

**The Swedish Women's Voluntary  
Defence Organisation (Svenska Lottakåren)**

is a non-party political, voluntary defence organisation that recruits and trains women to serve in civil emergencies and in Sweden's military defence. Every year "Lottas" perform roles in national and international operations. The Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation is the only female defence organisation in Sweden and is organized in over 100 local corps.



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THE SWEDISH WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY DEFENCE ORGANISATION:

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# CIVIL EMERGENCY PLANNING IN SWEDEN

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## What is civil emergency planning?

We live in a vulnerable society at a time when threats and risks don't recognise national borders. Serious epidemics, terrorist threats, extreme weather conditions and IT system failure are all examples of events that we have to be able to deal with and also try to prevent.

Civil emergency planning is about the ability of you, me and our whole society to prevent, resist and manage extraordinary events before, during and after a crisis.

## One agency takes overall responsibility for coordination

In Sweden there is a long-held tradition of collaboration between different government agencies and organisations at every level of society. This is our small country's way of creating resources. Sweden's ability to deal with civil emergencies rests on this basic principle.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) develops and supports society's ability to prevent, manage and monitor accidents and emergencies. The agency has a government mandate.

MSB is tasked with working towards a strongly protected and well-prepared society in which everyone takes responsibility. The principle of responsibility means that in practice MSB works with both the private sector and the public sector. Much of this work, vital to society, is currently in the hands of and run by the business community.

## The Swedish civil emergency system

Our Swedish system focuses on prevention and on learning from experience. An emergency often affects several sectors of society, which means that measures have to be in place within each sector and across sector boundaries. Our preparedness for emergencies is therefore built up among many different players in society, both private and public bodies alike. This demands cooperation and coordination.

The role and work of the municipalities is vital to building preparedness for civil emergencies at a local level. Consequently we all have a responsibility for reducing risks and for being better prepared should a crisis occur. This is what civil emergency planning is all about.

## The fundamental principle of responsibility

Work on civil emergency planning within society is based on the principle of responsibility, which means that whoever is responsible for a business or organisation under normal conditions bears that same responsibility in emergencies or cases of war. The principle of responsibility also means that every player is responsible for working with others. MSB has a supervisory responsibility which involves checking and monitoring the work carried out by municipalities, county administrative boards, other agencies and private companies.

## MSB trains more people

The agency provides courses and training programmes for private industry, the public sector and organisations. MSB is also responsible for regular, large-scale, cross-sector training exercises.

## Municipalities and county councils have a major part to play

By law, municipalities and county councils must draw up and adopt a plan setting out how an extraordinary event is to be handled. The plan is built up by carrying out a risk and vulnerability

analysis, taking any measures to reduce vulnerability, reviewing the emergency organisation, training staff and carrying out training exercises. This creates the organisation and ability required to deal with even the unthinkable.

## Voluntary resource groups and pooled resources

To succeed in this task, municipalities, county councils and other government agencies work in partnership with voluntary organisations. One of these collaborative forms is voluntary resource groups. A voluntary resource group is called in at the request of the municipality's executive when an extraordinary event occurs, for example to help with evacuation, information, administration and other practical tasks.

A voluntary resource group comprises staff from different voluntary organisations, including the Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation (Lottakåren). They have been recruited because they have the experience, training and personal skills required to cope with the tasks the group may face.

Another type of cooperation are pooled resources of trained staff assistants. These are county-wide and the Lottas included will have received special training in leadership support and information management.

## The Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation's role in crisis management

When a municipality has a well-drawn-up action plan that guarantees systematic safety work with broad participation and widespread support from the local population, staff are needed to put it into practice. These staff are often trained personnel from the Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation. When municipalities and county administrative boards are our clients, a contract is drawn up regulating the type of trained personnel the Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation will provide in the event of a crisis.

## The Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation trains specialists in crisis management

The Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation is one of Sweden's voluntary defence organisations that play a part in Sweden's civil emergency planning and defence. We recruit and train women looking to volunteer to do their bit for a safer society. The foremost aim of the Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation's civil emergency training courses is to provide fundamental skills in crisis management, leadership and practical preparation for operations. The training courses strengthen the client organisation in terms of knowledge, enabling you to develop and train in the areas that interest you.

## Become a member of the Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation

Women of all ages who are registered in Sweden are welcome to join the Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation as member. As a member you have access to activities arranged by your local corps and courses open to all members.

To be able to train for a contract in support of civil emergencies you need to be a Swedish citizen. The contract is not a full time job.

**Read more** about our crisis management training at [www.svenskalottakaren.se](http://www.svenskalottakaren.se)