

Governmental Hazardous Waste

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)

What are UXO?

UXO is an acronym for unexploded ordnance. UXO may result from past or present military use of munitions in conventional or chemical warfare, or from live-fire training and testing. UXO are considered to be the most dangerous category of military munitions. The public should consider any munitions or suspect munitions encountered as UXO and as such, extremely dangerous, until proven otherwise.

Military munitions come in all types and configurations which include the following: small arms munitions, projectiles, cartridges, bombs, rockets, pyrotechnics, grenades, blasting caps, fuzes, simulators, and explosives. Military munitions are designed to kill or injure enemy forces or damage enemy equipment. Most munitions contain primarily explosive components; however some munitions contain chemical agents and some form of energetic material such as propellants, explosives, or pyrotechnic mixes. When these military munitions do not function properly or as intended (i.e., do not explode as designed), they are considered to be unexploded ordnance or UXO.

Many people also refer to UXO as “duds”. Regardless, they should NEVER be touched, disturbed or moved because they can explode or cause serious injury or death.

Where would I encounter UXO?

Areas that the military used for live-fire training and testing of weapons are most likely to contain UXO, although UXO may also be found in other areas on and around current and former installations. In addition, former battleground (e.g., Revolutionary War, Civil War) locations may also contain UXO. Sometimes, signs are posted which mark the areas on active military installations and bases. For inactive military installations and bases, the public should check the deed, applicable covenants, and other property records for the property’s past uses.

What are Souvenirs?

It is also important to remember that sometimes people who have served in the military or who have worked on or visited battlegrounds, military installations or bases may have taken munitions home as souvenirs. These items, which may be found anywhere, can be extremely dangerous. Please do not touch the souvenir and call 911 immediately.

What should I do if I see UXO?

Remember the 3 R’s: **Recognize, Retreat, Report.**

If you see (**recognize**) what you believe to be military munitions, a UXO, or a piece of munition scrap, the most important thing to remember is DO NOT TOUCH IT. Immediately exit (**retreat**) the area in the same direction from which you entered. Call (**report**) 911 to report the item(s) to the proper authorities for response.