



HUMAN REMAINS OCCURRENCE FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Revised 2/2001

Complete a **Human Remains Occurrence Form** and a **Feature Form** for every human remains occurrence found. These forms must be accompanied by a map. The remains should be mapped at a scale that allows each bone to be illustrated clearly (usually either 1:10 or 1:5) and to be clearly labeled with the appropriate PL number. Disarticulated bones *must* have individual PL numbers. Articulated skeletons may have PL numbers assigned to logical groupings of bones, such as an entire left foot or a complete vertebral column. The accompanying PL catalog will serve as the bone inventory.

If human remains are within a pit, a separate feature number should be assigned to the pit, and a separate Feature Form should be completed for the pit. In addition, a plan of the pit should be shown on the human remains map, and a cross section of this pit should be drawn if possible.

**Site Number:** Site where human remains are located

**Site Name:** Record site name here

**Initials:** Initials of excavator(s) and recorder(s)

**Date:** Month, day, and year the human remains were recorded

**Study Unit Type and Number:** Study unit where human remains are located

**Feature Number:** Feature number of the human remains (sequential by study unit)

**HRO Number:** Human remains occurrence number (sequential by site)

**PD(s):** PD number(s) assigned to the HRO

**General description:** General statement regarding location, completeness, degree of articulation, general age or size, etc.

**Location:** Specific horizontal and vertical location of remains (for example, where the remains are within the study unit horizontally, and which specific surface or stratum they are associated with)

**HRO type:**

- formal burial** (body carefully placed, with or without grave goods)
- body articulated but not formally interred** (most of body is present and articulated, but no grave goods; position of body indicates body was dropped, thrown, or otherwise carelessly placed)
- concentration of disarticulated remains** (remains are largely disarticulated and may contain elements of more than one individual)
- scattered remains** (more than five substantial bones—not phalanges—but not a real concentration)
- other** (type not listed—describe)

**Condition of feature:** Are the remains in the same configuration as when they were deposited?

**Preservation of bone:** Mention friability, weathering, burning, root damage, rock damage, animal disturbance, etc.

**Type: extended**—legs and trunk are more or less straight; **semiflexed**—knees are bent, but the trunk is straight; **flexed**—fetal position; **other**—describe, such as “sprawled”; **N/A**—not applicable

**Position of body: on back**—body rests on back; **on stomach**—body rests on stomach; **on side**—specify which side; **other**—describe; **N/A**—not applicable

**Body oriented:** position of the head relative to the trunk; **head to**—cardinal direction toward which the top of the skull points; **facing**—cardinal direction toward which the face points, or “up” or “down”; **other**—any other details of body orientation

**Position of arms and legs: right arm**—record location and position; **left arm**—record location and position; **right leg**—record location and position; **left leg**—record location and position

**Description and interpretation of sediment that remains are in:** Describe sediment (using standard texture terms such as silt loam; visual color assessment is okay) and inclusions; *infer the origin of these deposits if possible*. If a more detailed stratigraphic profile description already exists for a stratum, just reference it here.

**Are remains within a pit?** Yes or No      **If yes, feature number of pit:** record pit feature number  
**PD number of pit:** record PD of pit feature

**Describe process or method of interment:** Describe in as much detail as possible how the remains came to be where they are and in the observed condition.

**Describe all observed stones, burned material, or other agents that could have damaged or affected bones:** Describe agents and their locations, specify which bones may have been affected by which agents, and interpret whether each agent was cultural or natural.

**Evidence of animal burrows:** Yes or No      **What areas of body?** Be specific about any disturbance or disarticulation that could have been caused by an observed animal burrow.

**Associated funerary artifacts/samples:** Describe and give locations relative to the remains, PD numbers, and PL numbers of any samples collected and any objects that are believed to be funerary artifacts; indicate whether these items were collected or left in situ.

**In-field analysis or Remains taken to lab:** Indicate where bone analysis occurred or will occur.

**Complete the documentation checklist at the bottom of the page.**

**Comments/Discussion:** Record any additional observations or interpretations regarding the remains.