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# open burning/open destruction

## OB/OD of Ordnance Environmentally Safe

*The safest, quickest, and cheapest method to deal with UXO is to blow it up on site. But, an important element of that equation is missing if damage to the environment has not been considered.*

To investigate OB/OD, Huntsville Center commissioned a study to document the environmental effects of OB/OD of munitions found at formerly used defense sites (FUDS) and provide program managers with a sampling plan for developing a contamination baseline. The findings of the study supported what many already suspected—UXO disposal on site leaves contamination behind at levels so low it is not even detectable.

The study, done by Nichols Research Corporation, used direct sampling at two FUDS—Camp Claiborne, LA, and Camp Grant, IL. Those two sites were chosen partly because they would have minimal background contamination, making it easier to measure any contamination that resulted from the OB/OD. The main contaminants of concern are metals, TNT, nitromethane, and ammonium nitrates. According to the report, “no notable contamination involving these explosives or their by-products was found in any samples.”

The study conclusions were based on a total of all detonations less than 500 kilograms—1,100 pounds—net explosive weight; therefore, this study applies only to areas where OB/OD will be used for a relatively small number of munitions during a limited amount of time.

The study report also contains a sampling plan. That plan outlines baseline data characterizing the air, soil, and water contamination levels expected from OB/OD of ordnance found during a typical FUDS cleanup. The plan is intended to be generic enough to be used at any FUDS, yet flexible enough to be adjusted for site-specific conditions.

The objectives are to cleanup safely while mitigating the potential for additional contamination that might result from removal activities. The study is dated 31 January 1996 and entitled “Open Burning/Open Detonation UXO Baseline,” is available by calling DSN 760-1888 or 256-895-1888.