

Call out exercise – Operation Civil Assist 2026

Self-employed reserve member information

Overview

At the request of Government, the Governor-General of Australia may issue a call out order to some or all of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Reserves for defence service.

Operation Civil Assist is conducted annually to test Defence's preparedness through the rehearsal of a call out. This means it's not an official call out, but it is exercised like one.

Civil Assist 2026 will run from **18 to 20 September**. Reserve members will be notified by their unit if they are required and members are required to serve unless an *exemption* applies.

Guidance

Working in your business

A reserve member obligated to render defence service on Operation Civil Assist should not be working in their business unless they have received an *exemption*.

Seeking an exemption

Members identified for Operation Civil Assist who believe they cannot render service due to **irreconcilable circumstances** may apply for an *individual exemption*. Requests must be submitted in writing to the member's Commanding Officer and include a statement outlining the reasons for the exemption, which will then be considered by the delegate.

Pay

Service on Operation Civil Assist is performed on reserve service days (RSD) and attracts standard RSD remuneration.

Financial assistance

The Employer Support Payment Scheme (ESPS) provides financial assistance to self-employed members who are absent from their business on eligible periods of defence service.

To support participation in Operation Civil Assist, the CDF has modified some standard ESPS requirements by:

- reducing the minimum continuous service period from five days to two days
- waiving the requirement to nominate a 12-month assessment period, and
- accepting the Principal Source of Income provisions have been met.

Applications must be submitted online via the [ESPS Online Claim System](#).

More information

Scan the website QR code below for further information.

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