

FACTSHEET: Detonations at the Former Fort Ord

Background

When Munitions and Explosives of Concern are located during the environmental cleanup of the former Fort Ord, the items are prepared and detonated using engineering design (such as consolidation, soil tamping, sand bagging, etc.), sequencing, and equipment, as well as limiting the net explosive weight of each shot as appropriate to control the explosive hazard and provide for public safety. The section below, “How Does the Army Conduct Detonations?” provides details about the sequence of a typical detonation.

Munitions and Explosives of Concern exist on the former Fort Ord in areas such as former weapons ranges where the Army used military munitions during training. The Fort Ord environmental cleanup includes the cleanup of those ranges and other areas where military munitions are found to have been used or stored.

How Does the Army Conduct Detonations?

When Munitions and Explosives of Concern are located, a safety assessment is made to determine if the item is safe to move or must be detonated where it is found. In some cases there will be more than one item. Moving items to an isolated location is preferred to best protect the public during a detonation. When it is not safe to move an item it must be detonated where it is found using engineering controls as appropriate.

The following steps are taken for a typical detonation:

- With the completion of a safety and fire hazard assessment the results are reviewed and approved by the Army and a notice of a planned detonation is posted to the cleanup website (fortordcleanup.com). Local authorities are notified directly of the planned date and time of the detonation.
- The area of the detonation is then prepared to best reduce the effects of the detonation (fragment distribution and potential for vegetation ignition). These controls may include a containment structure over the item and wetting the surrounding area down with water prior to a detonation.
- A safety exclusion area is established around the detonation site and ordnance experts prepare the item for detonation using shock tube initiating systems which in turn initiate the explosives. The Army fire department is standing by when detonations are conducted.
- When a detonation is complete and the appropriate wait period has passed, an inspection of the area is conducted to ensure that all detonated items are accounted for and the residue is collected, inspected, and recycled or disposed of as appropriate.

Who Authorizes Fort Ord Detonations?

Authorization of all Munitions and Explosives of Concern detonation operations on federal property of the former Fort Ord is reserved to the Commander of the Presidio of Monterey. Currently that approval authority has been delegated to the U.S. Army Fort Ord Base Realignment and Closure Environmental Coordinator.

Who is Consulted Prior to a Detonation?

Preparation for detonations includes consultation with Presidio of Monterey Fire Department and the project U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ordnance safety specialist.

How Can I Find Out if there is a Detonation?

Notification of planned detonations is provided to local public safety organizations and regulatory agencies. A detonation notification also is posted on the Army's cleanup web site www.FortOrdCleanup.com and announced on the Army's cleanup telephone hotline at 1-800-852-9699 (press 1 for detonation updates).

Additional information for scheduled detonations is available through the cleanup hotline. Additional information may include the types of items to be detonated, the exclusion zone for the detonation, the total Net Explosive Weight for each detonation (most detonations are limited to less than 15 lbs. Net Explosive Weight) and a time period for the detonation. Time periods for detonations are estimates and subject to unannounced changes.

Other Detonations on the Former Fort Ord

Monterey County Bomb Squad conducts training on the former Fort Ord, and could conduct detonations as part of their training.

To Learn More About the Fort Ord Munitions Response Program:

U.S. Army Fort Ord Base Realignment and Closure:

William Collins, BRAC Environmental Coordinator (831) 393-1284, outreach@fortordcleanup.com

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9:

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California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control:

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Photo Above: Dust, sand, and smoke resulting from a December 2012 detonation. The yellow rectangular structure in the background is a concrete bunker.

Para obtener una copia en Espanol contacte 831-393-1284.