

Field Manual
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FM 20-3
CAMOUFLAGE, CONCEALMENT, AND DECOYS

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Preface

This field manual (FM) is intended to help company-level leaders understand the principles and techniques of camouflage, concealment, and decoys (CCD). To remain viable, all units must apply CCD to personnel and equipment. Ignoring a threat's ability to detect friendly operations on the battlefield is shortsighted and dangerous. Friendly units enhance their survivability capabilities if they are well versed in CCD principles and techniques.

CCD is equal in importance to marksmanship, maneuver, and mission. It is an integral part of a soldier's duty. CCD encompasses individual and unit efforts such as movement, light, and noise discipline; litter control; dispersal; and deception operations. Each soldier's actions must contribute to the unit's overall CCD posture to maximize effectiveness.

Increased survivability is the goal of a CCD plan. A unit commander must encourage each soldier to think of survivability and CCD as synonymous terms. Training soldiers to recognize this correlation instills a greater appreciation of CCD values.

A metric conversion chart is provided in [Appendix A](#).

The proponent of this publication is HQ TRADOC. Send comments and recommendations on Department of the Army [\(DA\) Form 2028](#) (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to Commandant, United States Army Engineer School (USAES), ATTN: ATSE-DOT-DD, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri 65473-6650.

This publication implements Standardization Agreement [\(STANAG\) 2931](#), *Orders for the Camouflage of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on Land in Tactical Operations*.

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

Chapter 1

Basics

CCD is the use of materials and techniques to hide, blend, disguise, decoy, or disrupt the appearance of military targets and/or their backgrounds. CCD helps prevent an enemy from detecting or identifying friendly troops, equipment, activities, or installations. Properly designed CCD techniques take advantage of the immediate environment and natural and artificial materials. One of the imperatives of current military doctrine is to conserve friendly strength for decisive action. Such conservation is aided through sound operations security (OPSEC) and protection from attack. Protection includes all actions that make soldiers, equipment, and units difficult to locate.

DOCTRINAL CONSIDERATIONS

1-1. CCD degrades the effectiveness of enemy reconnaissance, surveillance, and target-acquisition (RSTA) capabilities. Skilled observers and sophisticated sensors can be defeated by obscuring telltale signs (signatures) of units on the battlefield. Preventing detection impairs enemy efforts to assess friendly operational patterns, functions, and capabilities.

1-2. CCD enhances friendly survivability by reducing an enemy's ability to detect, identify, and engage friendly elements. Survivability encompasses all actions taken to conserve personnel, facilities, and supplies from the effects of enemy weapons and actions. Survivability techniques include using physical measures such as fighting and protective positions; nuclear, biological, chemical (NBC) equipment; and armor. These actions include interrelated tactical countermeasures such as dispersion, movement techniques, OPSEC, communications security (COMSEC), CCD, and smoke operations (a form of CCD). Improved survivability from CCD is not restricted to combat operations. Benefits are also derived by denying an enemy the collection of information about friendly forces during peacetime.

1-3. Deception helps mask the real intent of primary combat operations and aids in achieving surprise. Deception countermeasures can delay effective enemy reaction by disguising information about friendly intentions, capabilities, objectives, and locations of vulnerable units and facilities. Conversely, intentionally poor CCD can project misleading information about friendly operations. Successful tactical deception depends on stringent OPSEC.

1-4. Smoke and obscurants are effective CCD tools and greatly enhance the effectiveness of other traditionally passive CCD techniques. Smoke and obscurants can change battlefield dynamics by blocking or degrading the spectral bands used by an enemy's target-acquisition and weapons systems. More recently developed obscurants are now able to degrade nonvisual detection systems such as thermal infrared (IR) imaging