

Memorandum

To: Region Chiefs and Assistant Region Chiefs
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From: HELGE ENG 
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Subject: Cultural Resources and Significance Determinations

Recently, during the delivery of the refresher course for CAL FIRE's Certified Archaeological Surveyor Training program, there was discussion about whether and how to consider the potential historical significance of deposits such as culverts, land surveying monuments and consumer items such as beverage containers, during project planning or plan preparation. This is to clarify the potential cultural resource significance of these and similar deposits during project planning or plan preparation.

Land Surveying Monuments are protected per Business and Professions Code 8725, regardless of archaeological significance.

The Office of Historic Preservation's 1995 Manual states that any physical evidence of human activities over 45 years old may be recorded. This age limit should be considered a trigger, an initial qualifying attribute for determining significance and recordation.

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 929.1(a)(3) requires that a field survey be done to detect "archaeological and historical sites." The Office of Historic Preservation and CAL FIRE have defined the term "archaeological site" to require more than the presence of a single deposit or feature (see CCR Chapter 11.5 Appendix A and CAL FIRE's 2003 "Definitions of Terms and Acronyms Used in the CDF Archaeology Program.") Specifically, the Office of Historic Preservation requires the site be "defined in part by the character and location of such deposits or features."

A deposit identified in a survey therefore must pass two tests to require inclusion in the Confidential Archaeology Addendum (CAA) and avoidance ("flag and avoid") or evaluation of significance. The deposit must be part of an archaeological or historical site, and it must be at least 45 years old. Unless the deposit passes both of these tests, no further consideration of the deposit is required.

Barring any distinguishing features, beverage containers (isolates) that meet the age requirement usually are not part of an archaeological or historical site and do not need to

be included in the CAA or considered further. Non-distinctive corrugated metal culverts that meet the age requirement are usually not part of an archaeological or historical site and do not need to be included in the CAA or considered further. Additional culvert features such as masonry headwalls and outflow features, however, may constitute the presence of a site.

For recent human activity, if the age requirement is likely met for a deposit that is part of an archaeological or historical site and damaging effects from operations cannot be avoided, a determination of significance can be made by the project representative who satisfies the requirements specified in 14 CCR §929.4 [949.4, 969.4]. If the project representative determines that the archaeological or historical site is not significant, it does not need to be protected but it still needs to be included in the CAA.

For Forest Practice Rule projects, the determination of significance should be based on criteria defined for significant archeological and historical sites under 14 CCR §895.1. For projects the Department has lead agency responsibility for under the California Environmental Quality Act, the determination should be based upon the criteria for determining Historical Resources (Public Resources Code §5024.1) and Unique Archeological Resources (Public Resource Code §21083.2(g)).