

**FM 100-10**  
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# **Domestic Support Operations**

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**U.S. Marine Corps**

PCN 139 000572 00

Field Manual  
FM 100-19  
Fleet Marine Force Manual  
FMFM 7-10

Headquarters  
Department of the Army  
The Marine Corps  
Washington, DC, 1 July 1993

## **DOMESTIC SUPPORT OPERATIONS**

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PREFACE</b> .....	vii
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	viii
<b>CHAPTER 1 CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES</b> .....	1-1
HISTORY AND CATEGORIES OF DOMESTIC SUPPORT .....	1-1
DISASTER ASSISTANCE .....	1-2
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE .....	1-2
LAW ENFORCEMENT .....	1-3
COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE .....	1-3
CONCEPT .....	1-4
PRINCIPLES OF OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR .....	1-4
THE ARMY'S ROLE .....	1-5
SUMMARY .....	1-6
<b>CHAPTER 2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b> .....	2-1
THE PRESIDENT .....	2-1
FEDERAL AGENCIES OTHER THAN DOD .....	2-2
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) .....	2-2
THE AMERICAN RED CROSS (ARC) .....	2-2
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC) .....	2-2
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DOEd) .....	2-2
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) .....	2-2
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) .....	2-2
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) .....	2-3
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA) .....	2-3
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (DHHS) .....	2-3
DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR (DOI) .....	2-4
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) .....	2-4
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) .....	2-4
NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (NCS) .....	2-4
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (NRC) .....	2-4
DEPARTMENT OF STATE (DOS) .....	2-4
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT) .....	2-4
DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY .....	2-5
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE (NWS) .....	2-5
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) .....	2-5
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (SECDEF) .....	2-5

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	<b>Page</b>
SECRETARY OF ARMY .....	2-5
DIRECTOR OF MILITARY SUPPORT (DOMS) .....	2-5
UNIFIED COMMANDS .....	2-5
DEFENSE COORDINATING OFFICER (DCO) .....	2-8
NATIONAL GUARD .....	2-8
US ARMY RESERVE .....	2-9
MAJOR COMMANDS (MACOMs).....	2-9
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT .....	2-9
STATE RESPONSIBILITIES .....	2-10
LOCAL RESPONSIBILITIES .....	2-13
SUMMARY .....	2-13
<b>CHAPTER 3 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS .....</b>	<b>3-0</b>
CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY .....	3-0
THE ROLE OF THE ARMY .....	3-0
THE LAW .....	3-1
SUPPORT TO CIVILIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT: <i>The Posse Comitatus Act</i> .....	3-1
DOMESTIC DISASTER RELIEF: <i>The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief Act</i> .....	3-2
CIRCUMSTANCES CONCERNING ELECTIONS .....	3-3
COMBATTING TERRORISM, AIRCRAFT PIRACY, AND OTHER OPERATIONS .....	3-3
COMBATTING TERRORISM, .....	3-3
AIRCRAFT PIRACY .....	3-4
OTHER OPERATIONS .....	3-4
USE OF PERSONNEL, MATERIEL, AND EQUIPMENT .....	3-5
USE OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE (MI) PERSONNEL .....	3-5
USE OF RESERVE COMPONENT PERSONNEL .....	3-5
USE OF MATERIEL AND EQUIPMENT .....	3-5
REIMBURSEMENT .....	3-5
SUMMARY .....	3-6
<b>CHAPTER 4 LOGISTICS AND SUPPORT OPERATIONS .....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
PLANNING .....	4-1
SOURCES OF SUPPORT .....	4-2
CONTRACTING .....	4-2
NEGOTIATED SUPPORT .....	4-2
MILITARY SUPPORT .....	4-2
SUPPORT FROM OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES .....	4-2
LOGISTICS COMMAND AND CONTROL CELLS .....	4-3
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT .....	4-4
SUPPLIES AND FIELD SERVICES .....	4-4

	<b>Page</b>
DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY .....	4-5
QUARTERMASTER (QM) UNITS .....	4-5
MORTUARY AFFAIRS UNITS .....	4-6
FORCE PROVIDER UNIT .....	4-6
OTHER SUPPORT .....	4-7
MAINTENANCE .....	4-8
TRANSPORTATION .....	4-8
DEPLOYMENT .....	4-9
CONVOYS .....	4-9
REDEPLOYMENT .....	4-9
AVIATION .....	4-9
ENGINEER .....	4-10
MAPS AND CHARTS .....	4-11
INTELLIGENCE .....	4-11
MILITARY POLICE .....	4-11
MILITARY HEALTH SERVICE SUPPORT .....	4-11
TASK-ORGANIZED MEDICAL TEAMS .....	4-12
KEY PLANNING GUIDANCE .....	4-12
NATIONAL DISASTER MEDICAL SYSTEM .....	4-12
SYSTEM ACTIVATION .....	4-12
PERSONNEL SERVICES .....	4-13
FINANCE .....	4-14
BAND .....	4-14
LEGAL .....	4-14
CHAPLAINCY .....	4-14
PUBLIC AFFAIRS (PA) .....	4-15
SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES (SOF) .....	4-15
CIVIL AFFAIRS .....	4-15
PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS .....	4-15
SPECIAL FORCES .....	4-16
SIGNAL .....	4-16
CHEMICAL CORPS .....	4-16
SAFETY .....	4-17
SUMMARY .....	4-18
<b>CHAPTER 5 DISASTERS AND DOMESTIC EMERGENCIES .....</b>	<b>5-1</b>
THE ROLE OF THE ARMY .....	5-1
DISASTERS .....	5-1
RESPONSE FOLLOWING A PRESIDENTIAL DECLARATION .....	5-2
RESPONSE PRIOR TO A PRESIDENTIAL DECLARATION .....	5-3
PREPARING FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE SUPPORT .....	5-4
THE FEDERAL RESPONSE PLAN .....	5-6
RESPONSIBILITIES .....	5-8
FEDERAL COORDINATING OFFICER .....	5-8

DEFENSE COORDINATING OFFICER ..... 5-8  
STATE COORDINATING OFFICER (SCO)..... 5-8  
JOINT TASK FORCE (JTF) 5-8  
DOMESTIC EMERGENCIES ..... 5-9  
    CIVIL DEFENSE EMERGENCIES ..... 5-9  
    ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS ..... 5-10  
    MASS IMMIGRATION EMERGENCY SUPPORT OPERATIONS..... 5-11  
    OTHER DIRECTED MISSIONS ..... 5-11  
SUMMARY ..... 5-11

**CHAPTER 6 ENVIRONMENTAL MISSIONS ..... 6-0**  
    PLANNING AND EXECUTION ..... 6-0  
        CHARACTERISTICS ..... 6-1  
        CLASSIFICATIONS ..... 6-2  
    COMPLIANCE ..... 6-2  
        OIL AND HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SPILLS ..... 6-2  
        PERMIT APPLICATIONS AND PLANS ..... 6-3  
        ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENTS (AUDITS)..... 6-3  
        RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ..... 6-3  
        WETLANDS ..... 6-3  
    RESTORATION ..... 6-4  
        FACILITY RESTORATION ..... 6-4  
        REAL PROPERTY TRANSFERS ..... 6-5  
        GENERAL SUPPORT ..... 6-5  
    PREVENTION ..... 6-5  
    CONSERVATION ..... 6-6  
        NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ..... 6-6  
        WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING ..... 6-7  
        ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION ..... 6-7  
        CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ..... 6-7  
    ARMY RESOURCES ..... 6-8  
        DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY ..... 6-8  
        TECHNICAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS ..... 6-9  
        INSTALLATIONS AND STATE AREA COMMANDS ..... 6-9  
        COMMANDERS ..... 6-10  
SUMMARY ..... 6-11

<b>CHAPTER 7 MISSIONS IN SUPPORT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT .....</b>	<b>7-0</b>
COUNTERDRUG OPERATIONS .....	7-0
ROLES .....	7-0
CATEGORIES OF SUPPORT .....	7-2
REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT .....	7-7
PROVISION OF SUPPORT .....	7-8
CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING .....	7-8
STAND-ALONE CAPABILITY .....	7-8
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS .....	7-8
LEGAL AND TACTICAL ASPECTS .....	7-8
LEGAL CONSTRAINTS .....	7-8
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT .....	7-9
OPERATIONS SECURITY .....	7-9
COMMAND AND CONTROL .....	7-9
COMMUNICATIONS .....	7-11
PUBLIC AFFAIRS .....	7-11
THREAT AWARENESS AND RISK ASSESSMENT .....	7-11
SUPPORT FOR CIVIL DISTURBANCE OPERATIONS .....	7-11
ROLES .....	7-11
REQUESTS FOR FEDERAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE .....	7-12
CONDUCT OF CIVIL DISTURBANCE OPERATIONS .....	7-12
SUPPORT FOR COMBATTING TERRORISM .....	7-14
ANTITERRORISM ASSISTANCE .....	7-14
COUNTERTERRORISM ASSISTANCE .....	7-14
TYPES OF SUPPORT .....	7-14
SUMMARY .....	7-15
<b>CHAPTER 8 COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE .....</b>	<b>8-0</b>
PRINCIPLES .....	8-0
COMMAND EMPHASIS .....	8-1
INDIVIDUAL AND UNIT ENHANCEMENT .....	8-1
READINESS ENHANCEMENT .....	8-1
COMMUNITY BENEFIT .....	8-1
COMMON INTEREST AND BENEFIT .....	8-1
NONCOMPETITIVE .....	8-1
NONPROFIT .....	8-1
TYPES OF COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE .....	8-2
NATIONAL EFFORTS .....	8-2
STATE AND LOCAL EFFORTS .....	8-3
SOCIAL IMPROVEMENTS .....	8-5
PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONSIDERATIONS .....	8-6
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS .....	8-6
SUMMARY .....	8-7

**CHAPTER 9 EDUCATION AND TRAINING** ..... 9-0

    CONCEPT ..... 9-0

    TRAINING TECHNOLOGIES ..... 9-2

    READINESS ..... 9-3

    RISK MANAGEMENT ..... 9-3

    PUBLIC AFFAIRS ..... 9-3

    ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE ..... 9-4

    DISASTER ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS ..... 9-4

    LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT OPERATIONS ..... 9-5

    SUMMARY ..... 9-6

APPENDIX ..... A-1

GLOSSARY ..... Glossary-0

REFERENCES ..... References-1

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## PREFACE

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### PURPOSE

This manual provides the capstone doctrine for US Army and US Marine Corps domestic support operations. It also provides general information to civilian authorities at federal, state, and local levels involved in planning for and conducting such operations. It identifies linkages and defines relationships with federal, state, and local organizations and with other services that have roles and responsibilities in domestic support operations.

### SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This doctrine applies to all Army and Marine Corps commanders and staff tasked with planning, preparing for, and conducting domestic support operations. For overseas theaters, this doctrine applies to US unilateral operations only, subject to applicable host nation laws and agreements.

### USER INFORMATION

This publication was developed by the Army Doctrine Directorate at Headquarters, Training and Doctrine Command (HQ TRADOC) with the participation of the Doctrine Division (C42) at Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC). HQ TRADOC, with MCCDC, will review and update this publication as necessary. Send comments and recommendations directly to—

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Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.



## INTRODUCTION

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Domestic support operations are not new. They had their beginning with settlement of the new world and organization of the colonial militia. With the establishment of the United States and a federal military, the Army routinely provided support to state and territorial governors as the nation expanded westward. In some instances, it actually administered governmental affairs until the fledgling local government became a viable entity.

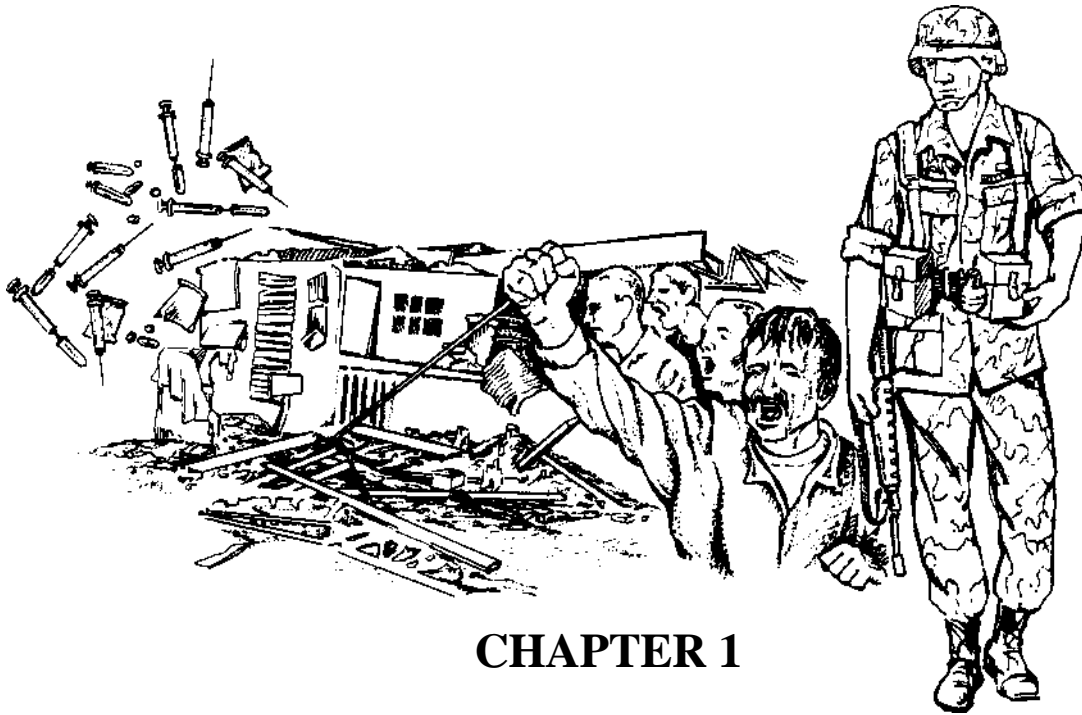
Congress has determined and the National Command Authorities have directed that the military should become more engaged in supporting domestic needs. In addition, the National Security Strategy “Domestic Imperative” affirmed that national security must be viewed in the context of the nation’s well-being.

Acknowledging the inherent capabilities the Army possesses for supporting federal, state, and local governments, the Congress has passed numerous laws providing for domestic military support. These laws recognize that the National Guard, while in state status, has primary responsibility for providing initial support when military assistance is required. They also institutionalize interdepartmental and interagency coordination/planning, linking it to the national strategy.

Commanders should anticipate requirements to provide emergency assistance and use domestic support opportunities to enhance unit and individual wartime skills. The Army, particularly the National Guard and Army Reserve, with its extensive combat support and combat service support (CS/CSS) structure, is ideally equipped to assist civil authorities in a wide variety of missions that fall into four general categories: disaster assistance, environmental assistance, law enforcement support, and community assistance.

Although the frequency of domestic support operations may increase, they are not in lieu of wartime operational requirements. The Army’s primary mission remains to defend the United States and its interests. It is the Army’s combat readiness that enables it to accomplish domestic support operations.

This manual provides specific guidelines and operational principles in the conduct of domestic support operations. It emphasizes the utilization of the Army’s core combat competencies and values to enhance combat readiness and the overall well-being of the nation.



## CHAPTER 1

### CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES

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*This chapter presents a brief historical perspective and concept of Army domestic support operations, the principles of operations other than war that apply to these operations, and a description of the Army's role. The Army consists of the active component (AC), the Army National Guard (ARNG), the US Army Reserve (USAR), and Department of Army (DA) civilians. The National Guard (NG), in a state or territorial status, has primary responsibility for providing military assistance to state and local civil authorities.*

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#### HISTORY AND CATEGORIES OF DOMESTIC SUPPORT

**A domestic support operation is the authorized use of Army physical and human resources to support domestic requirements.**

Since the Army's inception, its mission has been to fight and win the nation's wars. At the same time, the Army has provided general military support to the

nation, including participation in a wide variety of activities to assist civilian authorities. The Army has enforced laws, quelled domestic violence and insurrection, combatted terrorism, participated in public works and environmental projects, and assisted in recovery operations following disasters.

The dramatic end of the Cold War caused significant changes in the nation's domestic and foreign priorities. During the Cold War, national attention was directed to the external threat and related issues. Today, along with a shift from a forward deployed to a force projection strategy is a new awareness of the benefits of military assistance to improve the nation's physical and social infrastructure. The Army's focus on and continuing involvement in all aspects of domestic support operations identified the need for published doctrine.

The Army's roles and responsibilities in domestic support operations divide into four primary categories: disaster assistance, environmental assistance, law enforcement support, and community assistance, as depicted in Figure 1-1.

## DISASTER ASSISTANCE.

From the earliest years of the republic, the Army has provided assistance to the country in times of disaster. During the final year of the Civil War, Army officers provided disaster relief through the Freedman's Bureau. The Army also played a direct role in many disaster relief operations in the late nineteenth century, including the great Chicago fire, the Johnstown flood, and the Charleston earthquake.

In recent years, Presidential and Congressionally mandated federal disaster assistance programs have evolved. The Army actively participates with federal and

state agencies in disaster assistance planning, exercises, and operations in response to both natural and man-made disasters.

Disaster assistance includes those humanitarian and civil defense activities, functions, and missions in which the Army has legal authority to act. The Army provides disaster assistance to states, the District of Columbia, territories, and possessions. Civil authorities must request assistance, usually as a result of disasters such as hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, or massive explosions.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE

Environmental assistance has been evolving since the 1960s. The Army has provided a variety of resources to meet environmental challenges that have emerged as a result of increased public concern and demands for the restoration, conservation, and protection

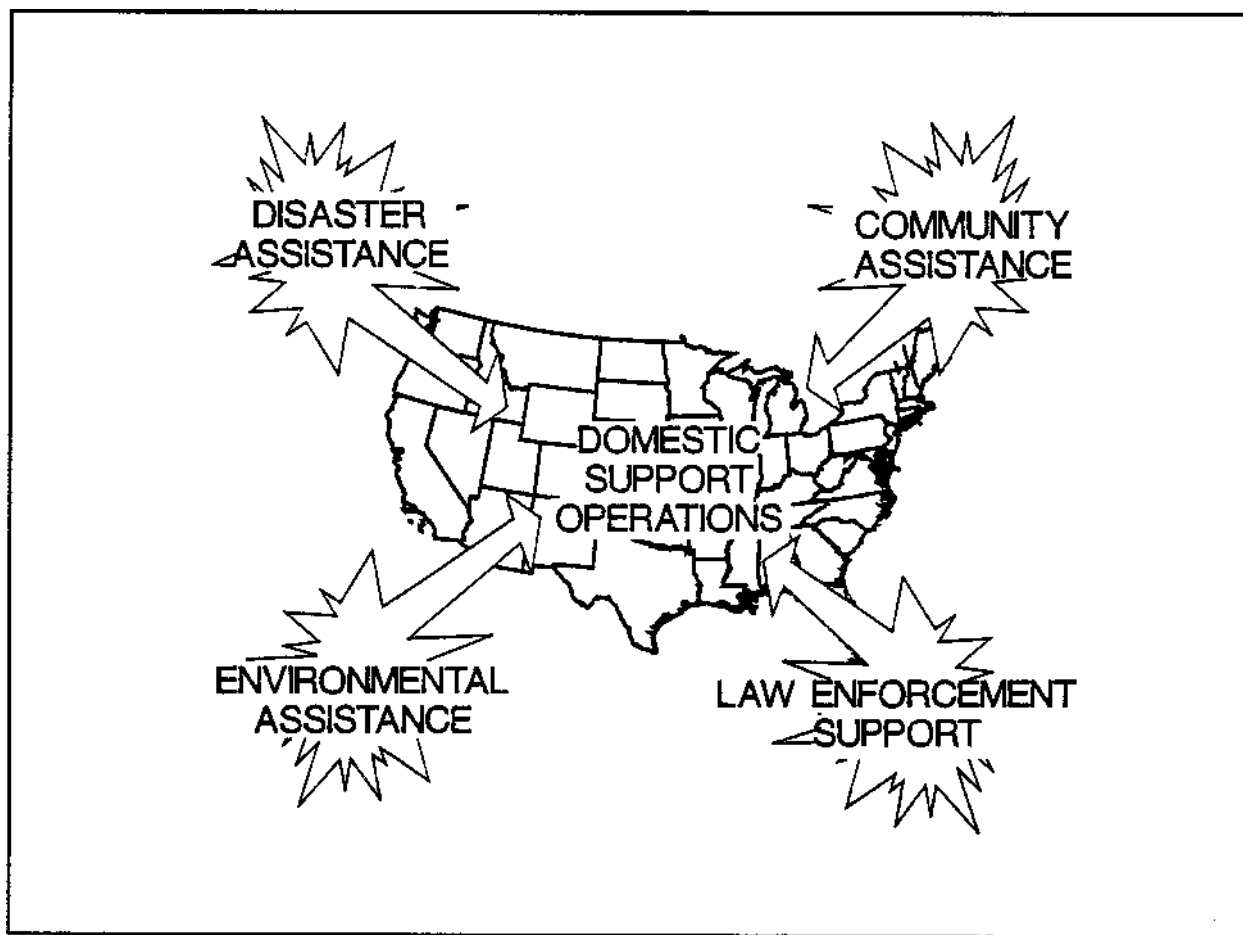


Figure 1-1. Domestic Support