

PROVINCIAL ARCHAEOLOGY OFFICE PROCEDURES
FOR LABELLING ARTIFACTS, REQUESTING DESTRUCTIVE ANALYSIS
AND SUBMITTING COLLECTIONS

The following are guidelines for the majority of the types of collections we have in Newfoundland and Labrador.

- You should consult with your Conservator for alternative approaches for fragile or unique items, faunal material and bulk iron. Ensure you review alternate options with the Provincial Archaeology Office (PAO).
- Remember the goal for all artifacts is to be able to maintain the correct information with them at all times, regardless of its use or if it gets separated from the collection. While you may have an internal system that works for you to organize and label artifacts, we need to ensure a standard approach so that in the future, artifacts continue to be decipherable for others to use them.
- For work starting in 2016 it is suggested that all permit holders submit a sample of their specimen record form and photos of numbered artifacts within one week after for review. You will see a reminder of this request on your permits.
- Proper procedures must be followed and **artifacts will no longer be accepted if they are improperly catalogued.**

CLEANING AND LABELLING ARTIFACTS

- Wash and dry artifacts, as appropriate to conservation requirements, prior to labelling. Ensuring the artifact is as dry as possible is essential. If the artifact has not dried completely prior to labelling the chances of the number peeling off in the near future are greatly increased.
- Apply a thin strip of Paraloid B-72 (20% in acetone) or clear nail polish to the smoothest surface and near the edge of the artifact
 - if possible avoid any areas of research interest, such as designs, maker's marks, and ground or chipped edges of stone artifacts
 - avoid writing on broken surfaces; if a mend is possible in the future it will be covered
 - avoid writing on the "display" side of an item, should it be available for an exhibition

Never apply white-out to artifacts prior to applying the catalogue number. White-out can be very damaging to artifacts as it flakes away from the artifact taking part of the surface with it and resulting in the loss of the catalogue number as well.

- Wait for the first coat to dry completely prior to writing on it as this will prevent illegible writing as well as clogging the pen nib ~~with B-72 or nail polish~~.
- If the artifact is light-coloured, use black ink. For dark-coloured specimens, use white ink. Do not apply white-out as a contrasting base.
- The catalogue number must be written neatly, legibly and as small as is reasonably possible.
- Artifacts from one site must be numbered in sequential order.
 - The same catalogue number is not to be applied to two different artifacts. Any additional information can be written on a second line.
 - **The Borden and Catalogue Number ONLY must be written on the first line.**
 - A key must be submitted with the artifacts indicating what the additional information means.

Examples:

DkBe-1:419	DkBe-1:32 a	DkBe-1:32 b	DkBe-1:419	DkBe-1:419
			Event 3	Level 2

- Wait for the ink to dry completely and apply another strip of of Paraloid B-72 (20% in acetone) or clear nail polish to cover the number
- Allow the top layer to dry completely before putting the artifact away.
- If an error is made in printing the catalogue number, remove it with a cotton swab and nail polish remover or acetone.

Labelling Artifacts Too Small or Fragile:

- If the artifact is too small, fragile, or rough-surfaced to print on, attach a label with the catalogue number to the artifact or to the container housing the artifact.

Labelling Numerous Flakes:

- If you have numerous flakes collected from the same unit and the same level the flakes must be sorted by material type and each type given a separate catalogue number.
- Numerous flakes of one type may be given **ONLY** one catalogue number which is attached to the container in which the flakes are housed.
- Less than five flakes from the same location must have the catalogue number written on them.
- Measurements for large numbers of flakes are not required.

Labelling Several Pieces from one Item:

- Artifacts which are found together must be separated by type and each type given a different number.
- If 2 or more sherds are clearly part of the same object letters may be assigned to each piece, for example DkBe-1:419 a-c. Never label artifacts past the letter "z". For example if there are 29 sherds of ceramic they must be labelled as follows: DkBe-1:419 a to 419 z; the remaining 3 sherds must be labelled with the next catalogue number, DkBe-1:420 a to 420 c. **Do not use DkBe-1:419 aa to 419-cc.**
- A separate catalogue entry should be done for each catalogue number. For example, one for DkBe-420 a and one for DkBe-1:420 b, if individual information is recorded for each. You can comment in the cataloguer's remarks that an artifact attaches to other artifacts, and list the number it attaches to.

LABELLING – EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICES

ACCEPTABLE	NOT ACCEPTABLE
 <p data-bbox="304 795 582 831">White and black ink</p>	 <p data-bbox="895 808 1251 844">White ink on light surface</p>
 <p data-bbox="256 1352 630 1388">Write on bottom of a bottle</p>	 <p data-bbox="866 1344 1278 1379">Too large and it is on the side</p>
 <p data-bbox="311 1816 576 1852">Small item bagged</p>	 <p data-bbox="975 1816 1171 1852">Smearred text</p>

ACCEPTABLE



Small flakes with tag

NOT ACCEPTABLE



Do not use whiteout as a base



How to add a second data field to a label



No numbering base of B72 or nail polish



Restoration is allowable – but permission should be obtained first.



Number written on the broken edge

DESTRUCTIVE ANALYSIS REQUESTS

The protection of archaeological artifacts falls under the *Historic Resources Act* Section 14. (4). All requests to alter an artifact, such as destructive analysis, require permission to proceed.

You should contact the PAO prior to any plans for destructive analysis.

Please note that once artifacts have been submitted and are in the collections of The Rooms Provincial Museum Division, any permission for destructive analysis need to be provided by them.

PACKING COLLECTIONS FOR SUBMISSION

Storage ready packaging is not required for your collection. Keep in mind that how you have been accessing the collection may not be how they are maintained in final storage. Once collections reach The Rooms, limitations of space, the type of collection you have, research and exhibition potentials etc. all impact on how the collections are ultimately stored.

You should however ensure your collections are packaged for the safety and stability of the objects in general. Ziploc bags of varying sizes and bankers boxes are acceptable standard materials that can be used. You should consult with your conservator or the PAO for packaging and transferring more fragile or special artifacts.

Pay attention to a standard organization of the collection – ie. organized by catalogue number, or by material, object or unit number. Something that will make reviewing the collections upon submission easy.

HOW TO SUBMIT FINISHED COLLECTIONS

Once your collections are ready for submission you should contact the PAO.

Your collection and catalogue will be reviewed at the time of submission to ensure all items can be accounted for and that the basic procedures outlined above have been followed.

The submission of the entire collection is preferred, however partial submissions are acceptable under certain circumstances such as items still being in long-term conservation. A listing of what is not being submitted at the time should be provided.

Note if artifacts are still with your conservator they remain your responsibility. Once the conservator is finished with the items, they should be returned to you, reviewed, packaged and then submitted to the Province. It is not the conservator's responsibility to submit them to the province.

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