Munitions Response Site Prioritization Protocol

Stakeholder Fact Sheet

Background

For decades, the Department of Defense (DoD) has used military munitions in training and testing to ensure force readiness and demilitarized munitions found to be excess, obsolete, or unserviceable. Munitions contamination remaining from DoD activities may present explosive, chemical agent, human health, and environmental hazards. Whenever a former range or disposal site is put to another use, actions must be taken to ensure remediation of any hazards.

DoD has been responding to properties that were known or suspected to contain munitions contamination for many years. In 2001, the Department established the Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) to address the unique hazards posed by past military munitions-related activities. As of September 2006, DoD has identified over 3,300 munitions response sites (MRSs) eligible for the MMRP that may require response actions (e.g., investigation, removal actions, and remedial actions). The Department does not have the capability to address all MRSs at once and must prioritize sites for response actions based on risk to human health and the environment.

Munitions Reponse Sites (MRSs)		
1,333 on active installations	318 on BRAC installations	1,658 on FUDS properties

The Protocol

DoD convened a workgroup with personnel knowledgeable in explosive safety and/or environmental restoration to build the framework for prioritizing MRSs. This workgroup engaged in a collaborative process with the States, American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, and federal agencies to develop a methodology to assign a relative priority for response activities at each MRS in DoD's inventory (the MRS inventory).

On October 5, 2005, DoD published the Munitions Response Site Prioritization Protocol (referred to as the Protocol), codified at 32 CFR 179. The Protocol directs each Component to apply a prioritization methodology to determine a relative priority for MRSs located at active installations, Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) installations, Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS), or other properties no longer under DoD control. The priority assigned is based on the overall conditions at each site, taking into consideration various factors relating to the potential environmental and safety hazards.

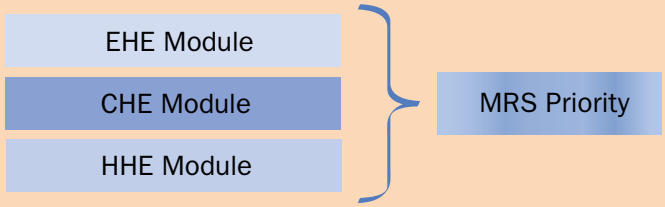
Web Site

The MRS inventory is updated annually and published in the Defense Environmental Programs Annual Report to Congress:

http://deparc.egovservices.net/deparc/do/mmrp

The risk posed by potential hazards present at an MRS are captured through the Protocol's central feature, three hazard evaluation modules:

- Explosive Hazard Evaluation (EHE) Module: provides the approach for assigning a relative priority to an MRS where munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) are known or suspected to be present.
- Chemical Warfare Material Hazard Evaluation (CHE) Module: provides the approach for assigning a relative priority to an MRS where CWM hazards are known or suspected to be present.
- Health Hazard Evaluation (HHE) Module: provides the approach for evaluating the relative risk to human health and the environment potentially posed by munitions constituents and any incidental nonmunitions-related contaminants.



An MRS's relative priority is determined by comparing the results of the three hazard evaluation modules.

Sequencing Decisions

After an MRS is prioritized, it must be sequenced for response action. The sequencing for response action is based primarily on the MRS's relative priority. As a matter of DoD policy, an MRS with higher relative risks will be addressed before an MRS with lower relative risks. Occasionally, other factors, such as environmental justice, economic development, and programmatic concerns can influence sequencing decisions.

Stakeholder Involvement

DoD offers all stakeholders opportunities to participate throughout the Protocol's application. DoD believes that if stakeholders are engaged early and often throughout the process, they will gain a better understanding of the Protocol and its application. DoD Components are required to notify stakeholders of the opportunity to participate in the application of the Protocol; publish an announcement requesting participation; consider stakeholders' input in prioritization decisions; and document stakeholder input. DoD recognizes that stakeholder involvement is an effective way to identify and address stakeholder concerns about environmental and safety issues related to MRSs.

Once an MRS's relative priority is determined, DoD Components will provide stakeholders with the opportunity to review and comment on how an MRS is sequenced for response actions. DoD believes that a proactive stakeholder involvement program will facilitate the munitions response process and help ensure the protection of human health and the environment.