

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPS) FOR MARITIME HERITAGE SITES

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

The following BMPs should be followed to reduce or eliminate adverse effects upon maritime heritage sites through potential interactions or discoveries during in water or shoreline activities. They are primarily aimed at small-scale projects such as research dives, marine debris removal, or oceanographic equipment repair or maintenance conducted by resource agencies or contracted personnel. These BMPs are not necessarily comprehensive for major construction activities or disaster response.

1. Prior to entry, all personnel should be aware of potential maritime heritage resources in areas of work/survey, including ongoing archaeological research sites. This may occur during a pre-access briefing. Permitted personnel conducting activities within Special Preservation/Management Areas that may potentially encounter maritime archaeological sites incidental to permitted activities may be required to have a briefing on maritime archaeological resources. The briefing includes an overview of maritime heritage sites and the Monument's maritime heritage program as well as best practices should a site be encountered. Permit coordinators would work with NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Maritime Heritage Coordinator in order to determine which permitted personnel would require this briefing.
2. Maritime heritage sites should be avoided unless necessary for survey/research, or with the guidance of a maritime archaeologist or designee. If sites are necessary for survey/research, appropriate permits and Section 106 consultation must be in place.
3. If anchoring, area should be assessed prior to setting anchor to make sure no maritime heritage resources will be disturbed.
4. If any maritime heritage sites are discovered, at a minimum, site location should be reported to the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Maritime Heritage Coordinator (telephone number: 808-725-5800) and the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Division (Monday thru Friday from 8am – 4pm: 808-692-8015; nights and weekends: 808-643-3567). As per the Monument's Management Plan, the definition of maritime heritage resources includes submerged and beached shipwrecks, aircraft, and other sites of historical, cultural and archaeological significance. Other sites may include submerged structures and artifacts thrown overboard. Significant items to report also include artifacts associated with shipwreck or sunken aircraft sites, or evidence of past human activity in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. These may include disassociated anchors, anchor chain, aircraft parts and pieces, and any small cluster of artifacts that may have broken apart and drifted away from a larger site.

5. If time permits, additional information to be collected and reported includes: GPS coordinates, photographs (with scale if possible), sketches (rough or measured), brief description, compass bearings.
6. No artifacts or material culture should be moved, or removed from the seafloor. Moving or recovering the artifact disturbs the context of the site, which is important for interpretation and archaeological survey. Additionally, removal has the potential to irreversibly damage and/or destroy the artifact. Artifact recovery can only take place if appropriate permits are in place, and there is a plan and infrastructure for conservation, stabilization, and curation of the artifact. Recovery should only take place by or under the supervision of an archaeologist.
7. Maritime Heritage resources are non-renewable, and thus, must be treated with the utmost care. Once lost, these resources are gone forever, so activities in the vicinity should aim to be non-invasive.