



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
BALTIMORE DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF
ENGINEERS, 2 Hopkins Plaza
BALTIMORE, MD 21201

Summer 2026

You are receiving this notice because **American University** is within the boundaries of the Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site (SVFUDS). During World War I, parts of the Spring Valley neighborhood and nearby institutions were temporarily used by the Army as part of the American University Experiment Station and Camp Leach to research, test, and train troops on chemical agents, equipment, and munitions. An enclosed map outlines the SVFUDS boundaries.

Since the discovery of buried munitions by a utility contractor in January 1993, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Baltimore District, has worked to identify the nature and extent of potential chemical contamination and buried munitions left over from past military operations, carrying out extensive cleanup activities.

This effort resulted in a Site-Wide Decision Document (DD) signed in June 2017, which outlined additional remedial actions for four specific areas within the SVFUDS. In 2026, groundwater monitoring wells were removed, the final Groundwater Report was posted on the project website, and fieldwork at American University was completed. Site-Wide Remedial Action closure procedures are now underway.

With the completion of Site-Wide Remedial Action, the Long-Term Monitoring phase will begin in coordination with regulatory partners. Five-Year Reviews will continue indefinitely, or until regulatory partners determine they are no longer necessary.

Enclosed is a brochure titled *3Rs Safety Guide*, which highlights critical safety procedures for personnel at your institution. Additionally, we ask that you take time to view the four-minute Spring Valley Munitions Safety Video. The **3Rs—Recognize, Retreat, and Report**—outline the necessary actions to take if anyone encounters a suspicious or unknown item. The safety video, along with electronic versions of the site boundary map and the *3Rs Safety Guide*, are available on our website.

Any unidentified metallic item encountered during construction or excavation could potentially be a munition or contain a warfare agent. A munition could remain on-site if it is buried under a road or parking lot, or entwined in tree roots. Therefore, if American University initiates any excavation or construction projects, this safety material will be an essential resource for your team and contractors. You are welcome to reproduce and distribute the PDF version of the *3Rs Safety Guide* across your organization.

The safety video, final Groundwater Report, and additional site-related information are available online at: www.nab.usace.army.mil/Home/Spring-Valley.

USACE Baltimore District appreciates your time in learning about munitions safety and participating in the SVFUDS cleanup process. If you have any questions, please contact the Baltimore District Public Affairs Office at NAB-PAO@usace.army.mil.



BACKGROUND

The **Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site** comprises 661 acres in northwest Washington, D.C. This is largely a residential area; however, Dalecarlia Woods is located on the western edge, and a large portion of the site is occupied by American University. During World War I, the U.S. Government established the American University Experiment Station to investigate the testing, production, and effects of noxious gases, antidotes and protective masks. These experimental activities were conducted on university property and in the open area which eventually became the Spring Valley neighborhood. For these reasons unexploded ordnance and/or chemical weapons may be encountered within the Spring Valley neighborhood.

Since 1993, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has conducted investigations, removal actions, health studies, soil sampling, a pilot study, and evaluations of long-term cleanup remedies. Final cleanup of the site began in 2018 and is expected to be completed in 2026, with administrative closure procedures scheduled for completion in 2027.

Weathering may make munitions, which may be on the surface, buried, or whole or in parts, difficult to recognize. **Even old munitions can still kill.** Residents and others should never touch, move, or disturb anything encountered that may be a munition or part of one. All munitions should be considered dangerous, regardless of how long they have been in the environment or how frequently they have been handled.

Help **protect yourself, your family, and your community** by learning and following the 3Rs of Explosives Safety.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER A
MUNITION **CALL 911**

LEARN MORE

For additional information regarding the Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site, contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District Public Affairs Office or visit our website.



NAB-PAO@USACE.ARMY.MIL



<https://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Spring-Valley/>



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Baltimore District

Spring Valley

Formerly Used
Defense Site

WASHINGTON, D.C.



3Rs SAFETY GUIDE



RECOGNIZE



RETREAT



REPORT

Help **protect yourself, your family, and your community** by learning and following the 3Rs of Explosives Safety.



Recognize when you may have encountered a munition



Do not touch, move or disturb it. Carefully leave the area.



**Notify the local police.
Call 911.**

RECOGNIZE

Recognizing when you may have encountered a munition is the most important step in reducing the risk of injury or death. Munitions may be encountered during residential construction projects.

Munitions may be easy or hard to identify. They come in many sizes, shapes and colors.



Top left: 75 mm Projectile
Bottom left: 3 in. Stokes Mortar
Right: Livens Projectile

Some may look like bullets or bombs while others look like pipes, small cans or even a car muffler. Whether whole or in parts, new or old, shiny or rusty, munitions can still explode. The easiest way to avoid injury or death is to follow the 3Rs.

RETREAT

Avoid death or injury by recognizing that you may have encountered a munition and promptly retreating from the area.

If you encounter what you believe is a munition, do not touch, move or disturb it. Instead, immediately and carefully leave the area by retracing your steps—going out the way you entered.

Once safely away from the munition, mark the location or path (e.g., with a piece of clothing) so munitions response personnel can find the munition.

To avoid the risk of injury or death:

- Never move, touch or disturb a munition or suspect munition
- Be aware that munitions do not become safer with age, in fact, they may become more dangerous
- Don't be tempted to take or keep a munition as a souvenir
- Notify contractors working in your yard that munitions may be encountered and share the 3Rs information

REPORT

Protect yourself, your family, friends, community, and workers/contractors by immediately reporting munitions or suspected munitions to the police.

Help us by providing as much information as possible about what you saw and where you saw it. This will help the police and military or civilian explosive ordnance disposal personnel find, evaluate and address the situation.

If you believe you may have encountered a munition, call the police and report:

- The area where you encountered it
- Its general description
- Do not approach it
- Do not touch, move or disturb it.

When possible, provide:

- Estimated size and shape
- Any visible markings, including coloring

