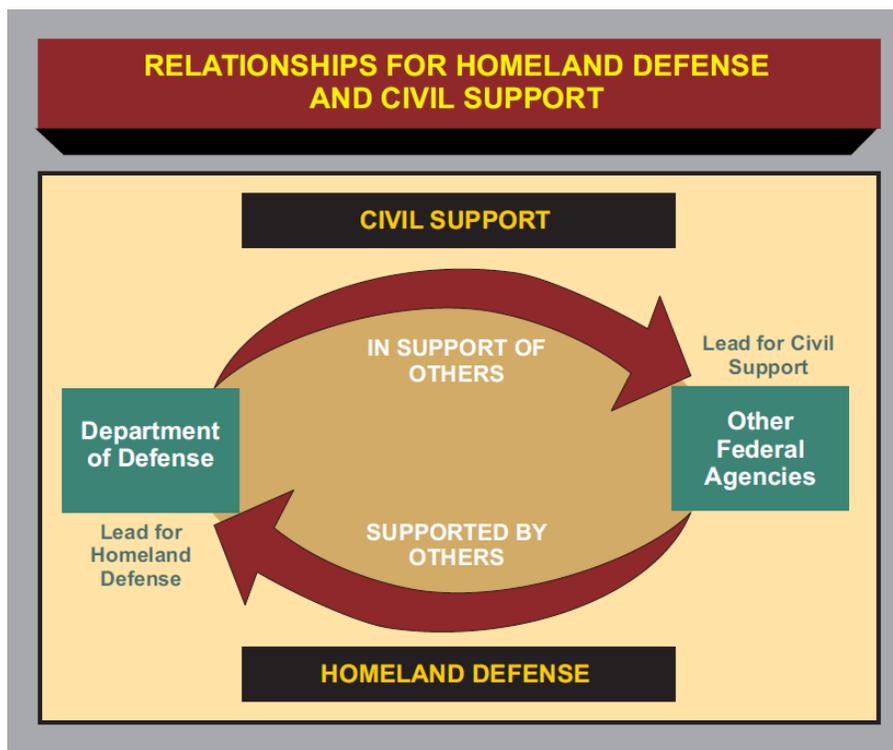


## HOMELAND OPERATIONS CONSTRUCT

Last Updated: 28 April 2016

A key distinction between homeland defense (HD) and defense support of civil authorities (DSCA) is that in HD, the Department of Defense (DOD) is the lead federal agency (LFA), while in DSCA, another federal organization is the LFA, with DOD acting in support (see figure, Relationships for HD and DSCA).<sup>1</sup>



**Relationships for HD and DSCA**

### HOMELAND DEFENSE

HD is defined as “the protection of US sovereignty, territory, domestic population, and critical defense infrastructure against external threats and aggression or other threats as directed by the President.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joint Publication (JP) 3-27, [Homeland Defense](#), and JP 3-28, [Defense Support of Civil Authorities](#)

<sup>2</sup> JP 3-27

For the Air Force, HD operations involve significant [counterair](#) emphasis. In addition, [special operations forces](#) operating to locate, characterize, and secure [weapons of mass destruction](#) (WMD) provide another option to defend and respond against WMD attacks or threats.<sup>3</sup> Cyberspace and space capabilities are continuing to develop, and are ready to support and defend US assets if directed by the President.

## DEFENSE SUPPORT OF CIVIL AUTHORITIES

DSCA, often referred to as civil support, is defined as support provided “in response to requests for assistance from civil authorities, for domestic emergencies, law enforcement support, and other domestic activities, or from qualifying entities for special events.”<sup>4</sup> It includes military assistance for civil law enforcement operations in very limited circumstances. In all these missions, various federal, state, or local civilian agencies are responsible for the management of the particular incident. The National Guard Bureau uses the term National Guard Civil Support, which it defines as the civil support provided to civil authorities by forces in State Active Duty or Title 32 status.<sup>5</sup>

DOD operations within the US are governed by law, including the [Posse Comitatus Act](#), that prohibits use of the military for law enforcement purposes, except as authorized by Congress and the US Constitution. For DSCA, the Air Force’s involvement is supportive, and dependent on a request to the DOD from the designated lead federal agency.

Many of the same forces needed to support military operations overseas and at home may be highly sought by the civil community when a crisis occurs. The Secretary of Defense determines the scope of a DSCA mission so that it will not interfere with higher priority missions. Combat operations remain the highest priority for the Air Force; these operations take precedence over noncombat operations unless directed by higher authority.

### Examples of DSCA Missions

DSCA missions can include support to the Department of Justice in preventing or defeating terrorist attacks, or aiding local agency response to natural disasters and terrorist use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons, among others.

They can also include countering cyberspace attacks against command and control networks and supervisory control and data acquisition applications used on critical infrastructure.

<sup>3</sup> JP 3-40, [Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction](#)

<sup>4</sup> DOD Directive (DODD) 3025.18, [Defense Support of Civil Authorities \(DSCA\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> National Guard Regulation 500-1/Air National Guard Instruction 10-8101, *Military Support to Civil Authorities*.

Air Force organizations that provide support for domestic emergencies use the Air Force incident management system (AFIMS) structure to comply with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, [Management of Domestic Incidents](#). The AFIMS structure mirrors the national incident management system (NIMS) structure used by civil response agencies and outlined in the National Response Framework.<sup>6</sup>

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

The Air Force includes [emergency preparedness](#) (EP) within the homeland operations umbrella as an integral subset mission of both HD and DSCA. EP is defined as “the measures taken in advance of an emergency to reduce the loss of life and property, and to protect a nation’s institutions from all types of hazards through a comprehensive emergency management program of preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery.”<sup>7</sup>

Homeland operations routinely involve a unique collaboration of federal, state, local, and tribal agencies, which present a number of challenges. These agencies may have different resources, levels of experience, and legal considerations. Regional partnerships should also be considered.

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<sup>6</sup> For detailed information, see Air Force Instruction (AFI) 10-2501, *Air Force Emergency Management Program Planning and Operations*.

<sup>7</sup> JP 3-28, [Defense Support of Civil Authorities](#)