



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

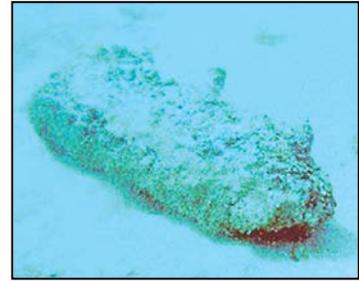
# Corps Facts

**SUBJECT: Underwater Munitions Safety**

## Background

The military has conducted training and combat operations at sea for centuries. Also, prior to 1970 the military disposed of excess, obsolete or unserviceable munitions at sea.

During activities at sea, like diving, commercial fishing, clamming or dredging, it is important to be aware of the potential to encounter these military munitions at sea. Munitions are designed to kill and destroy and are not safe to handle. It is important to take special safety precautions in the event that you encounter them at sea.



**Underwater munitions can be very dangerous whether they look like new, or old and rusty.**

## The Three R's of Munitions Safety



**Recognize** – Munitions encountered at sea can look like brand new weapons, they can resemble a block of rust, or they can look like anything in between. It is important to note that no matter what munitions look like, they can be extremely dangerous and should be taken very seriously.

**Retreat** – If possible, you should not bring munitions onboard your ship. If it does end up onboard, you must decide whether to carefully jettison the item or to keep it onboard to avoid any unnecessary contact with it. Never bring discovered munitions into a port.

You can contact the U.S. Coast Guard for assistance if you are within two to three hours of land. Otherwise you can request assistance through Channel 16—156. 800 MHz.

**Report** – If you encounter munitions at sea you should stay in the vicinity and report the incident to the U.S. Coast Guard. They will need to know the ship's location, when the item was found, as well as where it was dropped back into the water if the two are different. Ships should also let the U.S. Coast Guard know how they came across the munitions, such as caught in a net while fishing or discovered while dredging, etc.

If you inadvertently bring munitions into a port, call 911 for assistance.

## Underwater Munitions Safety Tips

No matter what you decide to do when you encounter munitions at sea, you should remain in the area and await assistance.

If you find munitions and are able to keep from bringing them onboard

- Immediately stop all operations.
- Do not bring the munitions or the gear they have been caught in, onboard if possible.
- Do not transport the munitions alongside the ship, as waves may cause contact with the side of the ship.
- Try to safely lower the munitions back into the water and note the location so you can report it to the U.S. Coast Guard.



**Underwater munitions can be big or small. No matter the size, munitions can be extremely dangerous**

### **If you find munitions that you accidentally brought on board**

- Immediately stop all operations.
- Keep the crew away from the munitions.
- You must decide whether to jettison the munitions or to carefully stow them.
  - If you jettison the munitions, note the location and report it to the U.S. Coast Guard.
  - If you stow it onboard, keep it away from heat sources or places with heavy vibration. Cover and/or wet the munitions so they do not dry out and to prevent metal parts from deteriorating.

## For More Information

For more information contact the Louisville District Public Affairs Office at (502) 315-6773.