

UXO Certifications in The Netherlands

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Article By: UXO Guest Author [Maarten Bosma](#), Bombs Away.

First of all, I want to thank UXOInfo.com for their hospitality when I met them during my stay in the United States (US). I found it very interesting to talk to them and get some more inside information about the way UXO clearance works in the US. I've learned that there are many differences between the Dutch and the American regulations in the field. So in this article, I want to explore one of the main differences - the certification or qualifications for UXO personnel.

In the US, UXO personnel qualifications are established by the U.S. Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board (DDESB) which is outlined in [Technical Paper 18 \(TP 18\)](#). The DDESB defines seven UXO positions (UXO Sweeper; UXO Technician Level 1, 2, and 3; UXOSO; UXOQCS; and SUXOS) with the levels primarily based upon years of experience. TP-18 recognizes military EOD training from a very limited number of countries outside of the US - Canada, Great Britain, Germany, or Australia as well as civilian UXO training. The US does not require any testing and/or certifications from UXO workers outside of the OSHA requirements and added quality training for the UXOQCS position.

In The Netherlands, UXO qualifications are governed by the [VEO](#) (Vereniging voor Explosieven Opsporing) which is a governing body that has a commission of experts who provide advice on new regulations. The Dutch Army EOD is also represented in the commission. In The Netherlands, personnel who perform UXO detection surveys and identification of UXO in the field fall into three different levels or categories:

- Assistant UXO Specialist (basic training)
- UXO Specialist (at least 3 years experience as an Assistant UXO Specialist)
- Senior UXO Specialist (at least 3 years experience as a UXO specialist)

The other main difference between the Dutch and US outside of the levels (i.e., 3 levels versus 7) is that UXO personnel are required to pass an exam every three years in order to be certified to perform UXO work. The exams are a combination of a written test coupled with a practical field exercise. The exams include the following tasks:

- A geophysical survey;
- Interpretation of the survey data;
- Digging on the identified target anomalies;
- Identification of the anomalies;
- Risk analysis of the potential hazards; and
- Knowledge of ammunition.

The exams are tailored for the three levels. For example, a UXO Specialist gets a two-hour exam

about ammunition which is open book where students are allowed to use their references / databases. Part of the written exam includes positively identifying munitions from images to include images of objects that have been buried for decades. The exam can be taken at one of several locations throughout The Netherlands with independent examiners.

The guidelines for conducting UXO work are called the [WSCS-OCE](#) (Werkveldspecifiek certificatieschema voor het systeemcertificaat Opsporen Conventionele Explosieven). Like the U.S., the guidelines link the positions with duties they are authorized to perform. For example, a team of Assistant UXO Specialists can perform a UXO geophysical survey, but a UXO Specialist is needed to identify the items. UXO fieldwork also generally requires that a Senior UXO Specialist be present on the location.