

To ensure force readiness and defend our nation, the Department of Defense (DoD) conducted live-fire training and testing of weapon systems at active and former military installations throughout the United States. As a result, some properties that DoD used for these activities potentially contain munitions contamination. While DoD has made great progress in addressing the potential hazards associated with munitions-related activities, much remains to be done.

In accordance with the statutory requirements established under the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2002, DoD was required to develop a method for assigning a relative priority for response actions to defense sites containing munitions contamination. In order to address this requirement, the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations & Environment) convened a workgroup with representatives from the DoD Components knowledgeable in explosives safety and environmental restoration. The workgroup led the effort to develop the Munitions Response Site Prioritization Protocol (the Protocol) by conducting preliminary discussions and interviews, reviewing numerous publications and methods, and consulting with stakeholders (federal regulators, state regulators, tribal representatives, and community members) throughout the process to gather their input and address their concerns.

DoD published the Protocol as a final rule on October 5, 2005 to assign a relative priority to each munitions response site (MRS). The relative priority assigned to each MRS is based on an evaluation of hazards posed by explosives, chemical warfare materiel, and munitions constituents or other chemical constituents. An MRS's relative priority will be the primary factor determining the site's sequencing decision for response action. However, DoD also considers economic, programmatic, and stakeholder concerns when sequencing MRSs.

To ensure consistent application of the Protocol, DoD hosted seven training workshops at locations across the country to Service personnel and involved stakeholders. Participation at the workshops included both persons knowledgeable about the development of the Protocol and those for whom the subject was new. Feedback from the training sessions was used to finalize the training materials, including student and instructor presentations. In addition, DoD developed a technical Primer to provide detailed information on the development of the Protocol, requirements for its application, regulatory agency and stakeholder involvement, terminology, and data management.

DoD will apply the Protocol to all sites listed in the MMRP site inventory and use it as the basis for DoD's national MMRP risk management strategy.