



# CURATION GUIDELINES

## I. PURPOSE

The University of Alaska Museum (UAM) curates archaeological collections from state, federal, private and Alaska Native lands in Alaska for future research, exhibit, and instruction. When a collection is deposited at the Museum, UAM assumes Title and Interest in the collection under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and the Alaska Historical Preservation Act. The Provisional Curation Request form serves as the written permission from UAM to serve as the repository for collections contingent upon compliance with the UAM Curation Guidelines. Prior to designating UAM as the repository for an archaeological collection, the Principal Investigator must complete a Provisional Curation Request form. The Provisional Curation Request form should be completed during the planning phase of the project. Only one form needs to be completed per project. UAM will review the request and may approve or deny provisional curation. Reasons for denial of provisional curation typically include determination that the collection falls outside UAM's mission or UAM does not have the space or other resources to curate the collection. The Provisional Curation Request form notifies UAM of a potential collection, notifies the PI that they must comply with these Guidelines, and notifies the Permit Agency that UAM has agreed to serve as the repository for the collections. Unless otherwise specified by a Memorandum of Agreement, the PI is responsible for complying with these Guidelines, including the payment of Curation Fees.







Other information recorded for each catalog entry is artifact description, provenience, and collection data. Artifact description fields will vary by project, but typically include formal or functional categorization (object name) and material type (e.g., stone, bone, ivory, etc.). If the item is cataloged as a lot, a count and weight must be included. In the event of number damage or of separation of unnumbered items from their labeled containers, the item description may be useful in the identification of specimens for which provenience might otherwise be lost. Measurements and photographs are also useful, but not mandatory.

The provenience-related content of each catalog entry is determined by the investigator's method of excavation and field recording procedures. Controlled excavation produces the most detailed provenience information, and generally includes grid square designation, position within grid square, elevation relative to a vertical datum, stratigraphic unit, and cultural feature.

Collection data such as excavator, date of collection, and field numbers should appear in the catalog and are useful for cross-referencing to field notes. A comments column is helpful for calling attention to distinctive features or unusual circumstances. Specimens used in destructive analysis should be cataloged and included in the collection catalog, even when completely destroyed in analysis. Should charcoal or other samples be submitted for destructive analysis, a note to that effect should be entered in the catalog. As a general rule, care should be taken to ensure that provenience recorded in the catalog is as clear, concise, complete and reliable as possible.

An Excel version of the catalog must be submitted to UAM electronically prior to deposition of the collection. An Excel version of the catalog on a CD or flash drive must be deposited at UAM in addition to the hard copy of the catalog list. This allows UAM to directly import the catalog data in to our Archaeology Collections Database. In order to make it easier for the catalog to be directly imported into the database, UAM has created a catalog template. UAM requests that this catalog template be used whenever possible.

**The following fields are mandatory for the collection catalog:**

Accession Number

Catalog Number

Object Name

Material Type

Provenience

Field Number (when applicable)

Excavator

Date of Excavation

Lot Count (when applicable)

Lot Weight (when applicable)

## **VII. NUMBERING**

The complete catalog number, including accession number, must be applied directly on the white block portion of the artifact bag. It is no longer necessary to directly apply catalog numbers to individual artifacts. It is recommended to use artifact bags with white block, but in cases where it is not possible an acid-free paper label should be included inside the bag with the artifact. Never glue tags or labels directly to an artifact or specimen. Information on each artifact label should include catalog number, artifact name, AHRIS number, site name, provenience data, and lot count (if applicable). Paper labels should be on acid-free archival paper and written with **archival black ink** or printed on a **laser printer**. If the artifact is likely to damage the label, then the label should first be placed in its own polyethylene bag before being placed in the bag with the artifact. In all cases, the outside of the artifact bag or box should also be labeled with the artifact catalog number. Never apply nail polish and/or white-out to an artifact or specimen. These materials are not archival and will degrade quickly over time. They will split and peel off the artifact taking the catalog number with them.

## **VIII. PACKAGING AND LABELING**

Most archaeological specimens can be stored individually in an archival 4mil zip-lock polyethylene bag with white block. This is the standard, default storage for archaeological specimens. Store each artifact in an individual **archival 4 mil zip-lock polyethylene bag** and

write the artifact number on the white block of the bag with a **black Sharpie marker**. Artifact numbers and other information not written on the white block of the plastic bag will rub off. Individual flakes in a flake lot should not be individually bagged. Soil samples, faunal remains and other bulk samples should be double bagged with an acid-free paper label facing outward between the two bags.

Numbe





Oversize documents should be placed in an archival map folder or archival box and stored flat whenever possible. UAM has limited map case storage space for housing oversize documents with dimensions up to 31" x 43". In the case of a large number of oversize documents, they

## **X. DELIVERY**

Collections should be deposited at UAM within one year from the date an accession number(s) is assigned. One-year extensions may be granted for a total period of up to three years unless other arrangements have been made with UAM. After this time period, the collection may be subject to revised Curation Guidelines and fees. The PI must contact UAM to schedule a time for delivery of the collections. A copy of the final report and collections catalog must be submitted electronically prior to deposition of the collection. UAM requires at least two weeks notice if the collection is hand delivered and thirty days if the collection is sent through the mail. **Collections should be hand delivered whenever possible.** If the collection is sent through the mail, take steps in anticipation of loss. **Register and insure the parcel(s) to facilitate tracking.** For insurance purposes, UAM determines the value of most collections to be equivalent to the cost of field collection and analysis and/or the estimated cost of recollection and analysis. UAM, however, does not accept responsibility for collections that have not yet been physically deposited in the Museum. Originators of shipments may wish to consult the insurance office of their institutions.

Shipment is typically the time when collections are most vulnerable to damage or loss. Packing must guard against damage from sudden movements, impacts and crushing. However, some fragile objects may suffer more from the effects of over-zealous packing than from shipping itself.

## **XI. LETTER OF REVIEW**

After delivery, UAM will review the collection for compliance with the Curation Guidelines and submit a Letter of Review or email to the PI, generally within one month of receipt. The Letter

## **XII. FEES**

Storage facilities, materials, and personnel support will be required to house and curate collections in perpetuity following deposition at UAM. UAM charges the following fees to enable the collection to be curated in perpetuity according to the latest professional standards for future research, exhibit, and instruction. **Fees are subject to change and will be reviewed annually.**

### CURATION FEE (one time fee)

**1 cubic foot of storage space** **\$575/ft<sup>3</sup>**  
(artifacts and documentation)

The per unit fee for long term maintenance of the collection(s) includes annual percentage of material replacement and upgrade costs, and annual personnel support.

### TEMPORARY CURATION FEE (monthly fee)

**1 cubic foot of storage space** **\$10/ft<sup>3</sup>/month**

### PROCESSING FEE (one time fee)

**One hour processing time (labor only)** **\$25/hr. plus material costs**  
Minimum charge: \$20

The per hour fee charge for bringing the collection(s) and/or documentation which do not meet the requirements into conformance with those requirements.

**If you have any questions regarding these Guidelines, please contact UAM prior to preparing collections:**

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