



Munition Safety

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

Munition Safety

When military munitions do not function as intended during use, they become unexploded ordnance (UXO). Some people consider these “duds” and think they are safe to handle, but that can be a costly mistake to make. Treat all UXO as live munition and never handle it.

UXO result from our military’s use of munitions during live-fire training or testing. UXO are considered the most dangerous category of military munitions. Although the conditions that define military munitions as UXO are specific, the public should consider any munitions or suspect munitions that are encountered as UXO and extremely dangerous. It is important to remember the three R’s of munitions safety when you think you may have come across UXO — **Recognize, Retreat and Report.**



Munitions can be clean or rusty and may be hard to recognize. Even old munitions can be very dangerous.

After decades of activities required to maintain our military’s readiness, UXO and other military munitions may be present at many active and former military installations across the country. Although military munitions will most likely be found in areas that the Department of Defense currently uses or used in the past, they could be encountered anywhere.

UXO Can Include:

- Bombs
- Artillery projectiles, rockets and mortars
- Land mines and grenades
- Guided missiles
- Torpedoes and depth charges
- Flares and pyrotechnic devices
- Bulk explosives and propellants

The Three R’s of Munitions Safety



- **Recognize** – There is no way to describe UXO. UXO can come in many shapes and sizes. It can be rusty or look like new. It can be out in the open, hidden in bushes or partially buried. The important thing to remember is that if you see what you think is UXO then you should retreat from the area and report it to authorities.
- **Retreat** – Make sure to never touch UXO, as they can be extremely dangerous. If you see UXO, immediately leave the area and do not disturb the item.
- **Report** – If you come across what might be UXO, you should leave it be and report it to your local law enforcement by calling 911. They will be able to take care of the item. Do not use your cell phone near the item. Call 911 after retreating from the UXO.

Safety Tips When Coming Across UXO



UXO can be hard to notice, especially when it has had years to settle into place. Make sure to be aware of the possible UXO in places like deep grass, heavy foliage or thick brush.

- **Never** approach a suspected explosive ordnance item.
- **Remember** you can come across UXO anywhere, but make sure to be especially aware in areas with signs warning of the dangers posed by UXO.
- **Never** attempt to disassemble, clean or handle any UXO.
- **Never** keep found UXO as souvenirs or “trophyes.” If you know someone who keeps UXO and believes it is harmless, explain to them how dangerous it really is.
- **Never** transmit radio signals near UXO, this includes cell phones. Retreat from UXO before calling law enforcement officials.
- **Report** ordnance to law enforcement officials.

Additional Information

- Contact the Louisville District Public Affairs Office:
(502) 315-6773
- Visit the Formerly Used Defense Sites Program website:
https://eko.usace.army.mil/usacecop/pub/ecop/what_we_do/fuds/.



Even small munitions can be extremely dangerous and should be treated with caution. If you see UXO get away from it and report it to local law enforcement.