

# M2160

*Posted on 06.09.2023 by Adam Parnell*

**Category:** [Commercial Fishing](#)

**Report Title** Danger! Unexploded ordnance

## Initial Report

A fishing vessel entered the harbour to land its catch. It also landed some rusty metal objects that had become tangled in the 'cod end'. A member of the harbour staff realised that these were items of historic ordnance and could contain explosive residue. The emergency services were called, and a bomb disposal team attended and took away the items, which were subsequently proven to be unexploded ordnance. Had the items entered a waste recycling plant, they would have posed a significant hazard to both people and equipment.

## Comment

Items of historic ordnance are occasionally caught in nets in many parts of the world that have experienced previous (or ongoing) conflicts, making the already hazardous work of commercial fishers even more dangerous.

While submerged in water, the components within explosives can separate and become extremely unstable if they dry out. Other chemicals, such as phosphorus, can spontaneously ignite in contact with air, creating toxic fumes.

In this instance, the ship's crew were unaware they had unexploded explosives on board. But if you are in doubt, do not touch it or try to throw it back over the side. Keep the crew as far away as possible, increase your vessel's watertight integrity by closing all weather-tight and water-tight accesses and contact your regional emergency services and follow their directions. Reduce your speed and steer a course that minimises boat movement. More guidance has been published by the UK's Maritime and Coastguard Agency in MGN 323

([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/440107/323.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/440107/323.pdf))

## Key Issues

Local practices – Ensure your fishing vessel has a plan to deal with suspected unexploded ordnance based on an appropriate risk assessment.

Situational awareness – Try to understand areas where unexploded ordnance is more likely to be

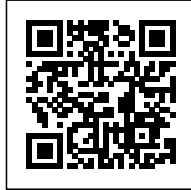
encountered. Your local port authority or fishing association may be able to help with this. Do not trawl over or near areas of charted disposal sites.

Alerting – To increase awareness, try to take pictures of the unexploded ordinance and distribute them to other fishers. Update the safety folder with the Near Miss incident.

**loss\_of\_awareness**Awareness

**lack\_of\_assertiveness**Assertiveness

**normalisation\_of\_deviation**Deviation



**There are no comments yet.**