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Weapon Contamination Manual: Reducing the Impact of Explosive Remnants of War and Landmines Through Field Activities

Book Review

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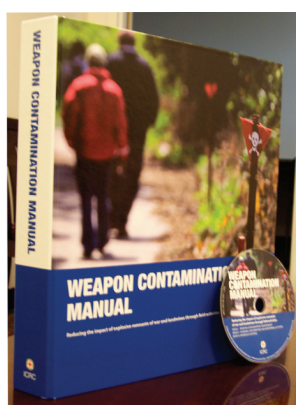
book reviews

Weapon Contamination Manual: Reducing the Impact of Explosive Remnants of War and Landmines Through Field Activities

International Committee of the Red Cross
Mine Action Sector
August 2007

<http://snipurl.com/41x41>

80.00 CHF (US \$72.50)



reviewed by Suzanne L. Fiederlein, Ph.D. [Mine Action Information Center]

explaining the nature and characteristics of weapon contamination and the physical, social, and economic impact of the presence of landmines and ERW. It then identifies the legal context and the main international actors involved in the global landmine- and ERW-eradication efforts and some of the management tools and coordination structures they have at their disposal.

“Book II: Planning, Implementing and Monitoring Activities” addresses some of the finer points that must be considered when formulating operational plans for reducing the impact of weapon contamination, recognizing that different approaches work best in different contexts (such as during armed conflict, in post-conflict environments and in a peacetime setting). Book II walks through elements of information collection and needs assessment so critical to understanding context as well as the process of developing strategies for action and program monitoring.

“Book III: Reference Material” contains a number of highly useful resources that can be easily accessed as needed, including legal documents such as the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction* and the *Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects*, Amended Protocol II and Protocol V. The book includes reference materials one would expect in a manual of this sort—glossaries and a list of sources of additional information. It also contains information on “dealing with human remains in contaminated areas,” and has an excellent section on data gathering and analysis as well as a concise overview of the basic elements of a risk-education program.

The hard copy version of the manual comes in a binder with the three books bound separately in soft cover. Copies can also be downloaded separately in PDF format from the ICRC Web site; CD and hard copy formats can be ordered there as well: <http://snipurl.com/41x41>.



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The International Committee of the Red Cross—which has had an important role in the global effort to eradicate and ease the impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war—released its *Weapon Contamination Manual: Reducing the Impact of Explosive Remnants of War and Landmines Through Field Activities* in August 2007. It consists of three parts, or “books,” and is designed to serve as the institutional reference for ICRC field operations, as well as provide guidance to others working in an environment impacted by the presence of landmines and ERW.

The great value of the manual is that it draws on experience gained through decades of work by ICRC personnel in war-affected areas; it addresses weapon contamination in a comprehensive manner, albeit primarily from an ICRC institutional focus; and it is organized in a logical and clear way so that specific information can be found with ease. Although written to serve as a guide for ICRC personnel, it is an invaluable resource for any organization working in a post-conflict environment where landmines and ERW are present, and for anyone wanting to learn about the problem of weapon contamination in detail.

“Book I: Weapon Contamination Environment” begins with the basics of the problem—