anti-retaliation rules – Safer Seas Act requirements
- Civility at Sea modules I, II & III required for science parties; annual crew training.
- Harassment policies must be posted in public and private spaces.
- Preferred/chosen names required on public-facing documents.
- SMS must include harassment procedures (inspected vessels).
- ADA pre-cruise planning; buddy systems encouraged.
- Personal safety behaviors explicitly defined.

# Chapter 6: New Requirements & Best Practices

## New Requirements

- Safer Seas Act reporting, surveillance, signage, anti-retaliation.
- Civility at Sea Modules I, II and III for science parties.
- Annual harassment training for crew.
- Posting policies in private spaces.
- PII protections (preferred names on public documents).
- SMS harassment content for inspected vessels.

## New Best Practices

- Weekly check-ins between science party and ship leadership.
- Cruise-specific codes of conduct.
- Watch parties with discussion guides.
- Expanded ADA accommodations and emergency-movement planning.



**These changes modernize Chapter 6 by aligning UNOLS vessels with new federal law, strengthening harassment prevention, and improving safety for all embarked personnel.**

# Chapter 6: What This Looks Like in Practice

## *More Structured Compliance Responsibilities*

- Meet new federal mandates under the Safer Seas Act, including immediate USCG reporting, video surveillance near berthing, and anti-retaliation protections.
- Update Safety Management Systems to include harassment-prevention procedures for inspected vessels.

## *Expanded Training & Documentation Requirements*

- Deliver Civility at Sea Modules I, II and III to all science parties; provide annual harassment-prevention training for crew.
- Post policies in both public and private spaces with clear, accessible reporting pathways.

## *Enhanced ADA & Personal Safety Expectations*

- Conduct pre-cruise ADA planning, including feasibility assessments and emergency-movement considerations.
- Reinforce explicit expectations for personal safety behaviors (handrails, PPE, hazard awareness).

## *Operational Adjustments Across the Vessel*

- Align signage, documentation, and onboard and ashore communication with updated Chapter 6 requirements.

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# Appendix E:

## Current vs. Draft 2026

Harassment Prevention — Summary for UNOLS Safety

Committee Review



# Appendix E: What's New & What Changed?

## Before (2021 Edition)

- Focused mainly on defining harassment
- Limited to examples of misconduct
- Basic guidance on speaking up and reporting
- No federal compliance requirements
- No guidance on PII, chosen names, or identity-respect practices
- No bystander intervention strategies
- No vessel-level operational expectations

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## After (2026 Draft)

- New and expanded definitions related to harassment
- Adds Responsible Employee obligations
- Integration of Safer Seas Act requirements (reporting, surveillance, signage, anti-retaliation)
- Deeper analysis of At-Sea social dynamics.
- Expanded list of unacceptable behaviors
- New emphasis on bystander intervention strategies
- Adds supportive response guidance
- Adds chosen/preferred name requirements & PII protections
- Adds vessel-level expectations (codes of conduct, signage, private reporting spaces, Civility at Sea Module III)
- Adds references to modern research and federal guidance.

# Appendix E: New Requirements and Best Practices

## New Requirements

- Civility at Sea Modules III posting and pre-cruise inclusion
- Use of chosen/preferred names on public-facing documents
- Protection of legal name/sex as Sensitive PII
- Responsible Employee reporting obligations
- Train crew and science parties on new expectations



## New Best Practices

- Codes of conduct for each cruise
- Early communication and culture-building
- Bystander intervention strategies
- Supportive response guidance
- Private spaces for confidential calls.

These Appendix E updates require vessels to modernize harassment prevention, align with new federal law, strengthen reporting pathways, protect identity and privacy, and adopt proactive culture-building practices at sea.

# Appendix E: What This Looks Like in Practice

## *Stronger Culture-Building Guidance*

- Shape an onboard environment grounded in civility, respect, and safety, supporting a culture where all individuals are valued and able to fully participate.
- Use cruise-specific codes of conduct and early expectation-setting as standard practice.

## *New Identity and Privacy Protections*

- Use Chosen/preferred names consistently on all public-facing documents.
- Treat legal name and sex and Sensitive PII and restrict access.

## *Expanded Prevention & Intervention Guidance*

- Train crew and science parties in bystander intervention and supportive response practices.
- Ensure Responsible Employees understand and follow mandatory reporting obligations.

## *Enhanced Reporting Infrastructure*

- Provide private spaces and communication channels for confidential reporting.
- Post Civility at Sea Module III in both public and private areas and include it in pre-cruise planning.

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# Research Vessel Harassment Reporting **Best Practices**

New guidance from the UNOLS Office for the U.S.

Academic Research Fleet



# Why **New** Reporting Guidance Was Developed

## **Multi-Institution Complexity**

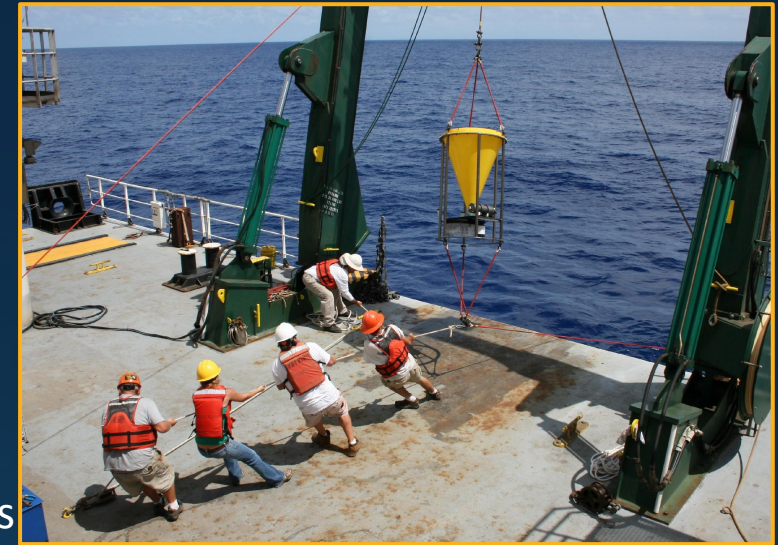
- Research vessels host personnel from many institutions with different policies, reporting obligations, and cultural norms.
- Students and trainees often have additional protections and unique power-dynamic considerations

## **Gaps Identified Across the Fleet**

- Unclear reporting pathways during multi-institution cruises
- Confusion between Responsible Employees (institutional) and Responsible Entities (federal law)
- Inconsistent coordination between vessel operators and home institutions
- Need for clearer expectations around interim measures and documentation

## **Purpose of the Best Practices Document**

- Provide consistent, fleet-wide guidance—not new policy
- Clarify reporting pathways aboard vessels
- Support safe, respectful working environments
- Align vessel operations with institutional, Title IX, and Safer Seas Act requirements
- Improve coordination between vessel operators and home institutions



# Research Vessel Harassment Reporting Best Practices:

## Key Functions:

**Step-by-step framework** for receiving, documenting, and reporting incidents.

**Defined roles** for vessel leadership, crew, science party leads, and institutional contacts.

**Dual reporting obligations** clarified for Federal and Institutional reporting channels.

**Scenario-based workflows** to support consistent decision-making.

**Guidance on interim measures** to support safety and reduce harm during a cruise.

**Modernized references:** updated federal guidance and research incorporated throughout.

**Documentation expectations** aligned with institutional and federal requirements.

# | How Chapter 6, Appendix E, and Reporting Best Practices Work Together

- **Chapter 6 — Requirements — What is Required?**

Legal and regulatory compliance (Title IX, Title VII, USCG, Safer Seas Act), required training, reporting systems, and safety procedures.

- **Appendix E — Culture — How do we behave?**

Definitions, behavioral expectations, bystander intervention, identity protections, and shared language for conduct.

- **Reporting Best Practices — Response — What Happens when an Incident Occurs?**

Step-by-step workflows, documentation, coordination with institutions, and clear roles during incidents



*Together, they align policy, culture, and operational response across the fleet.*

# How Should These Documents Work Together?

## Chapter 6 = Requirements

### *What is required?*

- Legal and regulatory compliance
- Title IX / Title VII / USCG / Safer Seas Act
- Required training and reporting systems
- Mandatory safety procedures



## Appendix E = Culture

### *How do we behave?*

- Definitions: civility, equity, harassment
- Behavioral expectations at sea
- Bystander intervention
- Shared language for conduct



## Best Practices = Response

### *What happens when an incident occurs?*

- Step-by-step framework for receiving, documenting, reporting, and coordinating incidents (vessel + Institution)
- Defined roles and dual reporting obligations
- Documentation requirements
- Scenario-based workflows

# Summary / Key Takeaways

Federal mandates now require stronger reporting, documentation, and anti-retaliation protections.

Harassment-prevention expectations have expanded for both crew and science parties.

Identity and privacy protections must be consistently applied across vessel operations.

ADA and personal safety planning are should be addressed before every cruise.

New Reporting Best Practices provide a unified framework for multi-institution coordination.

Together Chapter 6, Appendix E, and the Best Practices document work together to strengthen safety, respect, and accountability



# | Questions and Discussion

# Thank You!

UNOLS Safety Committee Briefing

Advancing safety, respect and accountability across the Academic Research Fleet