

# Total defence – all of us together

Sweden may well be safer than many other countries, but that doesn't mean risks to our security and independence don't exist. Sweden's combined armed forces exist to protect and defend the country, our freedom, and our right to live as we want. But we all have a part to play if Sweden is threatened.



## Total defence

The term “total defence” denotes all of the activities needed to prepare Sweden for war, and comprises both military and civil defence. Civil defence refers to society as a whole's resilience in the event of the threat of war and actual war.

## What could threaten us?

The security policy situation in our region has deteriorated in recent years. And the global situation is also regarded as unstable.

Sweden is increasingly affected by events in the outside world, and if a security crisis or armed conflict were to occur in the Baltic region or other parts of Europe, we will be affected. If this happens, we cannot exclude the possibility that military displays of force, or the threat thereof, could be aimed at Sweden. Sweden's total defence is designed to counter an armed attack or other acts of war against our country.

## Civil defence

Civil defence refers to the work carried out by central government agencies, local authorities, regions, private companies, and voluntary organisations to protect the civilian population and to ensure that health care services and transport systems, for example, work. Sweden's civil defence is also tasked with supporting Sweden's Armed Forces.

## Military defence

Sweden's military defence comprises the Swedish Armed Forces and the Home Guard, together with a number of other authorities. The Armed Forces defend our territory and our borders.



## What are we defending?

We are not just defending our country's borders and our territory: we are also defending all of the values that form the basis for our society. We must also be able to protect and defend human rights, freedom of speech, and democracy.

**See overleaf to find out more about your role in the event of the threat of war or actual war.**



Swedish Civil  
Contingencies  
Agency

## You are part of Sweden's total defence

Sweden has what is known as "total defence duty". This means that everyone who lives here and is aged between 16 and 70 can be called up to assist in various ways in the event of the threat of war and actual war. This might involve driving different means of transport, working in the health and medical care sector, or in a primary school, or otherwise helping ensure that society functions as well as possible.

If you already work in one of society's key roles, you might be able to continue going to work as normal. Everyone has a duty to contribute and everyone is needed.

## When society isn't working as normal

If there is a threat of war, or war actually breaks out, many of society's normal services will be limited due to substantial resources having to be invested in defending the country. Imports of important goods might not work, store shelves may stand empty, and it could be difficult to get medication. IT attacks could wipe out electricity supplies and the mobile phone network. Think about how you and the people around you would handle a situation in which society doesn't work as we are used to it doing.

## How prepared are you?

In a societal emergency, you need to be able to be self-sufficient for a few days, or for up to a week or more. The most important things you will need are food, drinking water, heat, and the ability to receive important information. If you're prepared, you will be helping ensure that the whole country is better equipped to handle serious systemic stress.

## Receiving important information

When the situation is serious, you need to be able to receive important information from the authorities and to follow media reports. Make sure you have a radio that works without an electricity supply. Listen to Sveriges Radio's radio station, P4, or watch Sveriges Television's TV channels. They must continue to be able to broadcast societal information, even when society's normal functioning is disrupted.

## Be on the alert for false information

When there is a threat of war, or actual war, false information and propaganda can spread like wildfire. Nation states and organisations already use misleading information in an attempt to influence our values and actions. Be on the alert, consider the source of the information, and think about the information you share on social media.

## Get involved in your own way

If you want to make an even bigger contribution to Sweden's total defence, you might consider joining a voluntary defence organisation. These organisations have specific duties in the event of a crisis or a war, and there are many organisations from which to choose. Find out more at [msb.se/ffo](https://msb.se/ffo).

You could also launch your own initiatives in the area where you live, at your school, in your workplace, or in some other setting.



### Consider the source of the information

- Are these facts or opinions?
- What is the purpose of the information?
- Is the source credible?
- Is the information repeated elsewhere?
- Is this new or old information and why is it being provided right now?