

Munitions Response Site Prioritization Protocol

Background Information

Background information on DoD's past use of military munitions and its development of the Munitions Response Site Prioritization Protocol is provided below.

Past Use of Military Munitions

To ensure their readiness to protect and defend our nation, our Military forces conduct live-fire training and testing with weapon systems at ranges throughout the United States. As a result, some properties that DoD has historically used to meet its live-fire training and testing requirements have been found or are suspected to contain unexploded ordnance, discarded military munitions, or munitions constituents. Where unexploded ordnance, discarded military munitions, or munitions constituents are present but the land use is incompatible with their presence, DoD's challenge on these locations is to:

- Protect human health and the environment
- Identify where and how much of this material is still present at munitions response sites
- Set priorities for conducting response actions at these munitions response sites
- Conduct necessary response actions for these munitions response sites.

As one part of addressing this challenge, DoD has established the Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP), a comprehensive program within the Defense Environmental Restoration Program, to address the potential health and safety hazards present at munitions response sites. Many aspects of the MMRP are under development. The Munitions Response Site Prioritization Protocol is one of DoD's efforts within the MMRP.

Requirement to Develop the Munitions Response Site Prioritization Protocol Factors Identified in Section 311

Section 311 of the Fiscal Year 2002 National Defense Authorization Act, codified at 10 U.S.C. §2710(b), requires DoD to develop, in consultation with representatives of the States and Indian Tribes, a proposed and final protocol for assigning to each munitions response site a relative priority for munitions responses.

Based on the requirements provided for in 10 U.S.C. §2710(b), DoD is accomplishing the following:

- Preparing, in consultation with the States and Indian Tribes, a proposed and final protocol per the requirements in Section 311 of the Fiscal Year 2002 National Defense Authorization Act
- Publishing the proposed protocol and providing a formal 60-day public comment period
- Applying the final protocol to munitions response sites listed in its inventory.

In the statute, Congress identified specific factors that may be considered when prioritizing sites for response actions. DoD did consider these factors during development of the Protocol and requested stakeholders to suggest any additional factors. These factors include:

- Whether there are known, versus suspected, unexploded ordnance, discarded military munitions, or munitions constituents on all or any portion of the defense site and the types of unexploded ordnance, discarded military munitions, or munitions constituents present or suspected to be present
- Whether public access to the munitions response site is controlled, and the effectiveness of these controls
- The potential for direct human contact with unexploded ordnance, discarded military munitions, or munitions constituents at the munitions response site and evidence of people entering the site
- Whether a response action has been or is being undertaken at the defense site under the Formerly Used Defense Sites program or other program
- The planned or mandated dates for transfer of the defense site from military control
- The extent of any documented incidents involving unexploded ordnance, discarded military munitions, or munitions constituents at or from the defense site, including incidents involving explosions, discoveries, injuries, reports, and investigations
- The potential for drinking water contamination or the release of munitions constituents into the air
- The potential for destruction of sensitive eco-systems and damage to natural resources.

Summary of the Final Protocol

Taking into consideration various factors relating to safety and environmental hazard potential, the Protocol reflects that the

priority assigned should be based on the overall conditions at each location. The priority assigned to each munitions response site will be made publicly available and updated annually in the DoD inventory.

The Protocol evaluates the following potential explosive safety and environmental hazards:

- Explosive hazards posed by unexploded ordnance and discarded military munitions
- Hazards associated with the effects of chemical warfare materiel
- The chronic health and environmental hazards posed by munitions constituents or other chemical constituents.

DoD recognizes the different hazards inherent to each class of materials. To address these differences, the Protocol has three hazard evaluation modules, each of which is specific to one type of hazard.

- Explosive hazards are evaluated using the Explosives Hazard Evaluation (EHE) module
- CWM-related hazards are evaluated using the Chemical Warfare Materiel Hazard Evaluation (CHE) module
- Health and environmental hazards posed by munitions constituents are evaluated using the Health Hazard Evaluation (HHE) module.

The sequencing of munitions response sites for environmental restoration activities will be based primarily on the priority assigned using this Protocol, but also may reflect other relevant information, such as stakeholder concerns, economic issues, and program management considerations.