

Morgan General Ordnance Depot

Formerly Used Defense Site
Remedial Investigation
Middlesex County, New Jersey

July 2026



Introduction

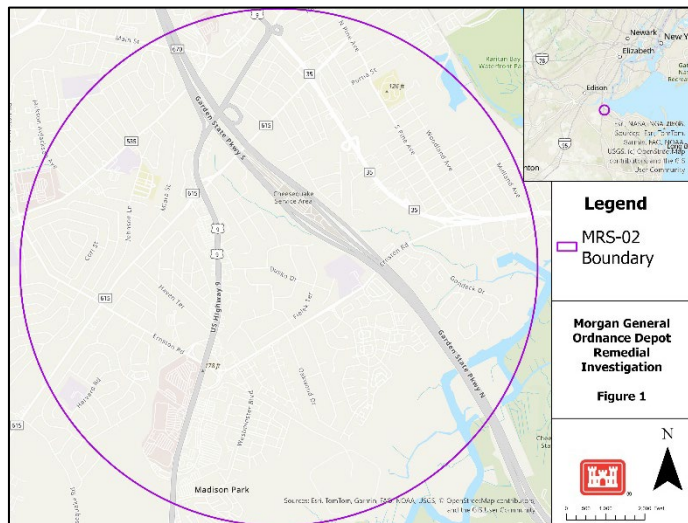
The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has initiated a Remedial Investigation (RI) at the Morgan General Ordnance Depot Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS), in Middlesex County, New Jersey (NJ). The purpose of the RI is to evaluate whether historical Department of Defense activities at the Morgan General Ordnance Depot have impacted current environmental quality at the site from munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) and munition constituents (MC), and if so, to identify what cleanup or remediation is needed to protect human health and the environment. The entire process can span over several years depending on site complexity and the amount of contamination present. The RI is being conducted under the Department of Defense's Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP). The MMRP program began in 2001, and addresses explosives safety, health, and environmental issues caused by past munitions related activities at current and former military installations and adjacent properties. The program follows the requirements of the National Contingency Plan as set under the 1980 CERCLA and its amendments of 1986. The FUDS/CERCLA process is outlined in **Table 1**. For additional information regarding the FUDS process, please visit <https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Formerly-Used-Defense-Sites/>

lines and halting operations (**Photo 1**). As a result of these explosions, debris and munitions were scattered throughout the area.



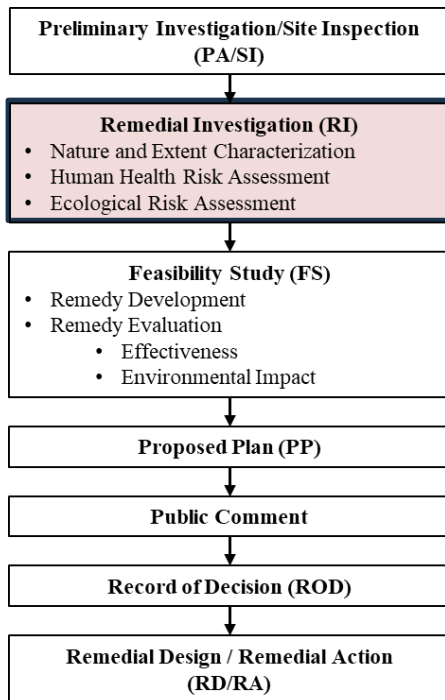
Photo 1. Source: Unknown photographer - 1918 news photograph, re-published in 2012 book "Explosion at Morgan", by Randall Gabrielan, 2012.

The 3,156- acre Munitions Response Site (MRS) under investigation at the Morgan General Ordnance Depot encompasses portions of the Borough of Sayreville, the City of South Amboy, and the Township of Old Bridge in Middlesex County, New Jersey, as displayed in **Figure 1**.



Currently thousands of residential structures and commercial businesses occupy most of the MRS. Existing usage also includes elementary schools, a home for the elderly, parks, and numerous other entities found within the developed municipal area. The Garden State Parkway and New Jersey Route 35 travel through the site and the southeastern portion of the MRS lies within Cheesequake State Park. Historically, development within the MRS has led to numerous munitions finds.

Table 1



What prompted the Remedial Investigation?

Morgan General Ordnance Depot was part of an artillery shell loading plant constructed and operated by the T.A. Gillespie Loading Company as an agent appointed by the United States. On 4 October 1918, a series of severe explosions and fires occurred over three days at the facility, destroying production

Between 1993 and 2000, USACE conducted historical records reviews, engineering evaluations and cost analysis, time critical removal actions, and other studies to understand and address munitions response related activities at the Morgan General Ordnance Depot. These previous studies and findings were used to develop the scope for the RI. This scope of work consists of non-invasive surveys on parcels within the MRS and investigation of selected subsurface items.

Remedial Investigation Field Work

A Right-of-Entry request was previously sent to property owners where USACE would like to conduct remedial investigation field work. USACE will not enter any property where a signed Right-of-Entry was not granted. The following activities 1 through 3 and 5 have been completed on properties with signed Right-of-Entry agreements. Activity 4, Targets of Interest Investigation, is scheduled to be completed in the summer and fall of 2026.

1. Landscape and Civil Surveys (completed in 2025)

A landscape survey (with photographs and video) was conducted to inventory and appraise vegetation, hardscapes (e.g., driveways, sidewalks, walkways, patios, retaining walls, and fencing) and moveable objects (e.g., yard ornaments, playsets, and trampolines) that may interfere with the investigation. A professional land surveyor established temporary control points to be used in conjunction with field activities.

2. Phase 1 Geophysical Mapping Surveys (completed in 2026)

Geophysical detection sensors were used to scan selected accessible areas of each property to locate subsurface metallic items.

3. Phase 2 Geophysical Mapping Surveys (completed in 2026)

Locations with identified subsurface metal from the Phase 1 surveys were surveyed again to collect more robust data for characterization purposes.

4. Targets of Interest Investigation

Neighborhood notifications will be provided to affected properties and in neighborhoods where intrusive investigations of subsurface anomalies are occurring. Neighborhood notifications will be provided in advance of the intrusive investigations taking place. You may expect to see signage and public meeting notices beginning in July 2026.

The Geophysical Mapping conducted during Phase 2 identified targets of interest (TOIs) in the subsurface that we are interested in investigating. Unexploded ordnance technicians will investigate and remove TOIs by hand during this phase of work. The use of mechanized equipment, such as a backhoe, is unlikely but may be required for items at depths greater than 4-ft. Locations where digging occurs will be backfilled or covered daily. Between four to eight USACE and contractor personnel may be on a property to conduct these operations.

While there are no mandatory evacuations, if an item is uncovered that is deemed unsafe to move, local authorities will be contacted, and evacuations may be required for residences and/or businesses surrounding the item.

5. Soil Sampling (completed in 2026)

Surface soil sampling was completed in select areas of the MRS based on historical information. Sampling of other media (e.g., subsurface soil, sediment, surface water, groundwater) may be warranted based on the results of the surface soil samples and target of interest investigations.

Remedial Investigation Schedule

- Fieldwork for the RI began in June 2025.
- Intrusive investigations are planned between August 2026 and November 2026.

Quality and Safety

USACE will oversee quality assurance through strict project quality control and safety procedures implemented during fieldwork. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and local stakeholders/officials (i.e., townships) have reviewed project documents to ensure the quality of the document and compliance with local, State, and Department of Defense guidance and environmental regulations. Rigorous safety and environmental training are completed by all project personnel.

3Rs of Explosive Safety

Should you recognize an item that you are concerned possesses an explosive hazard, follow the 3Rs of explosives safety;



Recognize, Retreat, and Report (call 911).

The attached QR Code and web address provides additional information for munitions recognition and safety.

Recognize – Recognizing when you may have encountered a munition is key to reducing the risk of injury or death.

Remember, munitions are sometimes hard to identify, if you encounter or suspect you may have encountered a munition, consider it extremely dangerous.

Retreat – If you encounter or suspect you may have encountered a munition, do not approach, touch, move or disturb it, but immediately and carefully - do not run – leave the area following the same path on which you entered. If you can, mark the general area, not the munition, in some manner (e.g., with a hat, piece of cloth, or tying a piece of plastic to a tree branch).

Report – When you think you may have encountered a munition, notify your local law enforcement - **call 911**.

Public Information and Administrative Record

A public meeting will be held on 16 July 2026 at 1300 EST at the Sayreville Active Adult Center to discuss any specific details with the community and answer any questions.

Sayreville Active Adult Center
423 Main Street
Sayreville, New Jersey 08872

Project related documents are available at the local library and additional project information is available on the USACE Website.

Sayreville Free Public Library
1050 Washington Road
Parlin, New Jersey 08859
<https://sayrevillelibrary.org/>



Morgan General Ordnance Depot FUDS Website:
<https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects-Topics/Morgan-General-Ordnance-Depot/>

If you have any questions regarding the Remedial Investigation, please contact Chris Kane, Project Manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, at (978) 318-8025 or Christopher.G.Kane@usace.army.mil.