



U/FOUO REL NATO, GCTF, ISAF, ABCA



CALL Lesson of the Day

SUBJECT: Proper Storage of Ammunition.

Theater: Afghanistan

Date: 18 May 2012

1. Observation: While doing a battlefield circulation throughout RC-South ammunition holding areas (AHA), brigade ammunition inspectors noticed several deficiencies pertaining to the proper storage of ammunition. The following deficiencies were noted:

- a) Ammunition items lying out and not being stored in the appropriate containers with the proper packaging. These items were lying on the floor of CONEXes and were being stored in or lying on top of other ammunition.
- b) Ammunition was also being stacked improperly and not separated properly by DODIC and lot number. Ammunition needs to be separated by DODIC type, lot number, and condition codes in order to maintain proper accountability when conducting inventories and to easily identify ammunition that may become restricted or suspended through Notices of Ammunition Restriction messages (NARs) or Ammunition Information Notices (AINs).
- c) Two 10 lb BC fire extinguishers were not present at all the AHA sites.
- d) CONEX was caving in due to improper weight on top of the CONEX for proper protection against indirect fire.
- e) There was mixing of residue ammunition with live ammunition as well as several different types of live ammunition mixed together.
- f) Hand grenades were taped. At no time will hand grenades be taped to hold the pin of the grenade, because if the tape sticks to the grenade when trying to remove the tape, the pin can come off and the grenade could explode.
- g) Containers storing white phosphorous (WP) ammunition did not have the required 55 gallon barrel of water.
- h) Also, ammunition needs to be stacked neatly, ensuring ammunition will not fall over injuring personnel or accidentally set off the munitions. Inspectors noticed several stacks of ammunition where the wooden pallets underneath the ammunition were decayed and it made the stockpile of ammunition unsteady or susceptible to fall

over. Other ammunition was just stacked together with other ammunition, making it very unsafe.



Figure 1 showing improperly stored ammunition

2. Discussion: Proper storage is essential for proper safety and ammunition accountability. When not handled correctly, ammunition can also cause damage to the ammunition itself making it unserviceable. Soldiers need to be aware of the potential hazard of improper storage of ammunition as it relates to safety and the effect it can cause on ammunition management.

It is the responsibility of the company commanders and NCOIC of each FOB to ensure all AHAs are in compliance with safety regulations and proper ammunition storage procedures are followed.

- a) Units need to secure all munitions in ammunition cans or some container to ensure they are out of the weather and primers are protected from being accidentally hit and causing an accidental discharge, resulting in injury or death.
- b) All AHAs need to at least have two 10 lb BC fire extinguishers on hand in case of a fire, with proper charging of both fire extinguishers.
- c) All ammunition must be stacked properly and segregated by DODIC, lot number, and condition code. This helps with accountability and inventories as

well as helping to identify bad lots of ammunition to segregate for turn-in procedures.

- d) Never, under any circumstance, mix ammunition of different types or store live ammunition with residue!
- e) Never tape hand grenades!
- f) When storing WP ammunition, it is required to have a 55 gal barrel of water in order to submerge cracked or smoking WP ammunition in order to keep oxygen from igniting the round.



Figure 2 showing properly stored ammunition

3. Lessons Learned:

The key points of the lessons learned are listed in paragraph 2. In addition to these, units must consider:

- a) Before putting additional weight on top of a CONEX for additional overhead protection, ensure that the roof of the CONEX is reinforced properly *before* the excess weight is stacked onto the CONEX. Not properly reinforcing the CONEX will result in a cave in of the roof.

- b) Ensure the amount of expended ammo brass that is put into multi-pack boxes does not make the box bulge. Ammunition brass is extremely heavy, so multi-pack boxes of ammunition should never be filled all the way to the top. If this happens the brass will make the box bulge and a top cannot be put on the box, making it unsafe to transport via an LHS. This slows down the ammo process for turn-ins because the ammunition brass needs to be taken out of one box and put into another.

4. Recommendation:

- a) All commanders and leaders associated with the ammunition storage at each location need to inspect the ammunition at least once a week and inventories need to be completed and submitted monthly to higher headquarters.
- b) Ensure CONEXes are reinforced before additional weight is put on the top.
- c) Make sure all ammo cans are properly marked with DODIC and lot number to ensure the ammunition in the ammo can actually matches the markers on the can. Mismarking of ammunition can lead to a soldier's death. If the can says 5.56mm but inside the can is C4 with det cord attached to it, bad things can happen through mishandling.
- d) Never slam or throw ammunition. This can result in accidentally hitting the primers, causing the rounds to go off.
- e) If ammunition is found on the battlefield, call EOD. Never handle live ammunition on the battlefield. Mark the site and call EOD immediately!

5. Related CALL publications:

- 07-15, The First 100 Days Handbook
- ALARACT 275/2007 AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVES MISHAPS

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