

CONTACT:
Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director
(518) 786-4581



Fact Sheet

New York National Guard Civil Support Teams (CST) (Weapons of Mass Destruction)

Description of the Unit

The Civil Support Team (CST) is a high-priority response unit supporting civil authorities in responding to a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) situation. The unit is made up of 22 full-time National Guard members. It consists of six sections: command, operations, communications, administration/logistics, medical, and survey, who have been specially trained and equipped to provide a technical reach-back capability to other experts. The team is formed specifically to provide advice to the Incident Commander to help make assessments of the requirements for follow-on forces.

The unit is commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel, jointly staffed with Army and Air National Guard personnel, and encompasses 14 military occupational skills. The unit is federally resourced, trained, equipped, and sustained, with the New York National Guard providing the personnel, stationing, and common support. The Adjutant General either employs the CST to support the State response under the direction of the Governor or to support another State's response under a supported Governor.

Mission and Organization

The CST mission is to support civil authorities at a domestic Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or High Yield Explosive (CBRNE) incident site by identifying CBRNE agents/substances, assessing current and projected consequences, advising on response measures, and assisting with appropriate requests for state support to facilitate additional resources.

The New York National Guard's Civil Support Team has performed more than 60 missions in support of civil authorities since the unit's certification in 2001.

CST Training and Equipment

The CSTs participate in both military and emergency responder training. Team members acquire approximately 600 hours of initial training above their military occupational skill qualification or professional military education requirements. Instruction is provided from several DOD schools, along with other agencies such as FEMA, DOJ, EPA and DOE. The CST is equipped with high-end detection, analytical, and protective equipment. The unit possesses satellite, secure and cellular telephone communications to provide connectivity with both civil and military forces within the operational conditions.

CSTs are required to maintain personal protective equipment sets that exceed those provided to military forces. CSTs are equipped to civil standards in order to operate in an area containing unknown contamination. Additionally, high-end detection equipment is required to detect a greater range of substances, including toxic industrial chemicals, organic substances, and chemical and biological warfare agents.

Unit Stationing and Response Range

New York's 2nd Civil Support Team is based in Scotia, New York. Based upon weather and road conditions, ground transit time equates to 3 to 5 hours after departing Home Station. Any response beyond the 250-mile maximum ground movement radius may warrant the use of rotary

or fixed wing aircraft. The CST equipment set is man-portable for rotary wing movement (but at a degraded capability) as well as air transportable by fixed wing aircraft at full capability.

The Congress last year increased the number of authorized CSTs nationwide from 55 to 57, clearing the House in May, and provided additional funding for FY 2008. One of those additional teams is slated for New York State.

An additional Civil Support Team is currently organizing at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, N.Y. The 24th CST will have the same equipment, training and capabilities as the Guard's 2nd CST, but provide more responsive training and operational support to the downstate region.

CSTs will normally be the first National Guard units to arrive at a WMD incident.

General

In response to a weapon of mass destruction situation, the Civil Support Teams provide a well-trained assessment team to support the State response as a lead element for the National Guard. Their knowledge of the emergency management system, expertise in emergency response operations, and technical capabilities may provide tremendous assistance to the local Incident Commander. WMD terrorism requires rapid response to a suspected or actual terrorist attack. The CSTs provide assessment of the damage, consultation on logistics, medical, chemical and biological defense, and transmission of the situation to higher headquarters to facilitate follow-on military forces. The CSTs are available for rapid deployment for WMD response operations.

Source: National Guard Bureau Public Affairs Office
For more information, call the DMNA Public Affairs Office.

###