

# National Guard Deployment Extended to Support COVID-19 Response

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Federal funding for the National Guard to support the whole-of-America response to COVID-19 has been extended under Title 32 to March 31, 2021. Under Title 32 status, the National Guard remains under the command and control of their respective governors but is funded by the Department of Defense (DoD). FEMA has mission assigned DoD to fund Title 32 National Guard deployments to support state and territorial efforts in response to the pandemic.

National Guard troops have helped distribute food and PPE, supported contact tracing and testing, and their medical teams have supported direct patient care and now will assist with vaccine administration.

To date, the president has approved 48 state and three territorial National Guard requests for federal support to use the National Guard through March 31, 2021. The Federal cost share for these mission assignments, set in Presidential Memoranda, ranged from 75% to 100%.

To date, FEMA has obligated \$2.7 billion to the National Guard mission. This continued federal assistance keeps states from incurring substantial State Active Duty personnel expenses for extended timeframes during the economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic.



Title 32 is rarely used for disaster response. Normally, National Guard supports disaster response in a State Active Duty status, and state costs associated with their activation is eligible for FEMA reimbursement under the Public Assistance program. Because of unemployment and the temporary closure of many non-essential businesses due to the virus, states have experienced reduced tax revenue and economic activity. Title 32 alleviates some of that economic burden. This continued assistance keeps states from incurring substantial State Active Duty personnel costs for extended timeframes. Further, since the pandemic has impacted the entire country, interstate mutual aid has been extremely limited. Rather than mobilizing out-of-state resources to support an impacted state, this response has required novel solutions to mobilize in-state resources using all possible authorities and mechanisms.

### **Cost Share**

- Title 32 authority provides federal funding for troops' salary, allowances, travel and per diem. Initially, FEMA covered 100 percent of this cost and operational expenses. Effective Aug. 22, all expenses were then funded with a 75 percent federal cost share, except in Arizona, California, Connecticut and Louisiana, which were funded 100 percent through Sept. 30, and Florida, Iowa, Texas, which received an exception and remain at a 100 percent federal cost share until Dec. 31.
- A specific request for Title 32 extension or cost share adjustment must be submitted from the Governor's office directly to the White House. FEMA has reacted to White House action on Title 32 authorization and issued mission assignments accordingly.

### **Cost and Number of Troops Deployed**

- As of Dec. 7, approximately **18,000** National Guard troops were deployed under Title 32.
- So far, FEMA has obligated over **\$2.7 billion** for the mission.

### **Requirements to be Eligible for Title 32 Authorization**

- To be eligible for Title 32 Authorization, the following criteria must be established:
  - The state or territory must have an approved major disaster declaration or have submitted a major disaster declaration request to FEMA for review.
  - The state or territory must have activated the lesser of 500 individuals or two percent of National Guard personnel in the state or territory under State Active Duty.
  - The state or territory must issue a resource request to FEMA and agree to the applicable cost share.



## Benefits of Title 32

- Because of unemployment and the temporary closure of many non-essential businesses due to the virus, states have experienced reduced tax revenue and economic activity. Title 32 alleviates some of that economic burden. This continued assistance keeps states from incurring substantial State Active Duty personnel costs for extended timeframes. Further, since the pandemic has impacted the entire country, interstate mutual aid has been extremely limited. Rather than mobilizing out-of-state resources to support an impacted state, this response has required novel solutions to mobilize in-state resources using all possible authorities and mechanisms.
- Advantages and Challenges to Guardsmen:
  - **Advantages:** after 30 days of deployment service members have access to DoD healthcare, and after 90 days the GI Bill, and other federal benefits. Also, after 90 days they are covered for any injury or illness incurred in the line of duty with the same benefits provided to full-time active duty military personnel.
  - **Challenges:** Unlike hurricanes and other disasters where deployments usually last 30 days, the COVID-19 response has required long-term deployments and responders at all levels of government are asked to deploy in environments with a high risk of exposure to COVID-19.

