

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Archaeological sites are the physical remains of past human activity. In British Columbia, the importance of archaeological sites as a link to the past is recognized in legislation (the *Heritage Conservation Act*). It is against the law to alter an archaeological site without first obtaining a permit to do so. Therefore, if you are considering development that may impact an archaeological site, you must hire a professional consulting archaeologist to determine the steps required to minimize or avoid development impacts on the site.

Receipt of this completed form indicates that your local government has reviewed the records of the Archaeology Branch to determine if your proposed activities will impact a **protected** archaeological site. By identifying these types of overlaps with archaeological sites early in the planning/development process, costs can be significantly reduced. However, you should be aware that there are limitations concerning this review and we ask you read the disclaimer below.

Your proposal falls into the selected category:

☐ Direct Overlap with a known archaeological site

Provincial records indicate an archaeological site is recorded on, or may extend into, your property.

- It appears your development will result in impacts to this site.
- The Province indicates it is necessary that you hire a qualified consulting archaeologist to determine the steps in managing impacts to the archaeological site. Archaeologists may be contacted through the British Columbia Association of Professional Consulting Archaeologists at www.bcapca.bc.ca or through the local yellow pages.
- On the back of this form is information regarding the archaeological impact assessment process for British Columbia. If you have additional questions, you may wish to check the Archaeology Branch website (www.tti.gov.bc.ca/archaeology) or contact the Branch at (250) 953-3334.
- Any disturbance of an archaeological site without a permit is a breach of the legislation. An offence under this legislation may result in substantial fines and/or imprisonment.

☐ No identified overlap with a known archaeological site

Provincial records do not indicate that your property contains a known archaeological site.

- Archaeological potential mapping is not available for your area, therefore your local government is unable to assess the potential for unrecorded archaeological sites occurring on your property.
- There may be a possibility that unrecorded archaeological sites exist on your property.
- Unrecorded archaeological sites are also protected by Provincial legislation.
- If an archaeological site is encountered during development, activities must be halted and the Archaeology Branch contacted for direction (250) 953-3334.

Provincial Disclaimer: The Archaeology Branch of the Province of BC is responsible for the administration of the *Heritage Conservation Act*. It is not administered by municipal or regional governments. In completing this form, municipal and regional government staff are relying on information provided by the Province of BC. Any questions regarding this document should be directed to the Archaeology Branch at the address and telephone number below or to a qualified professional consulting archaeologist.

The information in this document is based on a search of Provincial archaeological records. There are archaeological sites in BC which are unknown and not recorded in these records.

The Province makes no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of this information. Persons relying upon it do so at their own risk.

The following outlines the steps to manage development related impacts to archaeological sites.

Archaeological sites are protected by the *Heritage Conservation Act*. These sites are protected for their historical, cultural, scientific, and educational value to the general public, local communities, and First Nations. When a proposed development location overlaps with an archaeological site, it is these values that are addressed in managing the development impacts to the site.

The property owner/developer is responsible for managing impacts to archaeological sites by engaging archaeological expertise to assess the situation and follow the site management requirements provided by the Archaeology Branch. This process is summarized in three steps:

Step 1: Determining if Further Archaeological Study is Necessary

Your local government has reviewed Provincial records and determined that your development may affect a protected archaeological site. It is necessary to hire a qualified consulting archaeologist. However, a qualified consulting archaeologist may re-examine the records and additional information, perhaps including a field visit, and conclude that development will not impact a site and further study is not needed. The archaeologist should send a letter stating the professional opinion to the Archaeology Branch.

If further archaeological study is warranted, you will be required to complete an archaeological impact assessment before starting land altering activities.

Step 2: Archaeological Impact Assessments: Developing Requirements to Manage Site Impacts

To manage impacts to the archaeological site, the archaeologist will have to know the site location, the significance of the site, and the extent of damage the development will cause to the site. These questions are answered by a field study called an archaeological impact assessment (or AIA). The AIA results in recommendations for the management of the expected site impacts from property development or resource extraction.

The feasibility of recommendations will be discussed with you before the archaeologist submits the AIA to the Archaeology Branch. Common recommendations include:

- Changing the building site or footprint to reduce or avoid archaeological site impacts.
- Changing construction techniques to reduce the degree of site impact (e.g., substituting an above ground basement or building on pads and or pilings, instead of regular in-ground foundation).
- Completing additional archaeological excavations to recover information that will be destroyed by development.
- No further action when the values associated with the site are insignificant.

Step 3: Development under a Site Alteration Permit

After the appropriate archaeological studies have been completed, the owner or developer of a property is required to obtain a Site Alteration Permit in order to alter the archaeological site.

The site alteration permit application is available through the Archaeology Branch website; however, most proponents have the application prepared by the archaeologist on their behalf.