



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

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

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

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 410-962-0157 (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.