

NCMD Policy No.4 Issue 2

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. This Code of Conduct is written primarily for detecting in the UK. If you are detecting outside the UK, please make yourself aware of any differences in local laws and regulation.
2. Do not search for historical items in Northern Ireland without a licence, and then only in compliance with it.
3. Do not trespass. Obtain permission from the landowner before venturing on any land. The landowner must be aware if permission to detect is given by the occupier / tenant and you must obtain further permission to enter fields that have been sown with crops or contain livestock. Remember that all land, regardless of its perceived status, has owners.
4. The legal ownership of historical finds and requirements for accurate reporting varies from Country to Country within the UK. It is advised that a written agreement between the landowner and the finder is put in place prior to detecting to agree the outcome of any such finds to avoid disputes at a later date. Model Search Agreements can be found on the NCMD website, www.ncmd.co.uk.
5. Take extra care to leave gates and property as you find them. Whilst searching, do not leave unsafe surfaces where livestock or field walkers may get injured. Do not leave any litter of any kind on or around the permission property.
6. Stop digging If you discover any live ammunition, unexploded bombs, mines, or human remains. Let the landowner know that you are seeking help. Call the police, bomb disposal or coastguard and ensure that no other person is in danger until the relevant authority has arrived at the site.
7. Stop digging if you discover an in-situ hoard. Let the landowner know and contact: your Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) Finds Liaison Officer (FLO), if in England or Wales; or National Museums Northern Ireland; or the Treasure Trove Unit, National Museum of Scotland. In England and Wales, the NCMD have an agreement with PAS to fund major find excavations, phone the NCMD help-line on **0800 002 5808** to activate your free hoard assistance, which could help to get your find correctly excavated faster.
8. Report all historical finds to the landowner (unless there is a written agreement not to). Get the landowner's permission to record your finds with PAS and acquaint yourself with the current NCMD policy relating to the Voluntary Reporting of Portable Antiquities in England and Wales. ([Portable Antiquities Scheme](#))

Note that, in England and Wales, it is the landowners right to restrict the reporting of (non-Treasure) items to a parish or Grid reference. Accurate reporting of all historical finds (Treasure and non-Treasure) is mandatory in Northern Ireland and Scotland, in Northern Ireland you have 14 days to do this, in Scotland it is one month.

9. Remember that all Treasure finds in England and Wales must be reported to the Coroner within 14 days of being found (or of you becoming aware that they are potential Treasure items), regardless of any local agreements that may be in place. (Treasure Act 1996). With the change to the act in 2023, items that are of historical, archaeological, or cultural significance could come under the definition of Treasure, so show any item you are not sure about to the FLO or an experienced person. You will have 14 days, from when you become aware that they could come under this “significant class” of Treasure, to report them to the Coroner.
10. It is illegal for anyone to use a metal detector on designated areas such as Scheduled Monuments (SM), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Ministry of Defence (MOD) property without permission from the appropriate authority. It is also a condition of some agri-environmental agreements that metal detecting is subject to different regulations. The onus is on the metal detector user to seek this information from the landowner.
11. Understand your responsibilities by acquainting yourself with the following documents: -
 - a) Treasure Act 1996 (as amended 2023) and associated Code of Practice. [Code of Practice.pdf](#)
 - b) Advice for Finders of Archaeological Objects including Treasure 2006. <https://finds.org.uk/documents/advice.pdf>
 - c) The voluntary Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting to which the NCMD is an endorsee. <https://finds.org.uk/getinvolved/guides/codeofpractice>
 - d) Advice for finders in Scotland: See: <https://treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/information/information-for-finders/>
12. Note that your conduct is the only way that Landowners, Tenants, and the public can form an opinion of our hobby, so whether detecting in the field, discussing the hobby, or posting on social media, please be responsible, polite, and respectful to all.
13. Breaking or advocating breaking this Code, or any of the laws around detecting, may lead to your membership (and insurance) being suspended or cancelled.