

Royal British Columbia Museum
Archaeology Division

Repository Requirements

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Repository Requirements for Submission of Archaeological Material

The Royal British Columbia Museum Corporation (RBCM) curates objects and information that illustrate the natural and human history of British Columbia. The RBCM subscribes to national and international standards of museum practice and conservation. By accepting archaeological materials into its collection, the RBCM assumes a commitment to ensure safe storage of those materials and associated information in perpetuity. The RBCM currently accepts material without direct cost to the client (i.e. Archaeological consultants). This document provides a description of standards and a list of requirements that are designed to ensure the RBCM collection meets national and international standards.

Please note that the decision for the RBCM to act as repository for any given project is the responsibility of the RBCM Collections Committee under the terms of the Collections Policy. The RBCM reserves the right to reject material that does not adhere to the requirements listed in this document.

Currently, the RBCM does not charge a fee for acting as a repository. We are making efforts to store artifacts in a safer, more efficient way that will be easier for First Nations and researchers to access. Your cooperation in the artifact submission process is greatly appreciated and makes it possible for us to continue to offer this service without fees. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Collection Manager who will be happy to help.

Requesting to use the RBCM as your repository

Requesting to list a repository on a permit application is imperative for several reasons. First, the requirements of a repository form a legal extension of the conditions of permit, specifically conditions 6, 7, 11, and 12 of Section 12 permits, and conditions 6, 7, 8, and 9 of Section 14 permits (see below). Archaeologists need to know what obligations they are agreeing to. Repositories are not responsible for post-excavation costs, therefore permit holders need to be able to include the obligations to the repository in their initial budget.

Section 12 – Conditions of Permit

6. Where a condition for archaeological monitoring of development is attached to the permit, the permit-holder shall arrange for a secure repository to curate any materials recovered under authority of the permit.

7. Heritage objects and associated materials recovered under authority of the permit may not be sold or exchanged for financial gain. Any other transfer of heritage objects, materials and records, or changes to the conditions identified under the "Disposition of materials collected..." section of the permit may only be carried out with prior consent of the Minister.

11. The permit holder shall conform to all requirements that may be imposed by the institution or organization named in the "Disposition of materials collected..." section of the permit.

12. Notwithstanding expiration or earlier termination of the term of the permit, provisions with respect to the "Disposition of materials collected ..." section shall remain and continue in full force and effect.

Section 14 - Conditions of Permit

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8. The permit holder shall conform to all requirements that may be imposed by the institution or organization named in the "Disposition of materials collected..." section of the permit.

9. Notwithstanding expiration or earlier termination of the term of the permit, provisions with respect to the "Disposition of materials collected ..." section shall remain and continue in full force and effect.

Second, repositories need to be able to plan ahead, therefore it is imperative that archaeologists obtain permission to use a given repository before the permit application is submitted to the Archaeology Branch.

Permission to list a repository on a permit application must be sought *each time* you apply for a new permit. This includes S.12 permits that follow on from S.14 permits as methodology and anticipated materials to be recovered can change.

RBCM repository request forms can be found on our website, at:

<http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/collections/human-history/archaeology#forms>

Information for this form can be copied from your draft permit application. Please **submit a project map** with your application. Completed forms should be sent to ghill@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

Please contact us if you've recovered anything unexpected: a greater volume of material or a specific type that wasn't mentioned in your initial repository request, such as unexpected waterlogged material. This will allow us to provide you with specific advice about how to care for the material before it is sent to the repository, and it will give us time to find or make space to accommodate your material.

Provincial Artifact Catalogue

Under the *Heritage Conservation Act* S.3(1)(b), all heritage sites and heritage objects are to be recorded in the Provincial Heritage Register. While archaeological and other heritage sites are recorded by the Archaeology Branch, heritage objects (read *artifacts*) are recorded by the RBCM in the Provincial Artifact Catalogue. All artifacts are given a catalogue number, and the associated information is recorded in order to keep track of the location of recovered material. The Provincial Artifact Catalogue predates the establishment of the Archaeology Branch and the *HCA*, and is well over 100 years old. The Provincial Catalogue exists in order to allow First Nations and researchers to access the objects and associated data, and to follow it to the appropriate repository. Although the level of detail recorded has varied over time, the RBCM is working hard to update the Provincial Artifact Catalogue in order to ensure that it is an effective research tool for the future. To that end, your assistance with requests and timely reporting of last numbers used is appreciated.

All heritage objects recovered in BC are required to have a catalogue number.

In order to request Provincial Artifact Catalogue numbers, please complete the form on our website at: <http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/collections/human-history/archaeology#forms>

Please submit completed forms to ghill@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca and allow 5 business days for processing.

When reporting, please ensure that Provincial Artifact Catalogue numbers (rather than internal numbers) are used wherever possible in order to avoid confusion. If internal numbers are used, a disclaimer must be made in the introduction to the permit report, on the site form, and in any other relevant documentation in order to ensure that the reader can easily find the corresponding Provincial Catalogue numbers.

In cases where artifacts will be reburied on site, they should be assigned a catalogue number, but the number does not need to be written on the artifact. The artifacts should be thoroughly

documented (i.e. measured, photographed, etc.) in order to ensure that if they are uncovered again in the future we aren't mistaking them for a new site. A statement about the reburial of artifacts should be included in the final report and the site form so as to avoid any misunderstanding about their whereabouts.

Submission Standards for Archaeological Material

What to submit:

The following items must be submitted to the repository by the permit expiry date:

- A cover sheet itemizing deliverables (see below)
- All artifacts recovered
- All faunal material
- Any sample material
- Artifact catalogue (hard copy & digital – in excel format)
- Site Form (digital)
- Permit Report (digital)
- External reports (including specialist reports and original radiocarbon date reports)
- All field notes (hard copy and/or digital)
- All field maps (hard copy and/or digital)
- All photographs and photo log (hard copies & digital)

We require a cover sheet to be submitted with any incoming material. The purpose of this is to provide both the RBCM and depositor with a detailed list of deliverables. This should include:

- Name, contact information, and address of permit holder and institutional affiliation
- HCA Permit Number(s)
- Site number(s)
- A break-down of submitted material, to include number of boxes and contents.
For example:
 - DeRv-xx: 3 boxes
 - Box 1 – Artifacts 1-65, 2 bags faunal material
 - Box 2 – 8 column sample bags
 - Box 3 – Site form, permit report, artifact catalogue, appendices, field notes, maps, and photos

Please note that boxes should not weigh more than 25 lbs. each.

Artifact Preparation

Prior to initiating any cleaning or labelling of artifacts, consider whether or not the object in question may be suitable for specialized study. If the object is unique or well suited to further specialized analysis, please contact the Collection Manager to discuss cleaning and storage options. Much of the material recovered will receive standard cleaning and labelling.

Cleaning

Artifacts should be cleaned (where appropriate) prior to submission to the repository. Based on the material and its condition, a gentle wash in water or a dry brush may be appropriate. Don't forget that some classes of artifact, such as incised siltstones, are very delicate and should be given extra care. Any objects washed with water must be thoroughly dry before they are labelled and stored in plastic bags. It is often preferable to dry-brush porous material. If you have any questions about cleaning methods please contact the Collection Manager to discuss.

Labeling

Artifacts should be clearly labelled. Where labels are illegible, artifacts may be rejected until labelling is corrected.

PRACTICE! Use a non-artifact to practice the application of B-72, lettering, and placement.

Rapidograph pens, or map nib (#104) should be used wherever possible. Commercial pen nibs are often too broad and obscure letters and numbers. Please ensure that your **u**, **v**, **n**, **h**, **c** and **e** characters (to name a few) are clear and distinct. Please do not cross your **7** as this often looks like **4** when crammed on to a tiny artifact.

Non-perishable artifacts should be labelled using Paraloid B-72*, appropriate ink or printed tags, and sealed again with B-72. The B-72 should be applied cleanly without feathered edges, and should not be significantly larger than the area required to label the artifact.

** Conservation recommends Paraloid B-72 over nail polish because its chemical make up is known, and consistent. The formulation of nail polish varies greatly, and the long-term stability of nail polish is unknown. Further, nail polish may have one or more chemicals that can negatively impact the artifacts over time*

Dark coloured artifacts should be labelled with white ink. (Some people have used white nail polish, which was often poorly applied and obscures the object below to a greater degree than clear nail polish. DO NOT use white out. **Kohinoor Universal Ink** in white has been used successfully. Light coloured artifacts should be labelled with black ink.

Broken artifacts should be labelled “a, b, c...” and the catalogue should reflect the total number of pieces.

Groups of artifacts, such as unmodified lithic debitage, that have been recovered from a single level/layer from a shovel test or evaluative unit may be bagged as a ‘lot’ and given one catalogue number. The artifact catalogue must note the number of fragments assigned to each lot.

Perishable artifacts should be labelled in such a fashion that the tag does not damage the artifact. Please discuss with RBCM Collection Manager or specialist.

Artifact Storage

The RBCM is responsible for the safe storage of artifacts. We have begun to change the way we store artifacts to ensure that they are well protected and well organized under daily and catastrophic circumstances.

Artifacts measuring *less than 14 x 9 x 1 cm* will be stored in a card catalogue style, according to Borden number and artifact number (Figure 1).



Figure 1 - Catalogued artifacts in bag

Small artifacts should be placed in a bag measuring 14 x 9 cm*, with the opening along the **long** side of the bag. Please **DO NOT** use bags with openings along the short side as these do not fit in the catalogue boxes. **The correct bags are available from the Great Little Box Company.*

Several small artifacts may be placed in the same bag (Figure 1). If artifacts in each of the smaller bags are too small to label, then each bag must contain a slip of paper with the artifact number on it.

A ‘lot’ of artifacts (i.e. many obsidian flakes from the same context) may be placed in the 14 x 9 cm bags. Please DO NOT place more than one ‘lot’ in the same bag. Tags for ‘lots’ must indicate how many individual pieces are in the lot.

If three or more small artifacts are placed in a bag, please **write out each number in full**– do not put a number range.

A 3”x5” (76.2 by 127.0 mm) index card with the artifact number(s) in the **top right corner** must be placed in the bag (see Figures 1&2). Any supplemental information (which is always appreciated) should go on the back of the card. This can include permit number, site name, EU and level, date of recovery, and comments. Please ensure supplemental information is clear. Some companies choose to print out smaller cards with relevant information – this is okay, but *we still require an index card with the artifact number(s) in the top right corner as well* (Figure 4).

Artifacts larger than the measurements above will be stored in an oversized drawer, but a catalogue card will be placed in with the smaller artifacts to redirect the researcher (Figures 2&3). Please provide two index cards with the same information for each, one of which says “oversize.”

Waterlogged Material

Please inform the RBCM if waterlogged material is anticipated or found. The Collection Manager can advise about in-field conservation. For long-term conservation, the RBCM often sends this material off-site. Hard costs, such as shipping and treatment, are the responsibility of the depositor. Currently, the RBCM sends waterlogged material out of province for conservation treatments, so be sure to mention this fact in your permit applications if you anticipate recovering waterlogged material.



Figure 2 - Oversized artifact catalogue card



Figure 3 - Oversized artifacts in separate drawer



Figure 4 - Supplemental information

Warehouse Storage

Faunal material, and samples are kept at the RBCM warehouse. Due to the number of boxes, and to the storage system, we require archaeologists to submit this material in Stack and Nest totes for health and safety reasons. Please ensure that all material is dry before it is sealed and packaged for long-term storage. Please note that boxes should not weigh more than 25 lbs. each.

Samples

The RBCM accepts a wide variety of samples. Specialized samples, such as flotation and carbon samples, residues, wood, column samples, etc. will be accepted. While soil samples should ideally be processed as part of the ongoing project, we acknowledge that specialist services are

not always available during the life of the project. Any samples submitted must be clearly labelled and appropriately packaged for long-term storage. Rationale for keeping the sample(s) should be included in the report.

If one or more box worth of samples is submitted, please place them in **Stack and Nest Totes*** measuring (Figure 5 a,b). These totes measure 18x11x6” (SNT180) or 19.5x15.5x10” (SNT190).

Where possible, keep sites together. If more than one tote of material from a given site is to be submitted, try to arrange samples by type. If less than one tote of material is submitted, please arrange material based the proximity of sites to one another.

* *Please note that totes and lids are often sold separately.*

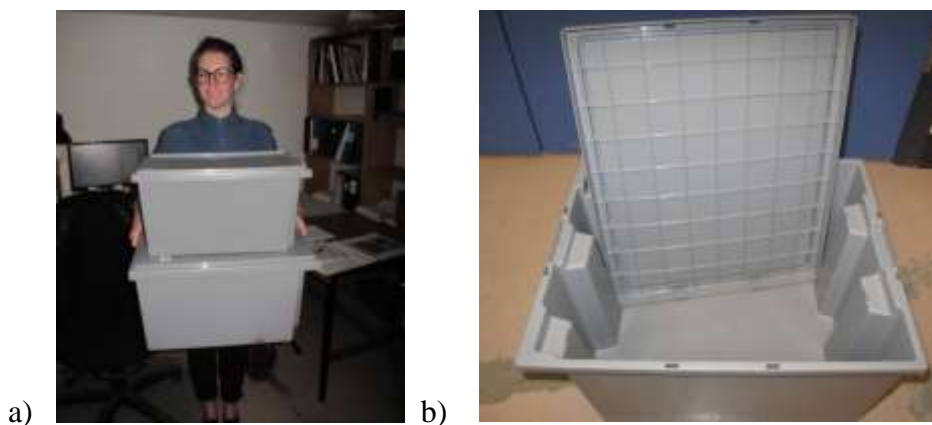


Figure 5 - a,b - Stack & Nest Totes

Faunal Material

The RBCM accepts faunal material as it may be very useful for future study, both in the fields of archaeology and biology.

DO NOT assign catalogue numbers to unmodified faunal specimen.

Please ensure that identified faunal material is clearly labelled in paper or plastic bags. Associated information should be included on the bag itself and on a card *inside* bag. Identified faunal material should be easy to access. If it is confusing for you it will be confusing for us.

Please consult the Collection Manager if you recover very large whale bones.

Post-1846 Material

If you have a site that you anticipate will yield significant post-1846 material, please contact the Collection Manager to discuss a collection strategy before fieldwork begins. Historical material that is found while excavating a pre-1846 site should be **thoroughly documented** as part of the standard project. Historic artifacts should be counted and photographed, by context, in the field, and a representative sample kept. Artifacts of BC manufacture, or ones that are linked to a unique historic event, may be submitted to the RBCM.

When collecting historical material, please only submit representative samples. For example, if you have 5000+ pieces of broken bottle glass, please only submit those that are good examples of the types recovered. A complete catalogue is important for future research. Intact bottles with BC makers marks, and objects of that nature, may be submitted. If you are uncertain, please seek assistance from the RBCM.

Field Notes, Maps, Photos, etc.

The purpose of repositing archaeological material is to create the archive of archaeological sites in BC. To that end, documentary material from each project is required. This includes projects with negative results for cultural material. We accept original field notes. If you need the originals, please scan them and *ensure they are legible*.

Please submit all photos taken, not just the ones that appear in the report. The photo record is incredibly important for anyone wishing to study the site in future. Include photo log with description of each photo.

Appendices

Include original documents such as Radiocarbon lab reports and faunal analysis reports with your submission.

Final Reports and Site Forms

Please provide one digital copy of the site form and the final report on USB or CD. (USBs will not be returned). For multi-year projects, interim reports should be submitted annually, along with artifacts, and a final report may be submitted at the close of project.

If the permit report is rejected by the Archaeology Branch, and a revised copy is submitted to them and accepted, please ensure that the RBCM is provided with the updated version.

Artifact Catalogue

The artifact catalogue must be in Excel format. Contact the Collection Manager to obtain a copy of the template. Please provide a hard copy of the artifact catalogue (not just as part of the final report).

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If you have any questions about the above requirements, please do not hesitate to contact the Collections Manager.

## **Contacts**

Anthropology Collection Manager and Researcher

Dr. Genevieve Hill

[GHill@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](mailto:GHill@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca)

(250) 893-8019

Archaeology Curator

Grant Keddie

[gkeddie@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](mailto:gkeddie@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca)

(250) 387-2416

## Glossary

|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>10 Agents of Deterioration</b> | These are the 10 primary threats to the safety of archaeological material. They are:<br>Physical forces, thieves and vandals, fire, water, pests, pollutants, light, incorrect temperature, incorrect relative humidity, and dissociation. More can be found at <a href="http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1444330943476">http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1444330943476</a>                                                                                                  |
| <b>Accession</b>                  | Transferring physical and legal control of <b>archaeological material</b> to a repository.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Accession Number</b>           | The number applied by the repository to a group of incoming <b>archaeological material</b> for internal tracking purposes. This is not to be confused with a <b>provincial artifact catalogue number</b> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Archaeological Material</b>    | Archaeological objects and data recovered during the course of any archaeological work. This includes, but is not limited to, artifacts, samples, faunal material, documents, photos, reports, etc. In practice, this term is used to refer to “ <b>heritage objects</b> ” which are defined under the <i>Heritage Conservation Act</i> as “personal property that has heritage value to British Columbia, a community or an aboriginal people” ( <i>HCA S.1</i> ) |
| <b>Archive</b>                    | A place where public and private documents are kept. These include, but are not limited to, correspondence, manuscripts, diaries, maps, photos, prints, etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Artifact/Artefact</b>          | An object made or modified by human skill.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Catalogue</b>                  | A document containing all known information about an artifact, including item description, context, and any other relevant information.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Cataloguing</b>                | The process of identifying the characteristics of an object or group of objects, and assigning it/them to categories within an organized system.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Catalogue Number</b>           | The sequential number applied to an object, the characteristics of which are recorded in a <b>catalogue</b> , for identification purposes. In BC, all archaeological objects are recorded in the <b>Provincial Artifact Catalogue</b> per Section 3(1)(b) of the <i>HCA</i> . Provincial Artifact Catalogue numbers must be obtained through the Archaeology Department of the Royal BC Museum.                                                                    |
| <b>Deposit</b>                    | A collection of archaeological material recovered under <i>HCA</i> permit that is being transferred to a repository.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Conservation</b>               | The methods of care for archaeological material to ensure long-term survival. Field conservation is undertaken by archaeologists to ensure that objects are carefully recovered and stored prior to deposition of the collection in a repository. Object conservation is undertaken by trained specialists who ensure the object will be protected for storage in perpetuity.                                                                                      |
| <b>Curator</b>                    | The museum staff member responsible for researching and interpreting museum collections, for museum exhibits and publications.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Collection Manager</b>            | The museum staff member responsible for the receipt and organization of archaeological material within a museum collection.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Database</b>                      | Computer based system of organized knowledge associated with collections.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Preservation</b>                  | Keeping something safe from harm. In practice, this means considering and mitigating the negative impacts from the <b>10 Agents of Deterioration</b> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Provincial Artifact Catalogue</b> | This is the register of “ <b>heritage objects</b> ” ( <i>HCA S.3(1)(b)</i> ). It is a record of all artifacts recovered from archaeological sites in BC. It includes information such as object description, date of recovery, donor/depositor, permit number and current location. The provincial catalogue includes artifacts recovered prior to the establishment of the <i>HCA</i> . |
| <b>Repatriation</b>                  | The return of archaeological material from museums to the community of origin.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Repository</b>                    | A place where archaeological materials are stored, cared for, and accessed by interested parties.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |