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National Museum of Ireland
and Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland
CPD Post-excavation Workshop

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1. **Introduction:**

   - Introduction to the NMI/IAI workshop

   - Introduction to the new 'Standards for the care and treatment of archaeological objects from excavations' document

   - Introduction to the newly updated 'Advice Notes for completing an application form for a Licence to Alter/Export and archaeological object'

2. **Summary of licensing requirements:**

   - Director of the NMI is a statutory consultee in relation to licence applications

   - Ownership of archaeological objects

   - Finds retrieval strategies (for inclusion in Method Statement)

   - Environmental sampling strategy

   - Unanticipated discovery of human remains to be reported to the relevant authorities

   - Numbering and care of archaeological objects

   - Funding letter

   - Post-excavation: licence-holder not exempt from the requirements in respect of licensing of alteration of archaeological objects

   - Conservation

   - Specialists

   - Storage

   - Inspection of excavations, post-excavation facilities

   - Reporting an object in the case of unlicensed monitoring

3. **Excavation/registration numbers and numbering objects from excavations:**
   - Licence number
   - Registration number (Ministerial Directions and Consents)
   - Numbering syntaxes for objects
   - Numbering of finds from Dive/Surveys (D) or Detection Device surveys (R)

4. **On-site requirements for excavated material:**
   - On-site packing, care and storage of objects
   - The role of the conservator in assessing objects
   - Block-lifting fragile/delicate objects (e.g. bog butter, coin hoard, urn burial)
   - Assessing metal objects and selecting objects for conservation work
   - X-raying metal objects

5. **Physically numbering objects from excavations:**
   - Numbering techniques must be secure, reversible, safe and discreet
   - Factors to consider when selecting the most appropriate technique for numbering an object (i.e. choosing an appropriate method)
   - How to physically number an archaeological object
   - Materials to use when numbering objects
   - Materials to avoid when numbering objects
   - Positioning a number on an object
   - Using archival quality/acid-free labels and writing them correctly
   - Using archival quality pens
   - What to do when an object cannot be physically numbered (i.e. owing to its size, fragile state etc.)

6. **Choosing suitable packing materials:**
   - Boxes – dimensions, quality, material etc.
   - Plastic bags
   - Acid-free tissue paper
   - Packing materials to avoid

7. **Packing archaeological objects (metals, human/animal remains, stone, glass, ceramics etc.):**
   - Packing finds in a logical manner (primarily by material, then by object type, register number or site context)
   - Packing boxes by layering contents and how this is achieved
   - Packing delicate/fragile/exceptional or vulnerable objects or objects of high material or cultural value (i.e. making inert foam cut-outs, making a nest for a fragile object and so forth)
   - Packing metal objects and demonstrating the use of Relative Humidity (RH) indicator strips, desiccants and acid-free labels
   - Packing large, heavy objects and or/bulk assemblages (e.g. faunal remains, large well-fired robust pottery assemblages) i.e. the use of reinforced boxes or heavy-duty stackable plastic containers with non-collapsible lids
   - Packing/boxing human remains (both cremations and inhumations)

8. **Box Labels and Box Contents Lists:**
   - How boxes are stored in the NMI Stores (Low RH Stores, Human Remains Stores etc.)
   - Standard for boxes
   - The use of pallets for the transportation of large assemblages (i.e. size and type of pallets allowed)
   - Box Label templates (what information should be included)
   - Correctly applying Box Labels to the box
   - Information to include in Box Contents Lists

9. **Overview of procedure for depositing objects in the NMI (stages involved):**
   - Submitting final reports
   - Completing and submitting NMI Excavations Finds Register (MS Excel) and Samples Register (MS Excel)
   - Arranging an inspection of archaeological objects for deposition in NMI
   - Completing Box Label and Box Contents Lists
   - Arranging a deposition date for excavated assemblages
   - Provision of receipts of transfer to the excavator following deposition of assemblage

10. **Completing and submitting NMI Excavations Finds Register (MS Excel) and Samples Register (MS Excel):**
   - How to populate the MS Excel spreadsheets
   - Using the Suffix field in the recording of articulated human remains
   - Using the description provided by the specialist, if appropriate (rather than the on-site description)
   - Suggesting inclusions to the 'Simple Names' list
   - Suggesting inclusions to the 'Materials' list
   - What to do when an object is not retained
   - Letters of recommendation from specialists in relation to material assessed

11. **NMI inspection of excavated assemblages. The following elements are checked:**
   - that objects are correctly/appropriately packed
   - that ecofacts/processed environmental samples are correctly/appropriately packed
   - that objects/ecofacts are stable
   - that objects are correctly numbered and/or labelled
   - that ecofacts are correctly labelled
   - that there are no signs of infestations
   - that Box Contents Lists are present and boxes are correctly labelled
   - that silica gel and Relative Humidity (RH) indicator strips, if required, are used correctly and appropriately

12. Accessing the NMI collections for research purposes (the steps involved)

13. Completing Alter and Export licence application forms