



West Virginia National Guard  
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## PRESS RELEASE

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### WVNG update on COVID-19 response

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Currently, nearly 350 members of the West Virginia National Guard (WVNG) are serving the State of West Virginia by augmenting civil authorities through four lines of effort:

- Operationalizing of the event
- Stabilization of the population
- Logistical movement of critical supplies
- Information and analytics to combat the virus

“The WVNG continues to make significant headway in positioning our state for a robust response,” stated Maj. Gen. James Hoyer, the Adjutant General of the WVNG. “Our men and women are showcasing the innovation, determination and driving spirit of our force in their actions to assist the State of West Virginia each and every day. As a state, we must continue to band together and support one another in our actions to stop the spread of this virus and flatten the curve. Every action we take in the coming days and weeks will make a significant impact on our capability to protect our most vulnerable and our healthcare workers who are on the front lines of this battle.”

Through continuous partnerships with our State Board of Education, community and technical colleges and business partners, a prototype N95 mask has been developed that is being refined in order to meet the specifications for the medical community. Collectively, we are also looking into innovative ways to meet the in-demand needs of our West Virginia healthcare system to include providing retail-specific training on proper box handling and PPE training for our medical and first responder community.

Since our last update, our logistical element has provided delivery of seven refrigerated trailers to areas around the state that will support feeding missions in Webster, Clay, Lincoln, Braxton, Pocahontas and Ritchie Counties. Additionally, two other missions were conducted to support distribution of 15,000 pre-packaged meals from Tamarack to Mountain View Elementary in Union and Peterstown Elementary in Peterstown. Ten additional Soldiers began working with the Facing Hunger Food Bank in Huntington today and will work seven days a week assisting with food box preparation and distribution.

As of this report, we have received 7,045 gloves; 330 gowns; 31,200 surgical masks; 1,560 N95 masks and 139 coveralls from the national stockpile. Additional shipments are expected in the next 24 hours and the WVNG will facilitate the distribution of these supplies to healthcare facilities around the state alongside the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHRR) and the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (WVDHSEM).

Our support to educate business partners and the healthcare/first responder communities continue. Beginning tomorrow, the WVNG will provide proper cargo and box handling training to big box retail establishments in the area, with a plan to roll out additional training to restaurants and convenience stores. In Huntington, four Guard personnel will assist with traffic control at a drive through testing site beginning Tuesday.

This week, seven teams of Guardsmen and women are assisting regional epidemiology centers in the data analysis and contact tracing of COVID-19, which will assist state leaders in decision making for response efforts. The southern region response team facilitated the pickup and delivery of an acute care specimen to the state lab today, enabling expedient processing for rapid response, if necessary.

The WVNG has conducted the following missions since coming on duty to support the state in all aspects of COVID-19 preparation and response:

- 18 Soldiers are providing assistance with food box building and distribution at with the Mountaineer Food Bank and with the Facing Hunger Food Bank in Huntington.
- WVNG medical personnel are supporting the COVID-19 hotline in Charleston, answering calls and providing information to concerned citizens. Additional medical personnel are being assigned to provide planning expertise to state agencies in areas such as long-term care facilities, epidemiology and contact tracing support.
- 23 liaison officers from the WVNG are working hand-in-hand with the various West Virginia agencies who are leading the response to COVID-19 to include the Department of Health and Human Resources, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and Department of Education.
- The WVNG's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) Battalion, the 35th Civil Support Team (CST), and the 35th Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) have provided classroom and hands-on personal protective equipment (PPE) instruction to more than 150 first responders and hospital staff from Kentucky and West Virginia, in order to help prepare them on how to minimize cross-contamination through proper wear of, "donning" and "doffing" of PPE.
- Five Soldiers provided capabilities for conducting COVID-19 swabs in Morgantown March 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> utilizing PAPRs PPE that can be decontaminated and reused, greatly reducing the use of disposable, one-time-use PPE.
- Soldiers continue to provide logistical support for delivery of PPE from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHRR) and West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (WVDHSEM) to hospitals and health departments.
- The WVNG has fielded a network of seven epidemiology teams to assist DHHR with COVID-19 tracking and analytics.

- We continue to provide logistical pickup and transfer of PAPRs and canisters to various health care networks in the event of a surge of patients.
- Our CBRN field is facilitating COVID-19 PPE training for retailers, restaurants, convenience stores, health care providers and first responders.
- Four Soldiers are providing traffic control assistance to a drive through testing facility in Huntington.

All current and future missions performed by the WVNG are a part of a coordinated state-level public health preparation and response effort for the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, initiated by Governor Jim Justice, and being led by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

The West Virginia National Guard has a bench of nearly 6,400 experienced and proven Air and Army National Guard professionals who frequently train side-by-side with state and local emergency responders, making them well-suited for domestic operations.

Our National Guard members work and live in every community have a proven record of accomplishment supporting civilian authorities during and after homeland emergencies.

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