

APPENDIX 4

Media Policy for Disturbance to Ancestral Human Burials

The Phoenix Metropolitan area is cultural landscape that contains buried archaeological resources that represent thousands of years of occupation. Native American communities, such as the Gila River Indian Community and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, claim cultural affiliation with the prehistoric cultures who inhabited these archaeological sites. Human burials are frequently discovered during construction and other ground-disturbing activities within the City of Phoenix.

The state of Arizona Antiquities Act (A.R.S. 41-844 and A.R.S. 41-865) and its implementing regulations require that the treatment and removal of human remains be done in a respectful and sensitive manner. Native American communities in Arizona have stated that the public should not be allowed to view human remains during their excavation, and that photographs or video film are strictly prohibited.

If the news media or curious bystanders appear at an archaeological site where human remains are being removed, they should be referred to the CAO. They should not be informed that human remains have been found.

In order to ensure that the human remains are not observed by anyone other than the archaeologists who are working at the site and by City or State officials, the area around the human remains must be secured with a fence and cloth should be placed on the fence to prevent the public from viewing their removal. Any cloth placed on the burial itself must be unbleached muslin cloth.

According to the Arizona Public Records Act (ARS 39-125), the City can refuse to provide information to the public about the location of human burials and other sensitive cultural resources in order to protect them from vandalism.

All prehistoric human burials discovered within the City of Phoenix should be reported to the CAO (602-495-0901). For more information about the State burial laws, contact the ASM Burial Coordinator. For more information about City projects, contact the City of Phoenix Public Information Office (602-262-7176).