

What Happens to An Unknown Sample Once It Is Recovered from a Project Site?



Safety protocols are implemented and the item is secured by trained onsite professionals. The appropriate response agencies are notified, including the Army response agency, CARA, and the non-explosive item is securely transported to ECBC's Chemical Transfer Facility (CTF) at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. Explosively configured items are safely transported to a storage bunker at Edgewood. The CTF is the single repository for the Army's research and development stocks of toxic chemical agents and is classified as a Single Small Scale Facility under the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is equipped with personnel and technologies to accurately handle, analyze and identify an unknown substance.



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Unidentified contents can pose great dangers to personnel supporting Department of Defense remediation efforts across the country. With a highly trained and experienced work-force that is certified, vaccinated, cleared and mobile, CBARR is recognized as a leading entity that can safely determine unknown samples and recommend follow-up protocols to ensure proper handling.



How Does ECBC Determine How to Handle an Unknown Sample?

Members of ECBC's Chemical Operations Branch, Environmental Monitoring Laboratory (EML) and the Safety and Healthy Office meet and perform a table-top risk assessment for handling the unknown sample. Determining proper methods, the sample container is opened and the solid or liquid contents are assessed and analyzed by the appropriate methods in accordance with customer requirements.



How Long Does It Take to Determine the Contents of An Unknown Sample?

The EML is a full-service laboratory for processing a high volume of samples. With more than 50 civilian and contractor staff members, the EML is capable of analyzing samples in a short period of time and with a sense of urgency that ensures safety for personnel and the community.



What Happens After a Sample Is Accurately Analyzed and Identified?

ECBC issues a final report to the customer regarding the unknown sample. This report includes an analytical narrative, sample summary, photographs, charts and analytical results for all for all of the tests conducted on the sample. From the data, the customer can accurately assess the situation on the project site and the decide the best path forward.

What Capabilities Does ECBC Provide to Customers?

Using state-of-the-art equipment, the EML has the capability to perform analysis of several matrices. This includes: air, water, soil, paint chips, wipes, organic solids and liquids, marine tissue, demolition debris and unknowns. Environmental sample screening includes qualitative and quantitative analysis of chemical agents, biological agents, degradation products, industrial compounds and metals in a wide range of media.