

# **INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY**

## **NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CULTURE AND HISTORY**

**Emergency Impact Management/Salvage Excavation Policy and Procedures**

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## 1. Glossary Term

**Terminology and expressions used in this policy document are defined as follows:**

**IA:** is the Institute of Archaeology established under section 34 of the National Institute of Culture and History Act Chapter 331 of the Substantive Laws of Belize 2000, Revised edition 2020.

**NICH:** Refers to the National Institute of Culture and History

**AIA:** Archaeological Impact assessment

**Permittee:** Refers to a person who is granted an Emergency Impact Management/Salvage Excavation permit or other official authorization to do archaeological mitigation at a specific location/ development.

**PI:** refers to a Principal Investigator who has an establish archaeological permit area in Belize, and receives an annual archaeological research permit.

## 2. Context

The Institute of Archaeology recognizes that development activities have an adverse impact on archaeological remains in Belize. Furthermore, considering that the country of Belize is submerged by archaeological features and this may far exceed the existing possibilities for conservation, and also taking into account that the destruction of an archaeological feature can lead to serious damage to the historical and cultural heritage of our country and, consequently, of mankind, the NICH Act mandates the Institute of Archaeology (IA) to ensure that no development, regardless of size, willfully destroys any cultural features in Belize.

Our legal mandate states that, all activities as it relates to IA shall strictly adhere to all the provisions of the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) Act, Chapter 331 of the Subsidiary Laws of Belize 2000, Revised Edition 2020. Specifically:

**49.** Subject to this Act and to any regulations made hereunder, the Director may in his absolute discretion grant permits in the prescribed form—

*a)* to any suitable person or group of persons to enter upon any specified lands or in any river, stream or watercourse or under the territorial waters of Belize where ancient monuments or antiquities are or may be situated to search for and explore or excavate such ancient monuments or antiquities therefrom subject to such conditions as he may specify therein; or

63. (1) The Director may direct any land owner, lessee, concessionaire, contractor or any other person who is about to engage in any operation which in the opinion of the Director is liable to destroy, damage, interfere with or otherwise be to the detriment of any ancient monument or antiquity:

*a)* not to proceed with any operation until the Director shall have had an archaeological exploration and survey carried out; and,

to take or to refrain or desist from taking any such action as part of the operation as the Director may decide to be fair and reasonable for the proper protection of the ancient monument or antiquity. This policy will therefore, guide all possible actions that may have an impact on any archaeological features whether upon land or any river, stream or watercourse or under the territorial waters of Belize.

### **3. Policy Statement**

The Institute of Archaeology is committed to the sustainable development of Belize's Cultural and Natural Resources. It recognizes the need to work closely and in partnership with Regulatory Agencies, NGOs, Concessionaires, Developers and Contractors to ensure that all developments are conducted in a sustainable manner, taking into consideration and respecting Belize's cultural heritage. This policy has been established to ensure that cultural resources that are likely to be impacted by any development are properly managed through documentation, excavation and collection before they are destroyed or prior to any negative impact(s) as is legally mandated by the NICH Act.

### **4. Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to any development within the country of Belize, whether upon land or any river, stream or watercourse or under the territorial waters of Belize, that is bound to affect any archaeological or cultural feature. It shall be the responsibility of the IA to effectively implement this policy, while also the responsibility of Regulatory Agencies, NGO's, Concessionaires, Developers, and Contractors to ensure its adherence.

### **5. Objective:**

The principal objective of the salvage excavation is to ensure the proper documentation, conservation and preservation, where possible, of Belize's cultural and archaeological remains in an effort to recover and document all fundamental information of an archaeological feature that would otherwise be lost during the development of an area.

### **6. General Consideration**

For this policy, salvage excavation is defined as the systematic removal of cultural and archaeological remains in order to obtain the information necessary to understand the cultural and archaeological features in their proper context. This process requires for the IA to conduct appropriate archaeological feature mapping, excavation, basic artifact analysis (by level, class, and type, special finds, catalogue), basic lab processing, photography, inventory, and summary report of the process and findings recovered during the salvage excavation.

Under the NICH Act Cap.331, section 49 (a) the IA shall authorize salvage excavation under the direction of an **accredited Archaeologist** in order to mitigate unanticipated impacts on archaeological sites. Depending on the extent of salvage excavation required, the IA may allow the use of an **accredited Research Assistant** to conduct salvage excavation. Salvage excavations are recommended only when all other alternatives have been exhausted.

In situations where unpredicted impacts occur, development activities must be stopped and the IA should be notified immediately. The overriding objective, where remedial action is warranted, is to minimize disruption in the scheduled development while recovering cultural or archaeological data. The IA must at all times do a site inspection before recommending and approving a salvage excavation.

The developer of any project shall bear the full cost of any salvage operation. Monitoring and evaluation of salvage excavation will be done during the excavation process by the IA Enforcement and Monitoring Unit. The cost for M&E of a salvage excavation will be included within the salvage excavation permit and will be done according to the level of M&E necessary for such. The IA may consider **waivers** in special cases determined by the IA.

In the event of any salvage excavation, the application and reporting format shall follow that of an AIA but shall include all field notes of archaeological lots, units and levels recorded during the salvage, field inventory of archaeological materials, and accompanied with appropriate photos of all steps. This report shall also include an analysis of the archaeological features observed and of the material recovered in any salvage excavation, and a complete inventory after the lab processing

### **Salvage Excavation Permitting Methods/Data Recovery Plan**

Upon application for a salvage excavation permit, the developer with the accredited archaeologist/technician must submit a letter of application and a proposal detailing the methods for the salvage mitigation guided by the extent of the proposed development.

Salvage excavations are designed to document, recover, and mitigate cultural materials and features within the project area before they are destroyed by development. This excavation is usually initiated through the preparation of a data recovery plan. A data recovery plan outlines the steps that are to be taken to excavate the archaeological features, and is guided by the confine/extent of the development, what questions will be addressed during the excavation, and what types of analyses will be undertaken.

The salvage mitigation should be accomplished through the excavation of large test units and trenches and accompanied with an archaeological monitoring plan. At least one unit should incorporate chronological data recovery with proper profile drawing and plan views. These excavations often produce large quantities of artifacts and data that are synthesized to form the basis for the site's interpretation. The permittee must identify and seek approval for an artifact collection method.

The salvage excavation must also include a public outreach component and require that information about the excavation be disseminated to the public through oral presentations, peer review articles, site tours, web sites, and/or public displays.

Once a salvage project is completed, the artifacts, field records, and reports generated by the project are processed for curation. The curation, or long-term storage of artifacts, is an important step in any salvage project. The curation of artifacts not only ensures that they are cared for indefinitely, but proper curation allows them to be used by future researchers.

The IA upon granting a salvage excavation permit will identify a proper location for storage of salvaged artifacts. In cases where the permittee is an established PI and the salvage works are within the permit

area a formal letter must be submitted to the IA director requesting approval for in-house storage. Facilities housing collections are required to comply with stringent IA guidelines, rules and regulations. Storage collections are required to maintain long-term cataloging and conservation systems that meet standard museum and archival practices. Additionally, facilities housing collections need to keep main collections storage areas that meet local building, safety, health, and fire codes. Failure to comply with these regulations can put important collections in jeopardy causing the data contained within them to be lost to future generations.

In cases where the permittee is an accredited archaeologist or a technician only, it is the responsibility of the permittee to seek/allocate funding for the proper storage (galvanized shelving) of these artifacts at the national collection. These artifacts must be submitted to the IA in durable storage containers with proper labeling and a filing index.

A non-refundable salvage excavation application and processing fee of \$200.00 must accompany the application process. Payment should be made to the Institute of Archaeology/NICH. Payment of this application fee does not guarantee that a Salvage Excavation Permit will be granted. Where a salvage excavation permit is granted, the permittee is responsible to pay an M&E fee, which will be calculated based on the scope of the Salvage Excavation.

Annex:

Salvage Excavation Fees (For internal Purposes Only)

Please note that as noted in the policy, the M&E Fee will vary depending on the scope of the Salvage Excavation being carried out. The below is the minimum fee that any SE will be required to pay for the IA to conduct one M&E visit/follow up inspections.

Category		# of visits	Unit Cost	Total \$\$	Notes
Application and Processing Fee		1	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	Application is a one time payment
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)					
	Fuel	2	\$ 100.00	\$ 200.00	This is the fee within a 20 mile radius from IA headquarters. There after, beyond this, the fee is \$200.00
	Subsistence for 2 IA personnel	2	\$ 40.00	\$ 80.00	This amount is dependent on the scope of the SE and location. This Fee is for one meal only, therefore if the staff is required to be on site all day, this fee will be charged accordingly.
	Other				
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$ 480.00</b>	