



## **Accidental Discovery Protocol (ADP)**

**Prior to the commencement of any works, a copy of this ADP should be made available to all contractors working on site.**

Under the *Historic Places Act* (1993) an archaeological site is defined as a place associated with pre-1900 human activity, where there may be evidence relating to the history of New Zealand. Over 11,000 archaeological sites have been recorded in Northland, and more are identified on a regular basis.

For Maori sites (the most common site types in Northland), the largest and most obvious site types are pa, pits and terraces. However, evidence may be of a smaller nature, in the form of bones, shells, charcoal, burnt stone etc; a midden is an archaeological rubbish tip, in which many of these items can be found consolidated together. Evidence of disturbance of a midden can be a scattering of shell across a wide area; this can be confusing if it is near a beach. Pieces of obsidian or chert, together with stone tools, may also be recovered.

In later sites of European origin artefacts such as bottle glass, iron/metal, crockery etc. may be found, or evidence of old foundations, wells, drains or similar structures.

Burials/koiwi tangata may be found from any period.

Some examples:



**Shell midden**



**Discoloured soils indicating burning**



**Animal bone**



**Historic pottery on a roadside scrape**



**A flight of pits in forest**



**Shell midden uncovered in road scraping**

In the event of an “accidental discovery” of archaeological material the following steps must be taken:

1. All work on the site will cease immediately. The contractor/works supervisor will shut down all equipment and activity.
2. The contractor/works supervisor/owner will take immediate steps to secure the site (tape it off) to ensure the archaeological remains are undisturbed and the site is safe in terms of health and safety requirements. Work may continue outside of the site area.
3. The contractor/works supervisor/owner will notify the Area Archaeologist of the Historic Places Trust (Northland Office), tangata whenua and any required statutory agencies<sup>1</sup> if this has not already occurred.
4. The New Zealand Historic Places Trust will appoint/advise a qualified archaeologist who will confirm the nature of the accidentally discovered material.
5. If the material is confirmed as being archaeological, under the terms of the *Historic Places Act*, the landowner will ensure that an archaeological assessment is carried out by a qualified archaeologist, and if appropriate, an archaeological authority is obtained from the Trust before work resumes.
6. If burials, human remains/koiwi tangata are uncovered, steps 1 to 3 above must be taken and the Area Archaeologist of the Historic Places Trust, the New Zealand Police and the Iwi representative for the area must be contacted immediately. The area must be treated with discretion and respect and the koiwi tangata/human remains dealt with according to law and tikanga.
7. Works at the site area shall not recommence until an archaeological assessment has been made, all archaeological material has been dealt with appropriately, and statutory requirements met. All parties will work towards work recommencement in the shortest possible timeframe while ensuring that archaeological and cultural requirements are complied with.

**ADVICE TO ALL CONTRACTORS/SITE WORKERS/OWNERS:-**

***IF IN DOUBT, STOP AND ASK; TAKE A PHOTO AND SEND IT TO THE NZHPT ARCHAEOLOGIST (details below)***

Contact details for the Area Archaeologist for Northland are:

Bill Edwards, Area Archaeologist Northland    *or*  
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[bedwards@historic.org.nz](mailto:bedwards@historic.org.nz) or [snorton@historic.org.nz](mailto:snorton@historic.org.nz)

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the New Zealand Police in the event that human remains are found.