

Risk Awareness – Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)

Introduction

In the last 12 months the national press has communicated 6 separate building sites that have uncovered large Unexploded Bombs from the war(UXO's) large being 500 – 1000 pounds.

After investigation each and every occasion was an unplanned finding, as luck would have it no one had been injured but each occasion brought severe disruption to the local area , as many homes were to be vacated until the situation made safe, this taking up to 18hours with the bomb squad attending.

Construct were concerned that these finds were unplanned and the Contractors on these projects having no idea of the risk and unaware of any process for identifying or managing it during Construction..

Construct uncovered a gap in our industry process as we could not find where the identification of UXO risk was in our process, we expected it to be linked to the Planning Process or land purchase agreements.

An unexploded World War Two Bomb prompted the evacuation of 700 people in East London by the military



The bomb, measuring 5ft in length and weighing 1000lb has been found in Southwark by builders



How close to Secant Piled Wall!!!

During World War 2, hundreds of thousands of bombs were dropped on London and the surrounding areas; many of these never actually went off, records have been kept of these areas of unexploded ordnance showing both position and likely depth.

This is a real risk, both in London and across the country. There are several Companies that have formed and provide specialist knowledge in UXO's they provide three levels of service.

- 1.0 – Desk Top Study, this can be provided for a fairly small sum, and involves the study of your construction site against the maps and records that they have access to, this study will conclude with a first pass risk assessment stating if the risk of finding UXO's is high, medium and low, and the likely range or depth that they may exist at.
- 2.0 – Medium or high risk control measures, the specialist company will provide the industry best practice in order to manage this risk, information on inductions for personnel, ground investigation and specialist probing.
- 3.0 – Provide the service for you on site, special inductions, earthworks monitoring and specialist plant for advanced probing of the ground, say at piling locations.

Any of the above could result in a Contractual risk that your company may be taking on similar to existing services, the above UXO service could run in to tens of thousands of pounds, or if there is a find , days of delay or ultimately if one was found and exploded , think of the consequences.

HSE view is that under CDM the Client is obliged to provide you with the existing site information, this should extend to at least the desk top study for UXO's.

The cost of managing that risk, i.e. paying for the UXO services above should be included in the tender cost and programme. (Probing can take many weeks)

The risk of a "find" should be considered and agreed between parties, could easily be a delay of one week, how do you get the confidence of your workforce back , what further investigation work may you have to do, what if the emergency services started charging for the removal and disposal operation...

FOR UXO SERVICE PROVIDERS – GOOGLE – UXO Surveys