



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

# ARIZONA STATE MUSEUM

## BURIAL RECORD FORM GUIDELINES

Many firms or organizations have developed their own feature forms for recording the context of human burials and these are fully acceptable provided that the information recorded meets or exceeds the criteria specified in *A.R.S. §41-844 and §41-865 Guidelines*. The Arizona State Museum Burial Record Form included here illustrates the type information that is required about the burial feature itself. Individuals and organizations are free to use this form as they wish.

Additional information is required by the *Guidelines* concerning identification of the archaeological site, the context of the burial feature in relation to other site features, detailed information about any objects associated with the burial, and circumstances of the excavation.

Inventory and documentation of the human remains is also required. A separate package of forms designed for this purpose is also available on this website.

The Burial Record Form is designed to insure consistency of observation of a minimum data set. However, it is often useful to include a written narrative that brings together a description of the burial context, inferences about feature formation processes, and the major osteological observations.

# BURIAL RECORD FORM

Site Name/Number \_\_\_\_\_ Recorder \_\_\_\_\_  
Burial/Feature # \_\_\_\_\_ Other # \_\_\_\_\_ Excavators \_\_\_\_\_  
Stratum \_\_\_\_\_ Begin Date \_\_\_\_\_ End Date \_\_\_\_\_ Photos: Y\_\_ N\_\_

Interment Type:    \_\_\_ inhumation    \_\_\_ primary    \_\_\_ single  
                          \_\_\_ cremation    \_\_\_ secondary    \_\_\_ multiple

Grave Construction:    \_\_\_ earthen pit    \_\_\_ stone-lined pit    \_\_\_ slab-covered pit  
                              \_\_\_ vessel    \_\_\_ multiple    \_\_\_ indeterminate  
                              \_\_\_ other (describe below)

Grave Dimensions (cm):    width \_\_\_\_\_ length \_\_\_\_\_ depth \_\_\_\_\_

Posture    arms:    \_\_\_ extended    \_\_\_ flexed    \_\_\_ semi-flexed    \_\_\_ indeterminate  
              legs:    \_\_\_ extended    \_\_\_ flexed    \_\_\_ semi-flexed    \_\_\_ indeterminate



Cardinal Orientation:

head to: \_\_\_\_\_  
facing: \_\_\_\_\_

Position:

\_\_\_ on back    \_\_\_ face down  
\_\_\_ on left side    \_\_\_ on right side  
\_\_\_ indeterminate or mixed (describe on page 2)

Burial Diagram (stick figure to show orientation)

Disturbance:    Describe type of disturbance (rodent, roots, vandalism, excavation damage, etc.). What percent is disturbed?

Feature Fill Description: Describe fill color, texture, composition, uniformity, and density of inclusions such as charcoal.

Artifacts: List all artifacts (attach extra sheets if required). Are they associated objects or just objects present in fill? Describe position relative to the remains.

Condition: Describe the overall condition/preservation of the remains. Are the remains articulated?

Context: Describe the stratigraphic and horizontal relation of the burial to other site structures or features.

Other Observations: Describe any unusual characteristics of grave construction, orientation of the remains, or other observations.

Attach a detailed plan of the interment showing the position of the remains and artifacts. The plan should be drawn to a scale large enough to recognize bones and objects. For metric graph paper a scale of 1:5 (2 centimeters = 10 centimeters) works well. For conventional graph paper a scale of 1 inch = 10 centimeters is good. The plan should include the site name, feature or burial #, graphic scale, north arrow, location of reference points (at least 2), reference to elevation datum, top and bottom elevations (in meters below datum), and a date. Also show any pit boundaries, trench lines, rodent tunnels, ash concentrations, etc.