

HISTORICAL FACT SHEET

Weapons of Mass Destruction - Civil Support Teams (WMD-CST)

Description of the Unit The Weapons of Mass Destruction - Civil Support Team (WMD-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 State National Guard providing the personnel, stationing, and common support. The Adjutant General either employs the WMD-CST to support the State response under the direction of the Governor or to support another State's response under a supported Governor.

Congress has authorized 55 WMD-CSTs. The first 10 teams authorized in the National Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal 1999 have achieved the certification required by law and in accordance with Department of Defense criterion. Seventeen additional teams were authorized in fiscal 2000, and all of them are certified as well; five more teams were authorized in fiscal 2001, and as of 14 Mar 03, all of them are certified as well. Twelve teams were authorized in fiscal year 2004 and are nearing completion of the certification process. Eleven teams were authorized in fiscal year 2005, completing the Congressional mandate to field at least one team in every state, territory, and the District of Columbia. These final teams will be certified by November 2006.

Mission and Organization The WMD-CST mission is approved by the Secretary of Defense and reads:

SUPPORT CIVIL AUTHORITIES AT A DOMESTIC CBRNE INCIDENT SITE BY IDENTIFYING CBRNE AGENTS/SUBSTANCES, ASSESSING CURRENT AND PROJECTED CONSEQUENCES, ADVISING ON RESPONSE MEASURES, AND ASSISTING WITH APPROPRIATE REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL STATE SUPPORT.

CST Training and Equipment The WMD-CSTs participate in both military and emergency responder training. Team members acquire on average 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 WMD-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.

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

Unit Stationing and Response Range With the fiscal year 2005 authorization, there is a WMD-CST in every state, territory, and the District of Columbia. When certified, these teams will provide rapid response to any location within the United States. Additionally, there is a plan in place to ensure WMD-CST can provide reinforcement for very large attacks or where multiple attacks occur in a single jurisdiction. The primary means of deployment will be using organic vehicles. Any response beyond the 250-mile maximum ground movement radius may warrant the use of rotary or fixed wing aircraft. The WMD-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. WMD-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 WMD-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 WMD-CSTs are available for rapid deployment for WMD response operations.