

1.0 Chance Finds Protocol

The following procedure will only be followed if fossils are uncovered during excavation.

1.1 Introduction

This document is aimed to inform workmen and foremen working on a construction and/or mining site. It describes the procedure to follow in instances of accidental discovery of palaeontological material (please see attached poster with descriptions of palaeontological material) during construction/mining activities. This protocol does not apply to resources already identified under an assessment undertaken under s. 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (no 25 of 1999). Fossils are rare and irreplaceable. Fossils tell us about the environmental conditions that existed in a specific geographical area millions of years ago. As heritage resources that inform us of the history of a place, fossils are public property that the State is required to manage and conserve on behalf of all the citizens of South Africa. Fossils are therefore protected by the National Heritage Resources Act and are the property of the State. Ideally, a qualified person should be responsible for the recovery of fossils noticed during construction/mining to ensure that all relevant contextual information is recorded. Heritage Authorities often rely on workmen and foremen to report finds, and thereby contribute to our knowledge of South Africa's past and contribute to its conservation for future generations.

Prior to the commencement of construction, a Chance Finds Method Statement for the site should be compiled by the Contractor.

1.2 Training

Workmen and foremen need to be trained in the procedure to follow in instances of accidental discovery of fossil material, in a similar way to the Health and Safety protocol. A brief introduction to the process to follow in the event of possible accidental discovery of fossils should be conducted by the designated Environmental Control Officer (ECO) for the project, or the foreman or site agent in the absence of the ECO. It is recommended that copies of a poster with procedures is printed out and displayed at the site office so that workmen may familiarise themselves with them and are thereby prepared in the event that accidental discovery of fossil material takes place.

1.3 Actions to be taken

One person in the staff must be identified and appointed as responsible for the implementation of the attached protocol in instances of accidental fossil discovery and must report to the ECO or site agent. If the ECO or site agent is not present on site, then the responsible person on site should follow the protocol correctly in order to not jeopardize the conservation and well-being of the fossil material. Once a workman notices possible fossil material, he/she should report this to the ECO or site agent.

1.3.1 Procedure to follow if it is likely that the material identified is a fossil:

- The ECO or site agent must ensure that all work ceases immediately in the vicinity of the area where the fossil or fossils have been found;
- The ECO or site agent must inform the Heritage Authority of the find immediately. This information must include photographs of the findings and GPS co-ordinates;
- The ECO or site agent must compile a Preliminary Report and fill in the Fossil Discoveries: Preliminary Record Form within 24 hours without removing the fossil from its original position.



1.3.2 The Preliminary Report records basic information about the find including:

- The date
- A description of the discovery
- A description of the fossil and its context (e.g. position and depth of find)
- Where and how the find has been stored
- Photographs to accompany the preliminary report (the more the better):
 - A scale must be used
 - Photos of location from several angles
 - Photos of vertical section should be provided
 - Digital images of hole showing vertical section (side);
 - Digital images of fossil or fossils.
- Upon receipt of this Preliminary Report, the Heritage authority will inform the ECO or site agent whether or not a rescue excavation or rescue collection by a palaeontologist is necessary.
- Exposed finds must be stabilised where they are unstable and the site capped, e.g. with a plastic sheet or sand bags. This protection should allow for the later excavation of the finds with due scientific care and diligence. The Heritage authority can advise on the most appropriate method for stabilisation.
- If the find cannot be stabilised, the fossil may be collected with extreme care by the ECO or the site agent and put aside and protected until the Heritage authority advises on further action. Finds collected in this way must be safely and securely stored in tissue paper and an appropriate box. Care must be taken to remove the all-fossil material and any breakage of fossil material must be avoided at all costs.
- No work may continue in the vicinity of the find until the Heritage authority has indicated, in writing, that it is appropriate to proceed.



Kuduskop OHL		
Province & region:	Northern Cape Province: Namakwa District Municipality; and Western Cape Province: Cape Winelands District Municipality	
Responsible Heritage Resources Agency	South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA)/ Provincial authority; and Heritage Western Cape	
ECO protocol	1. Once alerted to fossil occurrence(s): alert site foreman, stop work in area immediately (N.B. safety first!), safeguard site with security tape / fence / sand bags if necessary.	
	2. Record key data while fossil remains are still in situ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate geographic location – describe and mark on site map / 1: 50 000 map / satellite image / aerial photo • Context – describe position of fossils within stratigraphy (rock layering), depth below surface • Photograph fossil(s) in situ with scale, from different angles, including images showing context (e.g. rock layering) 	
	3. If feasible to leave fossils <i>in situ</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alert Heritage Resources Agency and project palaeontologist (if any) who will advise on any necessary mitigation • Ensure fossil site remains safeguarded until clearance is given by the Heritage Resources Agency for work to resume 	3. If not feasible to leave fossils in situ (emergency procedure only): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully remove fossils, as far as possible still enclosed within the original sedimentary matrix (e.g. entire block of fossiliferous rock) • Photograph fossils against a plain, level background, with scale • Carefully wrap fossils in several layers of newspaper / tissue paper / plastic bags • Safeguard fossils together with locality and collection data (including collector and date) in a box in a safe place for examination by a palaeontologist • Alert Heritage Resources Agency and project palaeontologist (if any) who will advise on any necessary mitigation
	4. If required by Heritage Resources Agency, ensure that a suitably-qualified specialist palaeontologist is appointed as soon as possible by the developer.	
	5. Implement any further mitigation measures proposed by the palaeontologist and Heritage Resources Agency	



