



# **Gov. Pritzker Activates Illinois National Guard At Request Of City Of Chicago To Help Protect Communities**

April 20 2021 9:25 AM

CHICAGO — At the request of the City of Chicago, Governor JB Pritzker is activating 125 personnel from the Illinois National Guard to stand by to support the Chicago Police Department with a verdict expected in the trial of Derek Chauvin. Members of the Guard will deploy to Chicago beginning tomorrow, April 20, to pre-position and support the Chicago Police Department as needed.

The Illinois National Guard will carry out a limited mission to help manage street closures and will not interfere with peaceful protestors exercising their First Amendment rights, much the same role as Guard members played in previous deployments.

“At the request of Mayor Lightfoot, I am activating members of the Illinois National Guard to support the city in keeping our communities safe,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “It is critical that those who wish to peacefully protest against the systemic racism and injustice that holds back too many of our communities continue to be able to do so. Members of the Guard and the Illinois State Police will support the City of Chicago’s efforts to protect the rights of peaceful protestors and keep our families safe.”

“Our greatest priority at all times is ensuring the safety and security of the public,” said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. “While there is no actionable intelligence at this time, we want to be fully prepared out of an abundance of caution. Our city has a long history of peacefully expressing its First Amendment rights and I encourage residents to exercise their rights to free speech this coming week thoughtfully, respectfully and peacefully.”

“The Illinois National Guard Soldiers assigned to this mission are trained, equipped and prepared to assist law enforcement authorities with protecting lives and property of Illinois residents,” said Maj. Gen. Rich Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard.

Governor Pritzker also directed the Illinois State Police (ISP) to support the Chicago Police Department with additional troopers. The troopers will work closely with the Chicago Police Department and other local law enforcement, supporting efforts to keep the community safe.

“The Illinois State Police will work closely with Chicago Police Department, other local law enforcement and the Illinois National Guard to protect peaceful protests and keep the community safe,” said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. “We appreciate the assistance of these agencies in our continuing mission to protect people, peaceful protests and property.”

The State Emergency Operations Center is monitoring operations throughout the state and is poised to fulfill requests from local governments, if they arise. All Soldiers will be tested for COVID-19 prior to deployment and they will be offered a COVID-19 vaccine. Additionally, Soldiers will be outfitted with personal protective equipment, such as face shields and masks, to address the threats of our current COVID environment.

Soldiers assigned to this mission are from the Illinois National Guard’s 33rd Military Police Battalion. These individuals are specially trained in riot control operations. The 33rd Military Police Battalion is comprised of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, based in Machesney Park, the 233rd Military Police Company, based in Springfield, the 333rd Military Police Company, based in Freeport, and the 933rd Military Police Company, based in Fort Sheridan. The battalion is drawing Soldiers from each of these companies.