
Operational-Level Logistics



U.S. Marine Corps

To Our Readers

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**Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine gender is used,
both men and women are included.**

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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FOREWORD

Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 4-12, *Operational-Level Logistics*, addresses fundamental principles for the planning and execution of logistics for the Marine Corps component within a theater of operations; the relationships between the Marine Corps forces (MARFOR) logistics staff, the Marine Logistics Command (MLC), Marine expeditionary force (MEF) logistics staff, and the force service support group (FSSG); and coordination with external theater logistic agencies. MCWP 4-12 delineates the division of labor between MLC and FSSG by providing logistics employment guidance. In addition, this publication identifies strategic logistic organizations and agencies that provide support to MARFOR in theater. MCWP 4-12 expands on MCWP 4-1, *Logistics Operations*, by providing detailed guidance to Marine Corps logisticians who conduct operational logistics.

This publication is a detailed guide for field grade action officers serving on MARFOR, MEF, and FSSG staffs, who are responsible for planning and conducting logistics at the operational level. The secondary audience is comprised of commanders and staff officers who require logistic support or who will benefit from a greater understanding of theater-level logistics.

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

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OPERATIONAL-LEVEL LOGISTICS

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CHAPTER 1. FUNDAMENTALS

Military operations require specific logistic support, and that support is based on the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. Operational-level logistics links strategic resources with tactical units and enables force closure, sustainment, reconstitution, and redeployment of forces. Functions of operational logistics are normally carried out in the communications zone (COMMZ), which is the rear part of a theater of operations contiguous to the combat zone. Operational logistics supports expeditionary operations.

The levels of logistics assist Marines in planning for logistics at the corresponding levels of warfare. Operational-level logistics addresses sustainment within a military theater of operations. Operational-level logistics connects strategic-level logistic resources with the tactical level of logistics thus creating the conditions for effective Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) combat service support (CSS) for the duration of a campaign. Understanding operational-level logistics is critical to integrated planning and the successful conduct of expeditionary operations.

Operational Logistic Environment

Marine Corps forces (MARFOR) conducting expeditionary operations as part of a joint force will be under the command of a joint force commander (JFC). The MARFOR plans, coordinates, and supervises the execution of operational (theater) logistics for the assigned MAGTF. Each Service provides administrative and logistic support to its forces assigned or attached to a joint force. The JFC may have the authority to direct a single Service to provide common item logistics to components of the joint force. Consequently, the MARFOR coordinates operational logistic support for the MAGTF per Marine Corps Service responsibility and for other Service components as directed by the JFC.

Joint doctrine encourages inter-Service support, which is defined as action taken by one Service or element thereof, to provide logistics and/or administrative support to another Service. The relationship between the Navy and Marine Corps is a recurring association that affects the Marine Corps at all levels of war.

Joint forces with a MARFOR assigned or attached include a Marine Corps component. The Marine Corps component commander provides administrative and logistic support for the MARFOR with the exceptions of logistics provided through service support agreements or as directed by the JFC.

The joint force and its Service components may conduct expeditionary operations as part of a multinational force (MNF). Formal treaties have resulted in military alliances that have produced multinational military organizations, procedures, and responsibilities that guide participating forces. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations Forces in Korea are two long-term alliances in which U.S. Forces participate. Short-term threats produce coalitions where the military forces of different nations temporarily cooperate to accomplish an agreed mission. Logistics remains a national responsibility; however, nations may cooperate and make support arrangements to increase efficiency and economy.

MARFOR logistic planners coordinate with other Services, Department of Defense (DOD) logistic agencies, and governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to meet requirements. Joint force operations may interact with interagency organizations, especially during military operations other than war (MOOTW). Interagency coordination occurs between elements of the DOD and engaged U.S. Government agencies, NGOs, and regional and international organizations to accomplish an objective. The MARFOR can expect to receive operational logistic assistance from the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM),