

# Heritage and Archaeology Sites: Chance Find Management Guidelines

## INTRODUCTION

The BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT) is committed to the responsible management of heritage and/or archaeology sites within its project sites and maintenance and service areas. The intent of this document is to provide contractors with guidelines for the appropriate response to the discovery of known or suspected heritage sites during construction or maintenance activities. The objective for providing this information is to minimize disruption to the activity while promoting the preservation and proper management of heritage sites. Please note that these guidelines are not a substitute for the [studies and assessments](#) required before a project starts.

The following sections:

- 1) Describe the provincial heritage regulatory framework,
- 2) Present step-by-step guidelines for heritage and/or archaeology site chance find management, including a procedure for the identification, treatment, and management options for the discovery of human remains,
- 3) Identify the limitations of the Chance Find Management Guidelines, and
- 4) Provide a list of contacts to be notified if heritage and/or archaeology resources are encountered during construction activities.

## BC REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Heritage and/or archaeology sites in British Columbia are managed in accordance with the *Heritage Conservation Act* (RSBC 1996, c. 187). [Section 12.1 of the Heritage Conservation Act \(HCA\)](#) specifies that except as authorized by a permit issued under section 12.2 or 12.4, a person must not damage, excavate, dig in or alter, or remove any heritage object from a heritage and/or archaeology site.

The HCA gives automatic protection to all heritage and/or archaeology sites that pre-date AD 1846, regardless of whether they are recorded in the Provincial Heritage Register, and regardless of whether they are located on Crown land or private property. Certain sites, including human burial sites, and rock art sites with heritage value, are automatically protected, regardless of their antiquity.

All archaeological sites are protected by the HCA and it does not distinguish between undisturbed or disturbed sites.

## CHANCE FIND PROCEDURES

**Step 1:** If suspected archaeological materials or features are encountered, immediately stop work, create a 30m buffer around the discovery site, and secure the area. Do not undertake further work within the buffer zone that could disturb the find, including moving any soil from the vicinity of the site or adjacent spoil material. Contractors may be required to undertake a variety of mitigative measures, such as [drainage or erosion control, slope stabilization measures, or erecting fences etc.](#) to protect the site. Please see the [Standard Specifications for Highway Construction Section 165.20](#) for more information. **Step 2:** Contact the Archaeology Branch for advice on further action. **Step 3:** Inform the Ministry Representative for your project or District Office Area Manager for your service area.



Chipped stone flakes and core artifacts



Fire altered rock



Waterlogged basket (cleaned)



Shell midden deposits

# Heritage Sites: Chance Find Management Guidelines

## MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

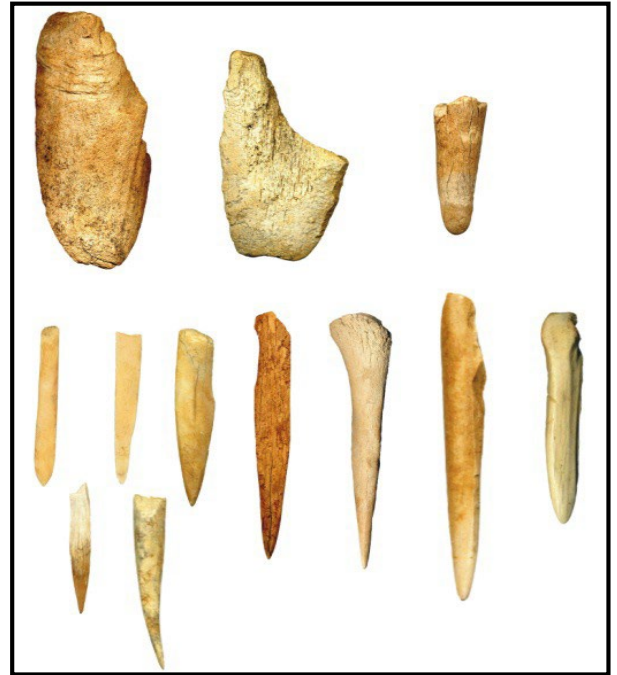
If an archaeological site is confirmed, discussions will occur between the Archaeology Branch, the contractor, First Nations, and the MoTT to select the appropriate management option\*. Options could include:

- 1) Avoidance through partial activity redesign or relocation. This results in minimal impact to the archaeological site, is the preferred option from a cultural resource management perspective and is the least expensive option. An archaeological impact assessment may be required to define site limits.
- 2) Application of temporary and/or permanent site protection measures as approved by the Archaeology Branch (e.g., fencing off the site, capping with soil). An archaeological impact assessment to identify site boundaries and archaeological monitoring to verify the effectiveness of protective measures may be required.
- 3) Archaeological mitigation involving controlled excavations or archaeological construction monitoring.
- 4) Monitoring of construction or maintenance activities near the site by a professional archaeologist.

\*A permit under Section 12.1 of the HCA may be required prior to undertaking any of these options.

## CHANCE FIND – HUMAN REMAINS

- 1) If suspected human remains are encountered (either intact or disturbed), immediately stop construction or maintenance activities and secure the area.
- 2) Do not undertake further work that could disturb the remains. This includes moving soil and/or spoil.
- 3) Inform the Ministry Representative or District Office Area Manager of the discovery.
- 4) Contact the Archaeology Branch.
- 5) A designate shall contact all First Nations with traditional interests in the area.
- 6) The archaeologist or designate may visit the site with First Nations representatives.
- 7) If it is determined that the human remains are not archaeological in nature, the local policing authority and Office of the Coroner will be contacted by the Archaeology Branch.
- 8) Discussions between the Archaeology Branch, First Nations, archaeologist, and the contractor will identify appropriate follow-up procedures including the appropriate treatment of the human remains and reburial procedures.



Bone and antler artifacts

## LIMITATIONS

This document was prepared for the exclusive use of MoTT construction and maintenance contractors for the specific application during construction and maintenance activities. Consistent with the intent of the *Heritage Conservation Act*, contractors are advised that if unanticipated cultural materials or features are encountered during construction or maintenance activities, all work in the immediate area should cease, and the guidelines for heritage and/or archaeology site chance find management, as presented above, should be implemented. Should contractors have any concerns about archaeological deposits or human remains, an archaeologist should be contacted for direction. Note that although the HCA does not apply on federal land, these chance find procedures should still be implemented.

## CONTACTS:

### Northern Region:

Kathryn Graham (250) 981-1339

### Southern Interior Region:

Kirk Densmore (778)-362-4531

### South Coast Region:

Krista Englund (236) 468-1959

### Archaeology Branch Reception:

Tel: (250) 953-3334