Reducing MSDs and (Debatably) Stress with AGC

Advanced geophysical classification (AGC) has been shown to accurately predict the size of munitions and facilitate reduction of the minimum separation distance (MSD) during digging targets of interest. Since Department of Defense authorization of AGC technology in this capacity in May 2022, Tetra Tech has successfully implemented reduced MSDs at one residential project site where the munition with the greatest fragmentation distance (MGFD) was the M64A1 500-lb bomb. We are planning the use of flexible MSDs for additional upcoming projects where digging operations will most likely impact adjacent communities.

The use of AGC to reduce MSDs is an emerging process within the munitions response industry. Understandably so, there are unforeseen challenges which arise during this emerging process, all while working to adhere to applicable guidance, to maintain safety of field personnel and the public and to keep the project on schedule. Our experience highlights the following areas: 1) having defensible yet not overly restrictive procedures; 2) preparing governing safety plans which both follow guidance requirements and contain necessary information to allow for MSD reductions; 3) understanding what is meant by “size prediction” in geophysical data when establishing actionable MSD bins; 4) and effectively managing large classification data sets in the home office and in the field. Most importantly, our growing experience with this process has amplified the need for early and often collaboration between contractor and Government project team subject matter experts, especially explosives safety experts.