

# MINE ACTION: MESSAGES

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## About the Message Library

People affected by disaster must have access to timely, appropriate and accurate information to help them keep themselves and their families safe and well. They should know their rights, entitlements and be able to give feedback. Responders have a duty to put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms to ensure this.

Our Message Library offers clear, concise and simple messages on a range of topics as templates for you to adapt and use in the context you are working in. These are intended to help you make a quick start on communicating with communities while you further develop mechanisms for on-going dialogue with diverse groups within each community.

For help contextualising and using the messages we recommend you do our e-learning course and read the following technical guidance.

### E-learning

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=768>

### Guidance

<https://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-guidance/cdac-message-library-user-guidance>

## Mine alert

Some of the roads in your area have mines on them or underneath or on the verges. Most of the time those mines are invisible and they can be hidden anywhere, even below the asphalt/tarmac/road. These are powerful explosive devices that can be set off by a vehicle such as a cart, a car or a bus, an animal or even by a person. When they explode, they can kill many people. Check with others which roads are safe to use and if in doubt, stay away. Avoid travels early in the morning or late in the evening. Never try to make a detour or to take a shortcut. Ask people you know where it is safe and where it is dangerous. Stay on well-used paths at all times.

## What are explosive remnants of war (ERW)?

Explosive remnants of war are both unexploded ordnance (UXO) and abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO). UXO refers to any ammunition that has been used or projected but which has failed to detonate. AXO refers to ammunition that has been stored, hidden or left behind by a party to an armed conflict

## What are fuses?

Fuses are a component of explosive devices and mines. They come in different shapes, sizes and colours. They are very attractive objects but are very dangerous and sensitive. They can blow off a finger, your hand or your eyes. They can be large or small. Do not touch fragments of a destroyed mine or any other explosive device.

## Effects of explosive remnants of war (ERW)

Military ammunition like bombs, grenades, cartridges, even small ammunition can kill or cause severe injuries even for people who are far from the place of the explosion. Injuries affect not only the injured individuals but also their families and communities.

## The importance of danger signs

Respect danger signs. Never write on them or remove them. If you see a sign, showing a danger, go back and find a different route. If there are no danger signs, do not decide that the area is safe: some people remove danger signs by mistake or without worrying about others. Do not remove signs showing explosive devices. If you steal a sign, you may be stealing someone's life.

## ERW Prevention

Inform your friends and family about the danger of bombs. Warn them not to play with military objects such as cartridges and munition boxes and to stay away from areas used by combatants.

## How to recognise a mine

Mines are difficult, if not impossible to see. Mines come in different shapes, sizes and colours. They can be made of wood, metal or plastic. Most mines will be buried while others may be above the surface. They may be buried, hidden in tall grass, camouflaged among trees, floating on water or lying under water. Some mines are set off by pulling or cutting a tripwire. Do not go near a tripwire as the surrounding area may be mined. Report explosive ordnance to a responsible person or authority. Contact [insert info here] if you spot a mine or you suspect an area is mined.

## Advice on mined areas

If you think an area has been mined or see signs saying it has, do not go into it. Stay clear. If you have to walk through a mined area, stay on the safe path and walk in single file. Stay close to the middle of the path and do not go off it. Make sure there is at least five metres between each person if you walk in a group.

## What are the warning signs of mines?

If you are in a suspect area, look out for the following warning signs: injured or dead animals, a partly exposed metallic object, a danger sign, an intact or broken wire, signs of fighting such as big holes in the ground, shrapnel or bullet casings, no sign of recent foot traffic. If you do not see any warning signs, do not assume that the area is safe. If you are aware of a mined or suspected area and/or if you are aware of a mine explosion that occurred somewhere in the surroundings, consider those areas as highly dangerous and tell visitors and newcomers which areas are safe and which are dangerous. Do not go near a tripwire as the surrounding area may be mined.

## What to do if you see a mine or other explosive remnant of war

If you see anything that looks like a bomb, a military object, a bag that does not belong to anyone, or is something that you don't recognise: Stop! Don't touch! Step back. Tell the adults.

## If you find yourself in a minefield

If you accidentally walk into a minefield you should stand still and wait. Warn others to stop immediately. Nobody should move. Call for help to send a demining team, or if there is someone nearby, ask them to go and get a demining team. Wait until help arrives.

## Advice about adolescents

Adolescents may be tempted to play with explosive remnants of war. Try to prevent them from doing so and encourage them to act responsibly by reporting the information about the location(s) of potentially dangerous items to the authorities or to other representatives of the community.

### Advice on prevention for young children

Beware that young children may be tempted to play with metallic or military objects or an unattended bag that they don't know. Beware of bombs! Try to prevent them from doing so, inform them about the dangers of bombs, ask them to stay away from these objects and encourage them to play in safe spaces.

### Advice on demining

Being a soldier, ex-soldier or policeman does not mean you can handle explosive devices safely. Only professional demining or bomb disposal teams can remove or destroy these items safely.

### Which organisations are working on mine awareness

There is a risk of mines and other explosive remnants of war in your area. The following organisations are working on this issue: [insert info here]. If you have any information on the location of mines or ERW or would like to know more about them, please contact [insert info].

### What to do in case of a mine accident

If someone has been injured by a mine. Keep calm. Don't rush. Stop others running to the victim. Have someone keep a look out so that children and adults keep away. Call for help. Speak to the victim: "Don't move, and keep calm! We're going to help you." Get the victim out of the minefield only when experts have cleared a way out.

### Support Services

If you or a family member has been injured by a mine or other explosive device, you can get emergency medical treatment from [insert info]. As well as medical care, [insert info] is also giving counselling. Visit them at [insert info]. Opening hours are between [insert time] and [insert time].

### REFERENCES

For more information on this topic, we recommend you read the following references.

Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (2004). **A Guide to Improving Communication in Mine Risk Education Programmes**

[https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/26814/Guide\\_Improving\\_Communication\\_MRE.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/26814/Guide_Improving_Communication_MRE.pdf)

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If you would like to contribute to topic reviews, have found a message that needs greater clarity, or wish to create a new topic, please contact us at [info@cdacnetwork.org](mailto:info@cdacnetwork.org).