



Quick Reference

for Contractors and Workers in Spring Valley, Fort Gaines and AU Park

What has been found?

- **Munitions** filled with high explosives and chemical warfare agent.
- Lab glassware containing **chemical warfare agents** (mustard & lewisite).
- Soils containing **elevated levels of arsenic**.



Unearthed munition

What are the risks?

- Munitions can injure or kill people through detonation or release of its chemical contents.
- Chemical agents can injure or kill, damaging eyes, lungs and skin (e.g. blisters or ulcerations).
- Skin contact with arsenic can cause redness or swelling; breathing in arsenic can irritate the lungs and ingesting it can cause nausea and vomiting.
- Beyond the acute effects, these chemicals have been associated with various forms of cancer.
- Other symptoms can be associated with chemical exposure. For additional health information visit the Spring Valley Web Site listed above and/or contact ATSDR at 1-888-42-ATSDR.

How could a worker be exposed?

- Though few encounters have been documented, finding a munition or container is possible.
- Working with surface soil through landscaping or yard work could bring a person in contact with elevated arsenic. No levels found on residential properties are high enough to cause acute poisoning, but could pose long-term risks if exposed over many years (e.g. decades).

What should you look for?

- Munitions would likely be 10-28 inches long. As shown above, old rounds are hard to recognize.
- Agent containers can be made of glass or ceramics and can come in a variety of sizes.
- Mustard agent is an oily liquid at room temperature; the vapor is colorless with a slight garlic or mustard-like odor.
- Lewisite is oily with a faint geranium odor.
- Arsenic has no specific smell or taste.

What to Do if You Encounter a Hazard?

Chemical Warfare Agents — As with any encounter or exposure to a hazardous chemical, it is critical to:

- 1) Leave the immediate site
- 2) Call 911
- 3) Seek medical attention quickly.

The following actions should also be taken if direct exposure to chemical agent is suspected:

Eyes - Flush immediately with water for 10-15 minutes by tilting the head to the side, pulling eyelids apart with fingers, and pouring water slowly into the eyes. Do not cover the eyes with bandages; protect the eyes from sunlight.



Recovered lab glassware

Skin - Remove contaminated clothing and immediately flush affected areas thoroughly with soap and water until medical attention arrives.

Ingestion - Drink milk. Do not induce vomiting. Seek medical attention.

Arsenic—Wearing work gloves, using dust masks and washing hands after working with soil will protect a person from undue exposure to soil arsenic (*D.C. Health Newsletter, 2001*)

Who should I call?

- **BEFORE YOU DIG**, call the D.C. Department of Health at 202-535-1755 (if permit required) and the Corps of Engineers at 800-434-0988 (if no permit is required) to obtain specific investigation information and sampling results.
- **WHILE DIGGING**, if you uncover an item, do not touch it. Step away from the object and call the D.C. Police Department at 911.
- For occupational safety questions, consult your employer and applicable OSHA guidelines.
- If concerned about specific potential exposures and health concerns, consult your doctor and the DC Department of Health.

Any object or container that cannot be easily identified should be considered a possible munition or hazardous container and should be evaluated by experts. Do not disturb the item.