



# Rebuilding After a Natural Disaster

## Ways to Mitigate Archaeological Risk for Property Owners and Developers

---

The British Columbia (B.C.) Heritage Conservation Act (HCA) protects archaeological sites across the province. There are presently 62,000 known archaeological sites in B.C. Archaeological sites are protected on public and private lands, regardless of previous disturbance or whether they've been officially recorded in the Provincial Heritage Register. Any impact to an archaeological site requires an HCA permit. The Ministry of Forests' Archaeology Branch regulates the HCA and issues permits. See the attached Property Owner Brochure for more context about the HCA and Archaeology in B.C.

### HCA Permits for Residents Impacted by Natural Disasters (Wildfire and Flood)

An HCA permit is required if there is a recorded archaeological site that overlaps with a proposed rebuilding or development project on private or public lands. In such cases, property owners and developers often need an archaeologist to review their building or development proposal and determine the work needed to meet HCA requirements.

To fast-track the permitting process and support people getting back into their homes once recovery is underway, the Province has developed HCA Permits which multiple residents can be included on rather than requiring all residents to apply for individual permits.

To be included and receive authorization under an HCA Permit, property owners and archeologists will need to request to be added to it. This request is made to the Archaeology Branch by the consulting archaeologist on behalf of the property owner.

Currently, there are several active HCA Permits that support rebuilding structures lost to recent wildfires as well as floods. Permits that cover other natural disasters may be created as needed. To find out which permits are appropriate for you please contact the Archaeology Branch.

---

#### Did you know?

While the province cannot require an HCA permit for properties that do not have previously recorded archaeological sites associated with them, **there is a risk of encountering a previously unknown site.**

For property owners, the consequences of uncovering a previously unknown site without authorization includes having to stop all work while required permits are obtained which results in delays and costs. To mitigate these risks at the planning stage of your project you can:

1. Contact the Archaeology Branch to request information specific to your property;
2. Hire an archaeologist;
3. Consider low impact building techniques.



## Getting Started: Information about Properties

Your first step to finding out whether there is a recorded archaeological site on your property or the risks of encountering an unrecorded archaeological site on your property is to submit a Data Request Form to the Archaeology Branch at:

<https://www.archdatarequest.nrs.gov.bc.ca/>. Under Section 2 of the data request form (see screen capture below), please indicate “**DISASTER**”. This will ensure that your request is directed to the Disaster Response and Recovery Team at the Archaeology Branch.

**YOUR INFORMATION REQUEST**

\*1. What information are you requesting? (select and complete one):

I request information and advice about archaeological sites on the properties described below, include the Parcel Identifier (PID), street address, and the legal description if available. Please upload them to the File Attachments section near the end of the form.):

Other (describe below):

I am a representative of the seller or prospective purchaser of the properties described above are currently listed for sale.

I am the property owner of the properties described above. I require the information

Other (describe below):

DISASTER

## Hiring an Archaeologist

Qualified and eligible archaeologists provide expert archeological advice for the development of building plans and approaches.

### What is the role of an archaeologist?

1. They can review your development plans, provide a risk assessment, and make recommendations to minimize impacts to known archaeological sites.
2. They can assess properties with high archaeological potential to determine if a site is present.
3. Their findings help inform development plans, building approaches and recommendations to ensure alignment with the HCA.
4. They submit necessary forms and reports to the Archaeology Branch.



Hiring an archaeologist provides you with certainty and necessary knowledge about your property. It helps minimize unplanned delays and costs if there is an archaeological site on your property, or one is discovered in the process of planning to rebuild.

To learn more about how to hire an archaeologist, please visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/natural-resource-use/archaeology/private-commercial-or-development-property>

## Low Impact Building Techniques

Using construction options that minimize impacts to sites during rebuilding helps mitigate archaeological risks. Property owners and developers are encouraged to consider low impact building techniques and approaches to minimize ground disturbance. See the attached Property Owner Brochure for examples of Low Impact Building Techniques.

As a property owner, you are encouraged to discuss low impact building techniques with your archaeologist.

## Contact Information

For inquiries relating to archaeological permitting on properties impacted by natural disasters, contact the Archaeology Branch at: [Archaeology@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Archaeology@gov.bc.ca), or contact an eligible archaeologist.