



Operation CIVIL ASSIST 2025

Self-employed Reserve members and call out exercises

What you need to know:

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

Operation Civil Assist 2025 will be conducted between **17 and 22 October 2025**.

Reserve members will be notified by their unit if they are required for Operation Civil Assist 2025 and all identified Reserve members are required to render defence unless an *exemption* applies.

Can I still work in my business during the call out?

No. If you are rendering defence service on Operation Civil Assist 2025, you should not be working in your business.

Can I seek an exemption?

Self-employed Reserve members who have a need to be excused from Operation Civil Assist 2025 due to irreconcilable circumstances are to submit an *Individual* exemption request, with a written statement of reasons, to their Commanding Officer. Commanding Officers are to assess each request on a case-by-case basis and submit their recommendation, through the chain of command, to the relevant delegate for consideration.

What support is available for my business?

The Employer Support Payment Scheme (ESPS) provides financial assistance to employers of Reserve members, including self-employed Reserve members, who are absent from the workplace on eligible periods of defence service.

In order to assist with the costs associated with the absence of a self-employed Reserve member during Operation Civil Assist 2025, the CDF has modified some of the normal requirements for ESPS and has:

- set aside the requirement to nominate a 12-month *assessment period*
- set aside the requirement to provide evidence that business provides the member's principal source of income and
- accepted the *Principal Source of Income* (PSI) provisions have been met.

Note. The modifications above are only available for defence service during the a call out and/or call out exercise. All other defence service is subject to normal eligibility requirements.

For self-employed Reserve members in full-time work (38+ hours/week), the ESPS support payment is equivalent to the average weekly wage. For financial year 2025-26, this is \$1,975.80 per week.

Note: A pro-rata support payments may be made for part-time work and higher level ESPS support payments may be made for health and scientific practitioners.

Applications must be made via the *ESPS Online Claim System* at, www.reserveemployersupport.gov.au.

What do I need to know if my business employs other Reserve members?

If your business or organisation also employs other Reserve members who are required to render defence service for Operation Civil Assist 2025, you must meet your legal obligations as their employer.

For general information about being an employer of a Reserve member, please visit, www.reserveemployersupport.gov.au.

For specific information about being an employer of a Reserve member rendering defence service on Operation Civil Assist 2025, please see our fact sheet, "Employers of Reserve members and call out exercises" – which is also available from our website.

Who can I contact if I need more assistance?

Units

Your unit is always a good place to start. You know your unit and its people and they may be able to point you in the right direction.

Defence Service Centre (DSC)

If you're not sure who to contact or how to go about getting assistance, the DSC is a great resource. Staff at the DSC can put you in contact with relevant Defence support services, including ADF Reserves and Employer Support.

The DSC is able to assist you with all general enquiries, personal administration services, human resources, payroll group certificates, service records and honours and awards.

Phone: 1800 DEFENCE (1800 333 362)

Email: yourCustomer.Service@defence.gov.au

Australian Defence Force Reserves and Employer Support

ADF Reserves and Employer Support (ADFRES) provides support to the ADF Reserves, employers and the community. The ADFRES mission is to enhance reservist contribution to Defence capability through mutually beneficial relationships, promoting the benefits of Reserve service and informing policy related to reservists.

Further information about ADFRES services may be found on our website, www.reserveemployersupport.gov.au.

Where can I get more information?

PH: 1800 DEFENCE (1800 333 362) E: yourCustomer.Service@defence.gov.au W: www.reserveemployersupport.gov.au