

Dept. of Military Affairs: Wisconsin National Guard posturing forces and ready to support state, if needed

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MADISON, Wis. — The Wisconsin National Guard is posturing forces to ensure it is ready to respond to potential requests for assistance from other state agencies or communities, if its assistance is requested.

Approximately 300 troops have been mobilized to state active duty to posture the Guard for further state support, if needed.

“We are working hand-in-hand with our partners across state government to ensure our forces are postured and ready to respond to anticipated requests for assistance,” Col. Eric Leckel, the director of domestic operations for the Wisconsin National Guard said. “Serving our state during times of emergency is one of our core missions in the National Guard, and we stand ready to assist the state with whatever it may ask of us.”

Currently the Wisconsin National Guard has brought on additional planners, logisticians, and command and control elements to manage and execute any future missions, which could include assisting state agencies with logistics and planning, specimen collection, providing a source of medical professionals, and more, Leckel said.

“Over the coming days and weeks, you will likely see our Citizen Soldiers and Airmen out in our communities serving our state,” Maj. Gen. Paul Knapp, Wisconsin’s adjutant general, said. “Wisconsin’s response to COVID-19 is a unified whole-of-state effort, and our National Guard is here and stands ready to support our fellow Wisconsin citizens.”

The Wisconsin National Guard consists of 10,000 Soldiers and Airmen from around the state, representing a ready pool of resources and capabilities available to the governor and local communities, if needed. Gov. Tony Evers declared a public health emergency March 12, clearing the way for National Guard support.

Approximately 30 Wisconsin National Guard troops mobilized to state active duty last week to assist the Wisconsin Department of Health Services in transporting a group of Wisconsin citizens to their homes for self-quarantine after returning to Wisconsin following a cruise with confirmed cases of COVID-19. Those troops remain on state active duty awaiting the return of seven remaining cruise ship passengers whom the Guard plans to transport home as well.

More than 700 Wisconsin National Guard troops are currently deployed in combat theaters like Afghanistan and the Middle East in support of the Guard's federal mission.