



by Rick Chersicla

You're in garrison, and you get the Warning Order (WARNO) for the Battalion (or Brigade) to deploy for a real world mission. Your organization, however, is not preparing to deploy overseas, or for an Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise (EDRE), but is instead preparing to deploy and support civil authorities within the United States.

The odds are that very few—or perhaps none—of the personnel in your organization has conducted [Defense Support of Civil Authorities \(DSCA\)](#) operations. You and your leadership may find yourselves asking “what is DSCA?” on the eve of an operation, and more importantly “how can we prepare for it?”

Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) is support provided by federal military forces (and DoD civilians, DoD contract personnel, and National Guard forces in a Title 32 status) in response to a request for assistance (RFA) submitted by civil authorities. DSCA operations can be in response to manmade or natural events and can range from [hurricane relief](#), to supporting [wildland fire fighting](#), to [COVID-19 vaccination support](#) at the request

of FEMA.

Given the frequency with which some Governors activate their National Guard for emergency response operations, many Guardsmen are well versed in DSCA operations. While Active Duty forces respond to domestic crises with less regularity than National Guard compatriots, they can still prepare for DSCA missions, rather than end up in an on-the-job-training situation when time could be of the essence.

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