



US Army Corps  
of Engineers

# Former Fort Devens: 3Rs of Explosives Safety

**Background** Fort Devens is a former military base where military munitions were used for training. As such, there exists the possibility that military munitions may be encountered on the property. The Army completed extensive military munitions investigations at former Fort Devens — which included historical records reviews, site inspections, statistical sampling, geophysical surveys, remedial investigations, and removal actions. These investigations determined that the probability of encountering military munitions was low at the former installation.

**Magnet Fishing Ban** After two individuals who were magnet fishing found military munitions in the Nashua River in 2020, MassDevelopment imposed a ban on magnet fishing from the stretch of the Nashua River near Devens (CMR 946 4.00, Section 4.18). At the same time, the

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) evaluated the potential for military munitions for the portion of the river that runs through former Fort Devens. It was determined that the former base never used the Nashua River or its riverbanks for munition-related purposes. The USACE concluded that there is a low probability for people to encounter military munitions within this area.



Follow the 3Rs of explosives safety if you encounter military munitions or a suspicious item:

**R**ecognize **Military munitions are dangerous.**

**R**etreat **Don't touch, move, or disturb military munitions. Leave the area.**

**R**eport **Call 911.**

**Military munitions are items like grenades, mortar shells, and bullets, such as these:**





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Follow the **3Rs of explosives safety** if you find any military munitions or suspicious item:

## **R**ecognize

**Military munitions are dangerous.**

Recognizing military munitions is important. Military munitions may be on land or in the water, and they may be hard to identify.

To avoid the risk of injury or death:

- ⇒ Never move, touch, or disturb military munitions or anything you suspect may be military munitions.
- ⇒ Know that military munitions may become more dangerous with age, not safer.
- ⇒ Don't be tempted to take military munitions as a souvenir.

## **R**etreat

**Do not touch, move, or disturb military munitions. Carefully leave the area.**

Avoid death or injury by promptly retreating from the area. If you encounter what you think is military munitions:

- ⇒ Do not touch, move, or disturb it.
- ⇒ Immediately and carefully leave the area by retracing your steps—going out the way you entered.
- ⇒ Once safely away from the military munitions, mark the path (like with a piece of clothing), so responders can find the military munitions.

## **R**eport

**Notify the police at 911.**

Immediately report military munitions or suspected military munitions to the police by dialing 911. Provide as much information as possible about what you saw and where you saw it to help responders find, evaluate, and address the situation. If you think you have encountered military munitions, dial 911 and report

- ⇒ The area where you encountered it.
- ⇒ Its general description. Remember, do not approach, touch, move, or disturb it.
- ⇒ When possible, provide its estimated size, its shape, and any visible markings and coloring.

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environmental cleanup website:

[www.nae.usace.army.mil/missions/projects-topics/former-fort-devens-environmental-cleanup/](http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/missions/projects-topics/former-fort-devens-environmental-cleanup/)

Visit the U.S. Army's Explosive Safety  
Education website:

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