

## National Guard CERFP Teams

**What is it?** Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Packages (or CERFP teams) consist of approximately 186 Soldiers and Airmen. Each team has a Command and Control section, a decontamination element, a medical element, a casualty search and extraction element, and a fatalities search and recovery element.

The following States (17) have CERFP teams: California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington State, and West Virginia. CERFPs are strategically based with at least one CERFP in each of the 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regions.

Three CERFPs are in Region 3 (PA, WV, VA) and three more in Region 5 (IL, OH, MN) providing coverage for high population areas in the North/North-East and National Capital Region (NCR). Two CERFPs are in Region 9 (HI, CA) based on population density and geographic location. Two CERFPs are in Regions 4 (GA, FL) and two more in Region 7 (NE, MO) supporting the South East population density and providing capabilities to leverage in the event of a catastrophe such as Katrina or Deepwater Horizon.

The existing National Guard CERFPs, also ensure Governors and TAGs have the capabilities in each state to mitigate risks associated with collapsed structure (confined space) rescue, medical triage and stabilization, mass decontamination, and the recovery of fatalities resulting from a CBRNE incident.

**What do they do and what have they done?** CERFP teams function as either follow-on or pre-positioned forces working closely with the deployed Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams (WMD-CSTs) to provide a robust National Guard response capability. CERFPs are specially trained to integrate into the National Incident Command System to conduct life saving actions within a contaminated environment.

The CERFPs and WMD-CSTs provide a phased capability; CSTs detect and identify CBRNE agents/substances, assess the effects and advise the local authorities on managing the effects of the attack. The CSTs also assist with request for other forces. The CERFPs locate and extract victims from a contaminated environment, perform mass patient/casualty decontamination, and provide treatment as necessary to stabilize patients for evacuation. CERFPs are specially trained to respond to a weapons-of-mass-destruction incident. The CSTs are dedicated units of National Guard personnel on active duty, whereas, the CERFPs are comprised of existing National Guard units in traditional reserve status.

The 17 CERFPs are existing National Guard units in traditional reserve status. They can be mobilized in State Active Duty, Title 32, or Title 10 status. Each CERFP can be ready to deploy to an incident site within 6 hours of notification of a CBRNE or WMD incident.

The search and extraction function is assigned to an Army or Air National Guard Engineering unit, the decontamination element is from an Army National Guard Chemical Company, and the medical element is from an Air National Guard Medical Group. These organizations maintain their original mission but are given additional training and equipment that build on existing skills to accomplish the CERFP mission.

In addition to their normal military equipment, CERFPs are issued state-of-the-art specialized commercial equipment that meets NIOSH/OSHA standards.

**What continued efforts does the National Guard have planned for the future?** This on-going program of preparedness requires that each CERFP maintain current OSHA/NFPA certifications, and monthly readiness level required for a quick and effective response to any catastrophic event. The National Guard will continue to institutionalize the CERFP program within standard DoD processes (for example, integrating CERFPs into the Standardization, Evaluation, and Assistance Team (SEAT) program). The SEAT will conduct field evaluations of the 17 CERFPs, which will provide program oversight to ensure compliance with laws and policies and audit the disposition of allocated resources. In addition, NGB in coordination with the Maneuver Support Center (Fort Leonard Wood, MO.) is developing written doctrine for CERFPs. The first and second draft have been completed, we expect doctrine for CERFP to be published July/August, 2011. The Fatality Search and Recovery Teams (FSRTs), a new element of the CERFPs, conduct search and recovery of fatalities from a CBRNE contaminated environment in support of the CERFP Commander's mission. This capability has been integrated into the CERFP CONOPs and will be including in CERFP doctrine.

**Why is this important to the Nation?** CERFPs are a key element of the Department of Defense's overall program to provide military support to civil authorities in the event of an intentional or accidental incident involving CBRNE or WMD on or in the United States. Within the national response continuum; CERFP teams are designed to fill the 6- to 72-hour gap in our Nation's ability to provide mass casualty patient decontamination, medical triage, and treatment and the extraction of injured or deceased from a contaminated environment. The CERFP program will continue to be the lead in providing a life saving capability for DoD's response to a CBRNE incident.