



LMAS 09.11 Annex C

CLEARANCE OF VEGETATION USING STRIMMERS

Responsible Local entity:

Sahrawi Mine Action Coordination Office

Contact: (00213) 673662211

Gaici Nah

operations@smaco-ws.com

Rabouni Algeria

Note:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Vegetation is a common obstacle confronted during battle area clearance operations as it impedes the ability to search for ERW visually, with instruments and can impact on safety, i.e. when traversing the ground and through concealment of ERW.
- 1.2 A mechanical hand-held strimmer may be used for the removal of vegetation in clear areas in support of mine action operations, on approval by the LMAS.
- 1.3 Mine Action Organisation must have detailed mechanical hand-held strimmer procedures in their SOP for authorised use in Mine Action operations in Western Sahara, East of the Berm (EoB).

2. Requirements and Procedure

- 2.1 The strimmer shall not be used in areas suspected / confirmed to contain mines and functional trip wires, however the LMAS may authorise their use in confirmed anti-tank mined areas, based on a pertinent risk assessment.
- 2.2 The strimmer may be used for the removal of vegetation in ERW hazardous areas, i.e. during battle area clearance operations.
- 2.3 A pertinent risk assessment shall be conducted prior to deploying strimmers which shall take into consideration the type of explosive ordnance and other hazards.
- 2.4 Authorisation for use of the strimmer shall be made by the external monitor and SMACO on a site by site basis, and shall be detailed in the Implementation Plan.
- 2.5 When deploying the strimmer in ERW hazardous areas the following shall be adhered to:
 - a. The strimmer operator shall be qualified (accredited) to use the strimmer.
 - b. The strimmer shall be operated by 1 person (i.e. Deminer) wearing full PPE (helmet and/or visor and body armour).
 - c. The minimum safety distance for operating the strimmer in uncleared areas shall be 25 metres from other personnel wearing full PPE and 100m from other personnel who are without PPE.
 - d. These distances shall be increased as required, i.e. depending on the type and condition of the explosive ordnance where the strimmer shall be deployed, may be reduced on agreement with the LMAS based on a pertinent risk assessment, and in circumstances where adequate protection is afforded, e.g. natural or human made objects such as a hill or wall.
 - e. The safety distance from the working strimmer may be entered by pertinent personnel wearing full PPE when there is a requirement for closer supervision or monitoring.
 - f. Prior to commencing the cutting procedure, the operator shall look into the vegetation to confirm that there are no obvious hazards, e.g. explosive ordnance, suspicious items or obstacles. Any hazards identified shall be immediately brought to the attention of the Supervisory person who shall take appropriate action.
 - g. The vegetation shall be cut systematically from the top downwards in a safe and controlled manner at a maximum of 50 cm segments at a time.
 - h. The vegetation shall be cut to a minimum distance of **20 cm** above the surface. This distance may be reduced to **5 cm** in circumstances where the ground is confirmed as surface cleared.
 - i. The maximum distance that vegetation shall be cut forward at a time shall be the dictated by the design of the machine (trimmer), the safety of the operator and the

effectiveness of the machine. The operator shall ensure that he/she is in a stable position and is complete control of the strimmer while operating it. However, the distance shall be agreed with the external monitor and SMACO in advance.

- j. A visual inspection shall be conducted of the area cut to confirm that there are no hazards such as explosive ordnance, suspicious items or obstacles, prior to the operator moving forward.
- k. The operator shall be under regular supervision when operating the strimmer.

3. Examples for deployment of the strimmer

3.1 Removing vegetation in cleared areas to facilitate the marking of designated administration areas. In these circumstances there may be no requirement for the strimmer operator to wear demining PPE however shall at least wear safety goggles (or a visor) to protect his/her eyes from vegetation, etc. thrown by the strimmer. The safety distance from the working strimmer may be reduced in accordance with the strimmer manufacturer's instructions or a distance approved by the SMACO.

3.2 Removing vegetation in unclear areas to facilitate battle area clearance operations.