

EPA Releases Draft MEC Hazard Assessment Guidance for Public Comment

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The EPA published a notice of availability of the Draft Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) Hazard Assessment Guidance in the Federal Register. The hazard assessment model was put together by the Technical Working Group for Hazard Assessments which was made up of representatives from the EPA, DoD, Department of the Interior, various State regulatory agencies, and Tribes. The MEC Hazard Assessment model evaluates explosives safety risk by looking at three components severity, accessibility, and sensitivity. There are various input parameters that make up each of the 3 components. In all, there are nine separate input factors or parameters that are assessed for each site including 2 for the severity component, 5 for the accessibility component, and 2 for the sensitivity component.

For example, the energetic material filler associated with the munitions at a site is one input factor that goes into the severity component. Users select from a list of six energetic materials (e.g. high explosives, white phosphorus, incendiary). The model provides instructions on how each of the input parameters are assessed, scored, and weighted. Once all 9 input factors are evaluated and scored, they are combined to provide an overall score for the site (a numeric value between 125 - 1,000). The overall site score is then associated with one of four hazard levels (Level 1- 4) with Level 1 being the highest potential explosives safety hazard level.

To view the draft guidance available for public comment click the download button at the bottom of the article or visit the EPA website listed below. The EPA is accepting comments on the Hazard Assessment Guidance through the 23 of March. Additional information including comment forms and related materials can be found on EPA's Web site at

http://www.epa.gov/fedfac/documents/hazard_assess_wrkgrp.htm