



## U.S. Coast Guard Sector Baltimore

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### MARITIME SAFETY & SECURITY BULLETIN 25-10

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## EXPLOSIVES SAFETY

A recent incidental discovery of munitions dredged up by a commercial fishing vessel off the coast of Long Island, New York, led to accidental exposure to Mustard Gas after one of the canisters broke. In addition to the chemical burns and respiratory problems that the crew suffered, the catch was seized and the boat was unable to operate for several days due to the decontamination process.

As a reminder for safe practices, the Coast Guard strongly recommends that persons involved in commercial fishing and similar activities review and update navigational charts to reflect properly marked and identified "Unexploded Ordnance Areas" and "Explosive Dumping Areas" so that wide berth may be given if towing gear is used in the vicinity of these areas.

Fishing, scuba diving, and other evolutions that involve bottom tending gear have an increased potential for such discoveries which can have detrimental results if not properly handled. In the event of a discovery of unexploded ordnance or other items that cannot be accurately identified, the emphasis on safety is to recognize the threat, retreat to a safe location, and immediately report the information to the **National Response Center** at (800) 424-8802 or by hailing the Coast Guard on Channel 16.

Additional information on safety measures and actions to take in the event of a discovery can be found in the Maritime Industry 3Rs Explosives Safety Guide published by the U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosive Safety. The guide is available online at: <http://aec.army.mil/usaec/cleanup/images/mmrp-maritime.pdf>.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John R. Dittmar".

**JOHN R. DITTMAR**  
**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, U.S. COAST GUARD**  
**USCG SECTOR BALTIMORE**