

## CLOSE AIR SUPPORT

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Close air support (CAS) involves employing ordnance within close proximity of ground troops; that employment and the requirement for detailed integration to prevent friendly fire incidents are two characteristics that distinguish CAS from other types of air warfare.

- ✦ **Close proximity.** Close proximity does not represent a specific distance. Instead, the phrase “close proximity” is situational and requires detailed integration and [terminal attack control](#) (TAC) pursuant to friendly force proximity to enemy targets. Detailed integration and TAC help ensure engagement of correct targets and mitigation of friendly fire and collateral damage. Thus, CAS is not defined by a specific location of an operation; it can be conducted at any place and time friendly ground forces are in close proximity to enemy forces. For example, special operations forces operating anywhere in the [joint operations area](#) may require CAS support if there are friendly troops within close proximity to the enemy forces being attacked.
- ✦ **Detailed integration.** The requirement for detailed integration because of [fires](#), proximity, or movement is the determining factor for CAS. Detailed integration describes a level of coordination required to achieve desired [effects](#) while minimizing the risk of friendly fire—from either surface fires or air-delivered weapons. Because of this level of integration, each element should be controlled in real time to prevent friendly fire with ground or air forces. Procedures should be flexible enough so that CAS, surface fires, and the ground scheme of maneuver are not overly restricted. The range at which the preponderance of effects against the enemy shifts from surface fires to airpower is the prime factor (among several) used to define the maximum range requiring detailed integration and a good depth for commanders to consider delineating between CAS and [air interdiction](#).

The [joint force commander](#) establishes the guidance and priorities for CAS in the [concept of operations](#), operation plan or campaign plan, air apportionment decision, and by making capabilities and forces available to the components.

The [air component commander](#) is given the authority necessary to accomplish missions and tasks assigned by the establishing commander. For CAS, these responsibilities

normally include recommending air apportionment, allocating forces and capabilities made available from the JFC and components, including command and control elements of the [theater air control system](#), creating and executing the air tasking order, and other applicable actions associated with CAS execution. The air component commander maintains close coordination with the other component commanders to ensure CAS requirements are being met in accordance with joint force commander guidance.

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