

# Information sheet

## Unexploded ordnance (UXO)

### **'Area management advice' for land potentially affected by UXO**

*This information sheet constitutes a generic 'area management advice' issued by the Department of Environment and Science to affected local governments about planning for or managing land potentially affected by unexploded ordnance (UXO).*

#### **UXO area management advice**

A 'UXO area management advice' (AMA) is a written notice given by the administering authority (the Department of Environment and Science (DES)) to an affected local government, about planning for or managing land contaminated because of unexploded ordnance.

UXO is explosive ordnance such as artillery shells, mortars or grenades that did not explode when used. Much of the UXO in Queensland is due to military training during World War II.

The Commonwealth's Department of Defence, on its [website](#) has categorised one or more areas of land under your Council's jurisdiction as having a 'substantial'<sup>1</sup> potential to be affected by residual unexploded ordnance.

This document constitutes the generic AMA given by DES for all UXO-affected land areas within the 'substantial' category and is to be considered where applications are submitted, under the [Planning Act 2016](#), for the reconfiguration of a lot or for a material change of use.

The purpose of this advice is to assist in the protection of human health and the environment whilst managing UXO issues during land disturbance associated with land development activities.

The AMA does not:

- apply to specific lots within affected areas that have otherwise been determined to be unaffected via investigative/remedial processes recognised by DES; or
- constitute a listing of affected lot/s on the environmental management register (EMR) or contaminated land register (CLR) that are maintained by DES pursuant to the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

Any development application for reconfiguration or material change of use of any lot to which this AMA applies will require referral to the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DSDILGP) as a concurrence agency under Schedule 10, Part 4, Division 2, Table 1 of the Planning Regulation 2017:

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<sup>1</sup> Where the Department of Defence has categorised sites, assessments of residual UXO potential refer to substantial, slight or other levels where:

- sites categorised as being substantial will have a history of numerous UXO finds or heavy residual fragmentation
- areas categorised as slight will have a confirmed history of military activities that have resulted in residual UXO but which Defence considers it inappropriate to assess as substantial
- areas categorised as other, have a confirmed history of military training but records do not confirm that the site was used for live firing. UXO or explosive ordnance fragments / components have not been recovered from the site. Defence opinion is that it would be inappropriate to assess as either slight or substantial.

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Any development application for reconfiguration or material change of use of any lot to which this AMA applies will require referral to the DSDILGP as a concurrence agency under Schedule 10, Part 6 of the Planning Regulation 2017.

Development application for the following development, if all or part of the premises are shown as an area of substantial unexploded ordnance potential in a mapping layer in the development assessment mapping system published on the department's website<sup>2</sup>—

- (a) reconfiguring a lot that is assessable development under section 20;
- (b) a material change of use that is assessable development under a local categorising instrument

DSDILGP is the State representative for the planning and development process. The Department of Environment and Science can provide advice on what land is potentially impacted by UXO through the register (fees apply—see <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/pollution/management/contaminated-land/search-registers/>). The register is updated for subdivision and should pick up sub-divided parcels that the AMA applies to.

It is recommended that any land usage rezoning or development of land with a 'substantial' UXO potential should only proceed following the conduct of suitable UXO investigations and any necessary remediation by a qualified UXO investigation and remedial search contractor. For a list of UXO investigation and remediation contractors or consultants who are able to carry out this work, please refer to the Department of Defence [website](#).

Notwithstanding the above requirement, the current usage of land with a 'substantial' UXO potential may continue without specific need for further UXO investigation. The Department of Defence advises that there are no known instances, in Australia, where UXO have caused injuries unless they were deliberately and intentionally disturbed.

The procedure, if an object suspected of being UXO is found anywhere, is as follows:

- Do not touch or disturb the object.
- Take action, where appropriate, to prevent it being disturbed by another person.
- Note its approximate dimensions and general appearance.
- Note the route to its location.
- Advise the Police as soon as possible.

Note: The Department of Defence also maps land areas that it categorises as having a 'slight' potential for residual UXO. DES has NO REQUIREMENT or advice additional to that offered by the Department of Defence regarding land usage in 'slight' areas.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a reference to the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning's website - <https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/>.

**Disclaimer:**

While this information sheet has been prepared with care it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Department of Environment and Science should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

**Approved:**

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