

*Texas Department of Transportation  
Environmental Affairs Division*

**Standards of Uniformity for  
Technical Reports**

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**Review Standards for  
Archeological Background Studies**

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CSJ \_\_\_\_\_ Hwy \_\_\_\_\_ Contract/WA# \_\_\_\_\_

Contractor \_\_\_\_\_ QC Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ ENV Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Page	Section	Sentence	Criteria	Issues: Not Applicable / None / Editorial or minor / Substantive / Critical	How addressed (or why not addressed)	New Page	QC check
			<b>Project Description</b>				
1			Submission includes a map of the project area on a USGS 7.5' quadrangle or equivalent if a 7.5' quadrangle is unavailable.				
2			The project description clearly identifies the project type and any associated elements.				
3			The area of potential effects (APE) is defined to encompass the limits of the existing right of way; proposed, new project right of way; permanent and temporary easements; utility relocations; and project-specific locations designated by TxDOT. The APE is defined in three dimensions, including the project limits, width, acreage, and depth of impacts. The description of the APE identifies the maximum depth of impacts from the project, referring to project plans or to typical impacts for this class of project. Note: the APE encompasses the entirety of the project area, regardless of the extent of prior archeological investigations, the particular locations subject to proposed field investigations, or the portion of a project added through a design change.				
4			The project description notes whether the project includes any new right of way, easements (temporary or permanent), or project-specific locations; describes the location of any such features; and quantifies their area				
5			Clearly reproducible layouts are attached when available; layouts show the existing and proposed right of way boundaries and easements.				
6			Clearly reproducible profiles are attached when available				
7			Clearly reproducible typical sections are attached when available.				
			<b>Background Information</b>				
8			Study includes description of relevant natural conditions that could affect the visibility and preservation of archeological deposits, including topography, soils, and geology. The study				

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			references soil survey maps and geological maps for the entire area of the background study or indicates that none are published for the area surveyed.				
9			Study includes discussion of previous work/sites within one kilometer of the project area with explicit reference to review of TARL files, THC or Historic Sites Atlas maps, and explicitly indicates trinomials of sites or absence of sites within one kilometer. The study also includes a map of unevaluated archeological sites, ineligible properties, and historic properties in and adjacent to the APE.				
10			Study contains a description of existing disturbances in the project area. For those existing disturbances that could affect the integrity of historic properties, the description shall include the type of existing disturbances and the extent of those disturbances. This discussion focuses on the effects of the disturbances on the integrity of location, design, materials, and association unless a discussion of other aspects of integrity is justified as appropriate.				
			<b>Identification of Areas that Require Field Investigation</b>				
11			The study describes how geologic conditions, previous disturbances, and other factors could affect the integrity of archeological deposits. Evaluation of potential site integrity explicitly considers the aspects of integrity presented in 36 CFR 60.4. Typically, the integrity of archeological sites is characterized by their integrity of location, design, materials, and association.				
12			For areas with the potential for intact archeological deposits, the study accounts for the locations of previously-identified archeological sites, the results of previous archeological investigations in the area of the construction project, and settlement patterns and likely locations for unrecorded prehistoric and historic archeological sites (including historic cemeteries). For these areas, the study also makes use of other sources of information such as historic maps, in addition to the THC Archeological Sites Atlas or TARL files, as a basis for drawing conclusions.				
			<b>Recommendations and Justification</b>				
13			Recommendations regarding project effects and the need for further work are explicitly expressed, indicating the portions of the project area where additional work is necessary to identify the project's effect on archeological historic properties, sites that warrant formal designation as State Archeological Landmarks, or cemeteries. For areas where additional work is recommended, an				

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			appropriate level of effort is recommended. (TxDOT reserves the right to deviate from recommendations for additional work.)				
14			Study includes an explicit justification of the level of effort used to identify and evaluate historic properties and make recommendations. For a background study, this justification either explains why no fieldwork is necessary or explains why fieldwork should be conducted.				
			<b>ENV Reviewer Conclusions/Additional Issues</b>				
15			Report contains no factual errors or omissions affecting the finding(s). (Additional reviewer comments required if "Critical")				
16			Report violates no regulatory requirement(s). (Reviewer comments required if "Critical").				
			<b>Additional Comments</b>				
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**Signature of QC Officer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**ENV Staff Reviewer Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Version History

**Review Standards for Archeological Background Studies**

2.0 - Revised format to comment-response matrix

3.0 - Clarified the area of potential effects definition (item 3); noted that easements included both permanent and temporary easements (item 4); included requirement that report doesn't violate any regulatory requirement not otherwise specified (item 16); made additional format changes.