

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGY LABORATORY
STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR DEPOSITED COLLECTIONS
revised November 2003

The Murray State University Archaeology Laboratory (MSUAL) houses collections from MSU archaeological projects and accepts collections for long-term curation. In order to permit accessibility for researchers and to hold down costs (and therefore fees) involved in long-term curation, we require minimal standards for the organization and packaging of collections deposited by professional archaeologists. Private collections may be accepted on a case-by-case basis, providing that they offer a resource for research and teaching and that we can assure adequate resources for their curation and protection. No collection will be accepted with any provisions regarding display, financial evaluation of individual specimens, or penalties for future unanticipated events. The determination of what will be accepted rests with the Director of the MSUAL.

These procedures should be followed in preparing artifact collections and documentation for submission to the MSUAL. The cleaning, sorting, cataloging, documenting, conserving, and packaging of archaeological materials are the responsibilities of the depositor. Please note that requirements apply equally to artifact collections and to related records such as field notes, drawings, maps, photographs, artifact inventories and similar forms of documentation.

1. All artifacts should be cleaned and stabilized prior to shipment to the MSUAL, except in instances where an uncleaned condition would facilitate a particular form of analysis. Items requiring specialized conservation measures cannot be accepted at this time.
2. Artifacts should be catalogued in a systematic manner, with catalogue numbers marked on the exterior of boxes, bags, and other containers in permanent ink. MSUAL will assign accession numbers upon arrival of the collection. MSUAL cataloguing guidelines are available on request if the depositor does not have a standard procedure.
3. Artifacts must be packaged by provenience. Each package must be labeled with at least the site number(s), project name, and date.
4. Artifact packages must be of a size which will fit standard storage boxes (see #5 below). It is preferable to use additional boxes rather than exceed these measurements. Oversized artifacts must be securely tagged with appropriate information. All artifacts should be placed in plastic bags, or in plastic or glass vials if particularly fragile. Plastic bags for permanent storage must be at least 4 mils in thickness. Self-sealing ("Zip-loc"-type) bags are preferred. Artifacts must be completely dry before final packaging.
5. Place all artifacts submitted for permanent storage in acid-free boxes. MSUAL standard boxes are Stone Container Corporation boxes 11½" tall, 9 7/8" wide, and 15½" long, with lids. Standard acid-free, Hollinger brand (or equivalent) record storage boxes, with dimensions of 10 x 12.5 x 15 inches are also acceptable.

Multiple provenience numbers may be grouped within exterior boxes provided they are from the same site (or--in the case of survey-level, surface-collected materials--from the same project). Multiple boxes containing materials from a single site or project should be numbered sequentially ("Box 1 of 3, 2 of 3," etc.) on the outside with permanent marker, and all inventory records must reference those numbers. The weight of boxed collections should be distributed as evenly as possible.

6. All shipments to the MSUAL must be accompanied by a packing list, which provides the project name, county, site number(s), catalogue numbers and number of containers for each project. A complete accession catalog or artifact inventory must also be included.

7. Either (1) at least one photocopy--on stable, acid-free paper--of all original field documentation, or (2) original notes, drawings, maps and other forms of documentation must accompany each collection submitted for curation.

All project field notes, correspondence, analysis sheets, feature records, etc. must be complete, organized and clearly labeled. The following information should be given on standard size, acid-free folders which contain documents: site number, site name/project name and date. If originals are not submitted, clear, readable copies may be substituted. Copies must be made on archival quality paper (xerographic process). Field notebooks or other bound records may be labeled on the exterior cover in permanent marker with the same information. Maps, large drawings and charts should be either rolled or folded with a proper outer label. Adhesive labels must be archivally stable.

8. A representative set of photographic slides and B/W photographs documenting the site, or sites, should accompany each archaeological site collection. A digital photo archive on CD-ROM is an acceptable alternative. Prepare and submit a catalog of all photographic documentation with an explanation of the labeling information. Photographs and negatives should be stored in acid-free photographic envelopes, which can be purchased from photography and archival supply catalogs. Project and provenience information must be marked on storage envelopes. Photographic slides must be individually marked and identified.

9. **Fees.** We charge \$150 per standard box (per #5, above), or \$50 for collections requiring less than one-half of a box. Please make checks payable to "MSU Archaeology Laboratory."

For additional information regarding these standards and guidelines, or for consultation on preparation or shipping of archaeological collections, contact:

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