

The Army's Sustainable Readiness Model (SRM)

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The Army's Definition of Readiness

The Army defines readiness as the capability of its forces to conduct the full range of military operations, including the defeat of all enemies regardless of the threats they pose. In this regard, readiness is a function of how well units are *manned, equipped, trained, and led*.

Past Army Readiness Models

Readiness models are the means by which the Army generates the forces that are then made available to Combatant Commanders for operations. From the 1980s until 2001, the Army employed a *Tiered Readiness Model* with units manned, equipped, and trained at different levels (tiers) and was focused on fighting potential overseas adversaries with Reserve Components (RC) (Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve) relegated largely to the role of strategic reserve (i.e., to be employed in the event of a crisis or emergency that exceeded the Regular Army's capacity). In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Army adopted the *Army Force Generation Model (ARFORGEN)*, designed to provide fully manned, equipped, and trained forces for the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2014, as the United States began to substantially decrease troop levels in Iraq and Afghanistan and focused more on threats from Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran, the Army determined ARFORGEN was no longer an adequate readiness model. The Army began implementing the *Sustainable Readiness Model (SRM)* in FY2017.

Army Force Generation Model (ARFORGEN)

ARFORGEN was a progressive force generation model designed primarily to generate ready forces to meet predictable deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. ARFORGEN consisted of three distinct cycles through which all units progressed in order to achieve a prescribed level of readiness.

- The post-deployment **Reset** cycle in which units returning from extended deployments would adopt a minimal manning and equipping profile and then begin to increase manning, equipping, and training, thereby improving overall readiness incrementally.
- During the **Train/Ready** cycle, units would continue to receive additional personnel and equipment and train up through squad/section, platoon, and company levels, with the goal of reaching either a battalion or brigade level of proficiency. Units in the Train/Ready cycle could be deployed in the event of an unforeseen requirement, depending on the mission and the unit's level of readiness.
- In the final cycle, the **Available** cycle, units were considered fully ready and available for deployment for known requirements such as Iraq or Afghanistan, as well as for contingency operations and major training exercises.

Under ARFORGEN, most Active Component (AC) units operated on a three-year cycle and RC units were on a five-year cycle (AC: two years preparation, one year available. RC: four years preparation, one year available). Low-density, high-demand units—Aviation and Civil Affairs, for example—cycled faster.

Army Sustainable Readiness Model (SRM)

The Army's goal under SRM is to achieve two-thirds (66%) combat readiness for global contingencies for the Total Army by 2023. Unlike ARFORGEN, there are no fixed progressive cycles for Regular Army units. The RC will remain on a five-year cycle. Under SRM, there are three descriptive modules:

- The **Mission Module** constitutes units allocated to or assigned to an ordered mission. These units are validated, fully resourced, and immediately ready to conduct Decisive Action operations if required. The Army describes Decisive Action as "the continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities' tasks."
- In the **Ready Module**, units are achieving or sustaining a baseline level of Decisive Action proficiency and the ability to respond to contingencies. These units can be deployed on missions if required.
- The **Prepare Module** consists of units rebuilding readiness and not involved in missions.

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The Army contends SRM will provide them with greater flexibility than ARFORGEN in addressing contingency operations and prioritizing unit readiness. Other perceived benefits of SRM include

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- stabilizing manning to avoid abrupt readiness declines;
- resourcing units to sustain higher levels of readiness over longer periods of time;
- providing Army leadership with greater readiness visibility among units and permitting forecasting of readiness out to the next three to four years; and
- better informing Army resourcing and budgeting decisions.

Potential Issues for Congress

- How does SRM specifically improve support to Combatant Commanders?
- Under SRM, RC units are maintained on a five-year cycle. How does this affect RC availability to support ongoing operations as well as contingencies—particularly one or more Decisive Action contingencies?
- How does SRM better support the Army Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) Process than ARFORGEN?
- What are the modernization implications of "resourcing units to sustain higher levels of readiness over longer periods of time" under SRM?