

# AMAS 14

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## Building Clearance

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## CONTENTS

AMENDMENT RECORD.....	3
14.1 INTRODUCTION.....	4
14.2 THREAT ASSESSMENT.....	4
14.3 WORKING PARTIES.....	5
14.4 EXTERIOR RECONNAISSANCE AND INITIAL ENTRY.....	5
14.5 SEARCH PROCEDURES.....	5
14.6 PRECAUTIONS DURING SEARCH.....	6

### Warning

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## 14.1 Introduction

14.1.1 The searching of a building for ordnance and, especially, booby traps is a very risky procedure and should only be undertaken by the most experienced personnel. It is recommended that an experienced Level 4 EOD technician conduct these types of searches, with an EOD team and medical personnel in support. Individuals clearing a building where booby traps are expected should be alert for all types of entrapment situations during the clearance.

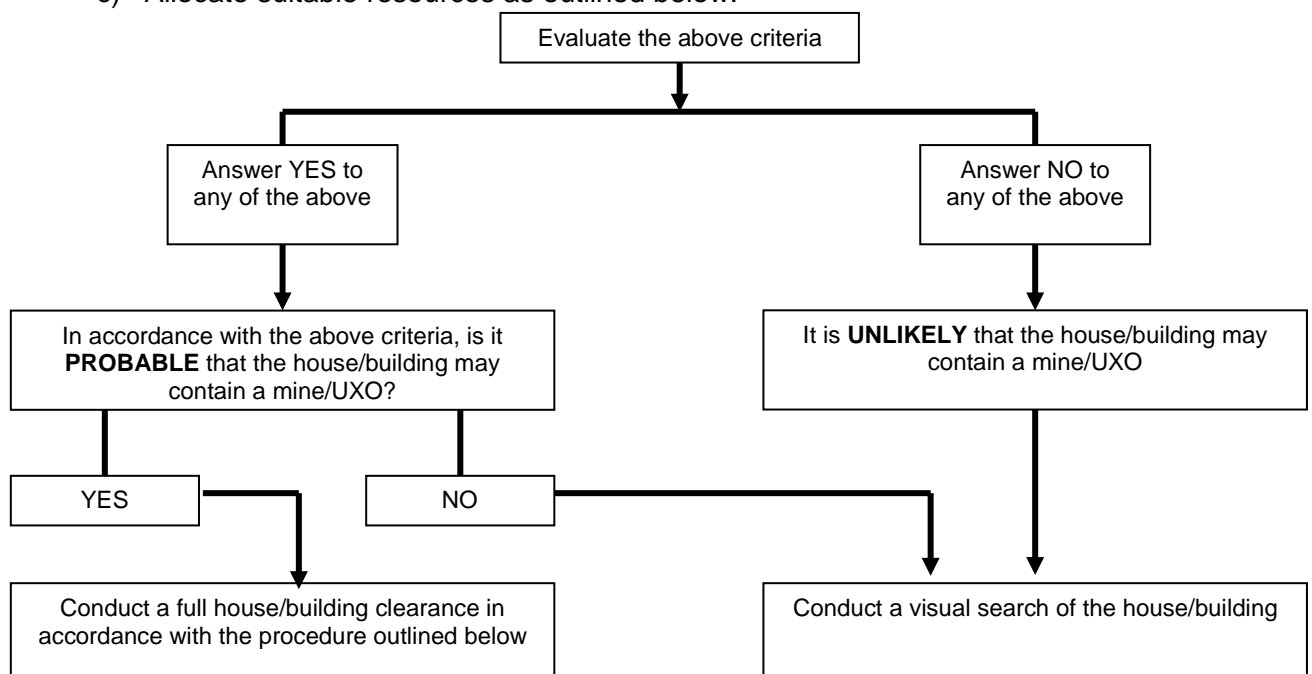
## 14.2 Scope

14.2.1 This chapter provides technical guidance on conducting mine and ERW clearance operations in the suspected hazardous buildings.

## 14.3 Threat Assessment

14.3.1 When there is a requirement to provide a threat assessment of the state of individual houses and buildings it is recommended that the following procedure be adopted:

- a) Receipt of request for house/building clearance.
- b) Ascertain the necessary degree of search required according to the following criteria:
  - (1) Why has the clearance been requested? By whom?
  - (2) Has any ordnance been visually seen, in or around the house/building?
  - (3) Did military, police and/or militant units occupy the house/building?
  - (4) Was there any fighting or bombardment of the locality?
  - (5) Is the house/building located within a known SHA?
  - (6) Have there been any casualties, attributable to ordnance, in the locality? If so, what type of ordnance?
  - (7) Have booby traps been used or found in the past in the area? If so, specifically what types?
- c) Allocate suitable resources as outlined below:



**IF ANY DOUBT EXISTS, ALWAYS CONDUCT A FULL HOUSE/BUILDING CLEARANCE**

## 14.4 Working Parties

The working party for an average sized house or building will not exceed two qualified operators working as a team. **No other** person will enter the building until it has been cleared. In very large buildings two or more pairs may be employed provided they work a safe distance apart, and have clearly defined boundaries. As a general rule, either two walls or two floors will be the minimum distance between parties. When clearing single room buildings, each building will be treated as a single room of a house.

## 14.5 Exterior Reconnaissance and Initial Entry

14.5.1 Before approaching a house/building a Control Point shall be set up and searched for any ordnance. If the team has to return to search the same building at a later date, the same Control Point will not be used – a new Control Point, preferably at least 100m from the old one will be used. Once this is completed, the Team Leader shall determine the approach path and point of entry. Both the approach path and a working area around the selected point of entry shall be searched and cleared of any ordnance. When selecting a point of entry the following points shall be considered:

- a) Doorways. Doorways shall never be considered as safe unless the door is fully open and the entrance can be seen to be safe. For example, if a building is built on a concrete slab, it is unlikely (but not impossible) to contain a pressure-firing device located in the floor.
- b) Windows. Windows offer excellent opportunities for trapping. Particular attention will be given to the ground outside, and the floor inside, as these are classic sites for pressure firing devices. If access has to be gained through a window, the following procedure is recommended:
  - (1) If the window is unsecured and can be moved by pulling, pull it. If it is secured, break the glass by using a small charge, or a heavy object.
  - (2) If there is a choice between a readily opened and a fixed window, choose the fixed.
  - (3) Deal with blinds and curtains in a manner similar to windows.

Mouse Holes. If it is decided not to enter through a door or window, a mouse hole may be made in the wall, roof, or floor. Where possible this should be made using explosives, as this offers not only a remote and hence safe method of creating an access point, but may also set off any traps in the near vicinity. Caution should be exercised if entering through the roof of a two-storey building, as it is far more difficult to clear stairs going down than it is going up.

## 14.6 Search Procedures

14.6.1 The following sequence should be considered when searching all buildings.

- c) Floors and furniture,

Walls, including doors, windows, fireplaces, fitted cupboards etc.,

Fittings, including light switches and pictures, and

- d) Ceilings.

As each area or item is cleared it will be marked as **SAFE**. This will be done using spray paint, chalk, felt tip pen etc in green or white colour. Marking systems may differ between sites, but the marking system used on each site will be in writing and a copy of it kept at the Control Point.

## 14.7 Precautions during Search

14.7.1 The following techniques and precautions should be considered for all building searches:

- a) **All** initial movements will be done remotely.

After remotely pulling anything, allow at least 5 minutes wait time, as there may be a delay fuse.

- b) Check both sides of a door before opening it. This can be done by drilling a hole through the door and using a mirror to check the other side or looking through windows that offer an interior view of the doorway. They can be further checked, or opened, by remote pulling or by blowing the lock and hinges with a small explosive charge. Each door shall be both opened and closed, remotely, before it may be considered clear.
- c) Examine floor coverings for signs of disturbance. The underneath of floor coverings should be searched by folding it back on different sides until the entire floor beneath has been visually inspected. Floor coverings should not be rolled, as this will greatly increase the possibility of functioning any type of pressure switches.
- d) Remotely open cupboard doors, drawers and move any furniture by using a pulling cable.
- e) Check upholstered furniture and beds by remotely dropping a heavy object on them.
- f) Electrical wiring in a building provides a ready-made circuit for electric booby traps and every switch will be treated with suspicion. If possible, remotely remove power to the building prior to search operations.
- g) Leave open all windows, doors, cupboards and drawers that have been cleared.
- h) Clearly mark all routes, areas, and items that have been cleared.
- i) Check plumbing by remotely turning on all water taps and allow the water to run into baths and basins for at least one minute.
- j) Check cisterns before flushing toilets.

In dark places, such as attics and chimneys, be aware of light-sensitive devices.

Do not cut or pull any tripwires, until both ends have been inspected and cleared of any devices.

When clearing tripwires, be aware of possible devices laid under the tripwire.

- k) If at anytime during the search, an improvised explosive device (IED) is located or suspected, the person(s) searching must leave the building, secure it and request assistance from CF or ISAF EOD. Under no circumstances should a render safe procedure, or even movement, of a known or suspected IED be attempted.

Hands on render safe procedures (RSPs) will not be attempted, except in the most extreme cases. Where a hand on RSP is required, the operator must be familiar with the item being worked on or the RSP will not be done.