



## BEFORE YOU PRESS SEND

### What could happen to it?

Once a picture or video is sent, it's no longer in your control. The messages can be shown to anyone and posted anywhere on the internet.

### Who might see it?

If it's something you wouldn't want your wife, family, friends, or superiors seeing, you shouldn't send it.

### Who are you sending it to?

Is it someone you trust? Would you feel uncomfortable doing something sexual with them in person? Would you be able to have a serious conversation about sex with them? Would they be okay with you saying, "No," because you're uncomfortable?

### Why do you want to send it?

Never send a picture just to impress someone. It's important to understand that sexting can have the opposite effect. You wouldn't want to risk having a bad reputation.

## STOP THE TREND!

### What can you do to stop the sexting craze?

You need to be able to step up and stop the sexting trend. There are several things you can do to protect yourself and others from the negative effects of sexting. These include:

- Don't send explicit images or clips of yourself to anyone.
- Report any inappropriate messages you receive to your superior.
- If you know someone who is forwarding inappropriate pictures to others, encourage them to stop.
- Have respect for yourself. Understand that if someone needs an inappropriate picture to like you, they aren't worth your time.

Sexting has evolved into a major issue in today's society. While many people have learned that sexting is wrong, it is still happening. Stand up for yourself and others and put a stop to this behavior. Technology should be used responsibly without hurting others or yourself in the process.

## WHAT TO SAY?

### Refusal Tips for Service Members

What if someone you know tells you they would like you to send them a "sex"?

It's not always easy to turn them down. Here are a few suggestions on how to say "NO" if someone asks you to send explicit pictures or texts:

- "My wife checks my text messages; I don't want her reading your request.
- "Nah, I'm not comfortable doing that."
- Just ignore it!

## TEST YOURSELF!

### What Do You Know?

1. An image can exist in cyber space for years.
  - a. True
  - b. False
2. Sending an explicit text message is not considered sexting if no photos are attached.
  - a. True
  - b. False
3. Sexting is sometimes considered child pornography.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. Explicit text messages or e-mails can be tracked back to the source.
  - a. True
  - b. False
5. Private messages are safe from hackers, as long as you password protect your phone and internet.
  - a. True
  - b. False

Answers: 1. a; 2. b; 3. a; 4. a; 5. b

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# SEXTING

## IN THE MILITARY



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# A SERIOUS MISTAKE



## WHAT IS "SEXTING?"

Today the information highway is quickly advancing and technology is revolutionizing the way we communicate. While these times are exciting, they can be very dangerous as well, especially when it comes to sexting.

Sexting is the act of sending, receiving or forwarding sexually explicit pictures, videos or messages via cell phone. People sext to show off, to show interest in someone or to prove commitment. While some believe sexting is fun and innocent, the consequences can be very devastating. Sexting is problematic enough, but the real challenge comes when the content of these messages are shared. As many people have found out, you can't always trust the recipient and once a photo is sent, you lose all control.

## YOU CAN'T TAKE IT BACK

### The Facts About Sexting

Once an image or clip is sent:

- It can deliberately be leaked or it can even be leaked accidentally.
- It can exist in cyberspace for years.
- It can be traced back to its source.
- Private images can be stolen and published by people who "hack" into others' phones and internet accounts.

## KNOW THE RISKS

Sexting can expose you to risks that greatly impact your life.

- Images and clips can very quickly be shared abroad.
- Sex offenders can get a hold of explicit images or clips sent over texts.
- Future employers many times check social media sites for inappropriate content posted by or about job seekers.
- If posted to the internet, anyone can find the images using online search engines.

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

### Consequences of Sexting

#### Emotional Effects

- **Embarrassment and Humiliation:** When you send an explicit picture or clip, there are no guarantees that it will remain private and in many cases they don't. As a result of a fight or breakup, the explicit content is mass distributed causing the person in the pictures to feel embarrassed and humiliated.
- **Guilt and Shame:** Having private images shared amongst your peers can cause extreme guilt and shame. Many people who participate in sexting regret having done so. It affects their self-esteem and leaves them feeling vulnerable.
- **Feelings of Hopelessness:** The consequences that come with sexting can cause a person to feel hopeless and depressed, sometimes even resulting in suicide.

#### Legal Effects

When people participate in sexting it can lead to serious issues. The consequences of this activity range from being reprimanded to felony charges.

- **Criminal charges for child pornography:** Sometimes it is hard to tell the age of someone who is sexting you. If the person who is sexting you is under the age of 18, then you could be in some serious trouble. If you share that photo with others it becomes much worse, and you could be charged with distributing child pornography.
- **Having to register as a sex offender:** Jail time isn't the only legal risk for sexting. Service members with these charges risk having to register as a sex offender as well. This is something that is likely to follow them for the rest of their lives.
- **Being charged with misuse of government equipment:** If you use a military issued phone while sexting, you could be charged with misuse of government equipment. You could face hefty fines or even dismissal from the military for such an act.

#### Effects on Your Reputation

- Even if you've only sexted once, it could damage your reputation. Just one bad choice could overshadow the positive image your peers and subordinates had of you. Sexting can damage your relationship with friends, family and the military. Just one photo could end up defining who you are for a long time.
- Having your explicit photos leaked could result in your friends not wanting to associate with you. Your friends and family could be put in an uncomfortable situation because they overhear others talking about you. It may be easier for friends to cut ties with you than be involved with the situation.
- Since you sexted before, others may approach you asking for more. Others may only want to date you because they think you will send them indecent photos or clips. Even worse, you could attract online predators or unwanted attention from other service members.

The military has very specific rules regarding fraternization. Superior officers are not to have relationships with subordinates. This is in part to protect the reputations of superior officers. As a leader you want to be someone who is respected by your peers and subordinates. It only takes one text to ruin this image of respect.

## A RUINED CAREER

Sergeant Andrew Jones had worked a long time to get where he was. He had a loving wife and family and an illustrious career in the United States military. Sergeant Jones was well respected by his superiors and subordinates alike and only needed to serve a few more years before retirement. It only took one wrong decision to ruin everything.

Alicia was a new recruit under Sergeant Jones. One day Sergeant Jones received a half naked photo with an explicit message from Alicia on his cell phone. Sergeant Jones thought there could be no harm in a little flirtation. After all, we wasn't cheating, just having some fun. They began sexting each other and it lasted for a few weeks.

Alicia shared one of Sergeant Jones' pictures with a friend. Somehow, the photo circulated around the unit, and Sergeant Jones was dismissed for conduct unbecoming a superior officer. In the process he lost his family as well. All of this could have been prevented if he had just chosen not to "sext".

