

These guidance notes have been prepared by QinetiQ's Subject Matter Experts (SME) here at MOD Eskmeals to inform you of best practice in the event of an unidentified object being discovered.

What is Unexploded Ordnance?

"Explosive Ordnance (Live ammunition) that has been primed, armed or other wise prepared for action; and which has been dropped (aircraft bomb or sea mine), fired (gun or howitzer), launched (missile or rocket), projected (mortar bomb), placed (anti-tank/personnel mine), thrown (grenade) which has failed to function at the target or failed to have been activated, it may also be placed (deliberately buried or sea dumped) or illegally retained. such items constitute a hazard to operations, installations, personnel or material."

Ammunition and Explosive Regulations
Volume 3, pamphlet 21, part 3.

They remain unexploded by non activation, malfunction, faulty design or for any other cause (buried, dumped at sea or illegally retained).

Such items constitute a hazard to operations, installations, personnel or material. There have also been instances where a member of the public has picked something up and removed it, totally unaware of the danger they are placing themselves and others in.

Examples of Unexploded Ordnance



Actions Upon Discovery of Unexploded Ordnance on Land

Do



- Stop immediate entry into the area
- Evacuate employees and public to a safe distance (200 metres)
- Tape and mark near to the item
- Provide details (description) of the item found, its location and the circumstances surrounding its discovery
- Prevent the public from being overly inquisitive
- Ring the Police on 101.

Do not



- Touch, handle or tamper with the item
- Move the item to a "safe place" so that operations may continue
- Take the item off a site
- Hide the item so that operations may continue
- Allow anybody to enter the danger area or approach the item

Do not be complacent or contemptuous with any item that appears to be innocuous.
DO NOT HANDLE THE ITEM.

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Discovering Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) or Suspicious Object



Responsibilities for the Clearance of Unexploded Ordnance

This is a Local Authority Police responsibility but is delegated by the police through the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

MOD task the appropriate Naval, Army or RAF Explosives Ordnance (Bomb) Disposal Teams to clear UXO dependant on the type of ammunition and where it is located.

Test and Evaluation sites such as MOD Eskmeals are permitted by the MOD to utilise their own competent UXO disposal staff.

Identification of Unexploded Ordnance on Land

Your description can assist the police upon discovery of an unidentified object, the following factors may assist you in the identification process, although it is worth remembering that UXO that has been buried or sub-merged for any length of time may not resemble any recognisable item.

- Are there any visible markings: embossed, engraved, stencilled or stamped?
- What is the general shape and size: pointed nose, flat base, round cylindrical, length, diameter etc?
- What is the general body colour?
- Are there any visible fittings such as: a driving band, a fuse, a venturi, a fly off lever, a safety pin, fins or lugs?

Please remember if in doubt, assume it is UXO and treat it as such.

The Non Emergency Response number is 101 from any telephone.

Note: Sea/Marine dumping is an official term used to describe volumes of munitions which were disposed of at sea following World War I & World War II. The Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by dumping of wastes and other matter 1972, commonly called the "London Convention" or LC' 72" and also abbreviated as Marine Dumping, is an agreement to control pollution of the sea by dumping and to encourage regional agreements supplementary to the Convention. It entered into force in 1975.

Actions Upon Discovery of a UXO at Sea

- Fishing Vessels (FVs) suspecting they have an item or ordnance in their trawls should reduce speed to a maximum of 2 knots while keeping their nets at a depth deeper than 10 metres and transit to a safe area. The item should not be lowered to the seabed within 2 nautical miles of a pipeline, undersea cables, offshore installation or traffic separation area. It should be placed in less than 30 metres of water if possible. Consultation with local Coastguard will help designate a safe area into which the item can be lowered.
- An accurate latitude and longitude or bearing and range from a prominent land or sea mark (even if marked with buoy) needs to be recorded and the details of the item, the depth and its position passed to a Coastguard.
- If an item is inadvertently brought onto a vessel, it should be secured on deck and kept wet. The vessel should immediately inform the Coastguard and ask for maritime Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) advice. Attempting to lift and swing the item outboard to return the item to the sea will significantly increase the risk to the vessel and her crew.

The following procedures should be followed:

- The item, SHOULD BE KEPT COVERED UP AND DAMPED DOWN. This is important because any explosive which may have become exposed to the atmosphere is liable to become very sensitive to shock if allowed to dry out.
- Great care should be taken to avoid bumping the weapon. If retained on board it should be stowed on deck, away from heat and vibration, firmly chocked and lashed to prevent movement.
- Do communicate – a ship with an explosive weapon on board, or in her gear, should warn other ships in the vicinity giving her position and, if applicable, intended position of jettisoning.

- If the skipper has concerns as to the continued safety of the vessel and crew/passengers, they should discuss the situation with the Coastguard.
- Fishing vessels (FVs) operating within UK waters are able to gain direct contact Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) operators who are on duty 24 hours a day and can be reached via the Coastguard.
- Under no circumstances should attempts be made to clean the weapon for identification purposes, open it or tamper with it in any way.
- Suspect items should not be subjected to any form of impact or given sudden jolts. Where possible, it should be lowered carefully to the seabed and marked with a buoy.
- On no account should the item be dropped from the surface by cutting away or opening nets – this could cause the object to explode on contact with the surface or the seabed.
- The weapon should be kept on board for as short a time as possible. If within two or three hours steaming of the coastline the safest measure will generally be to run towards the nearest port and lie in a safe distance off shore to wait the arrival of a Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should the vessel bring the mine or weapon into harbour.