

Offshore Renewable Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries



Operational Guide 3: Grapnel Surveys & Obstruction Clearance

Introduction

This Operational Guide is intended to help those involved in grapnel surveys and obstruction clearance to meet the requirements of The Crown Estate's Offshore Renewables Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries (ORPAD).

Grapnel surveys and obstruction clearance are routinely carried out in advance of the laying of export cables for offshore renewable energy schemes. There is a high potential that archaeological material will be encountered, or brought to the surface, during these activities.

What to do

If you find any material that may be archaeological in nature, or impact/encounter an obstruction that may be of archaeological significance, it is a condition of consent that it is reported. The Site Champion needs to report it to the appointed Nominated Contact, who will report it through the Offshore Renewables Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries. This Operational Guide will help you to report finds and obstructions that may be of archaeological interest.

Operations

In all cases, the grapnel should be towed at a suitably low speed. The vessel's movements should be monitored

on a satellite navigation system monitoring screen along predefined tracks corresponding to the future location of export and inter-connecting sub-sea cables. The grapnel should be periodically recovered to the surface and inspected for debris, at a maximum interval of 2 km.

What to do if you encounter an obstruction

During PLGRs or Grapnel Surveys, if the towing cable tensiometer indicates that an object or structure has been encountered on the seabed, follow this advice. Where the grapnel meets:

1. A light obstruction causing the vessel to slow down:

The vessel should be stopped, a GPS position recorded, the grapnel recovered to the surface and any potentially archaeological debris attached to it should be photographed, stored and reported.

2. A strong obstruction causing the vessel to stop:

An attempt to recover the grapnel should be made and records made of the GPS position. Any potentially archaeological debris attached to the grapnel should be photographed, stored and reported. If the grapnel appears to be caught, an ROV or divers should ideally be sent to investigate the nature of the anomaly and a report made.

DOs

- ✓ Seek the advice of the Protocol team at Wessex Archaeology if you are unsure on your next steps – protocol@wessexarch.co.uk
- ✓ Tow the grapnel at a suitably low speed
- ✓ Stay on predefined tracks and avoid exclusion zones
- ✓ Recover and inspect grapnel for debris at regular intervals (max. 2 km)
- ✓ Report anything you suspect is of archaeological or cultural heritage interest to the Site Champion
- ✓ Record the obstruction's GPS position, the tensiometer reading, the measurement heading of the vessel, and the side of the vessel on which the cable was located.
- ✓ If you are the Site Champion, report the anomaly to your Nominated Contact immediately
- ✓ If you suspect an anomaly is of 'high potential' (see criteria) stop any planned work within the area where the anomaly is located until archaeological advice is received via the Nominated Contact
- ✓ Keep finds protected in a suitable container and in a cool, dark place
- ✓ If the item came from seawater, keep it immersed in seawater. If it is too large, cover it and keep wet
- ✓ If the item is dry, keep it dry and protected
- ✓ Label finds all and handle them with care

DON'Ts

- ✗ DON'T wait to report the anomaly or finds
- ✗ DON'T remove any concretion, sediment or dirt
- ✗ DON'T leave the finds where they could be damaged or deteriorate
- ✗ DON'T tow the grapnel at high speed
- ✗ DON'T tow the grapnel for long periods without recovering it and checking it for debris

Criteria for High Potential Finds – Nominated Contact to be informed immediately

- Single finds that are post-medieval or earlier in date (date to 1800 or earlier)
- Single finds that relate to military aircraft
- Multiple finds recovered from one location
- Indications of the presence of a shipwreck or other structural remains
- Peat or other fine-grained sediments that contain worked flint, charcoal or bone

Criteria for Low Potential Finds

- Single, isolated finds that are not dateable or of modern (post-1800) date
- Peat deposits

Prepared by

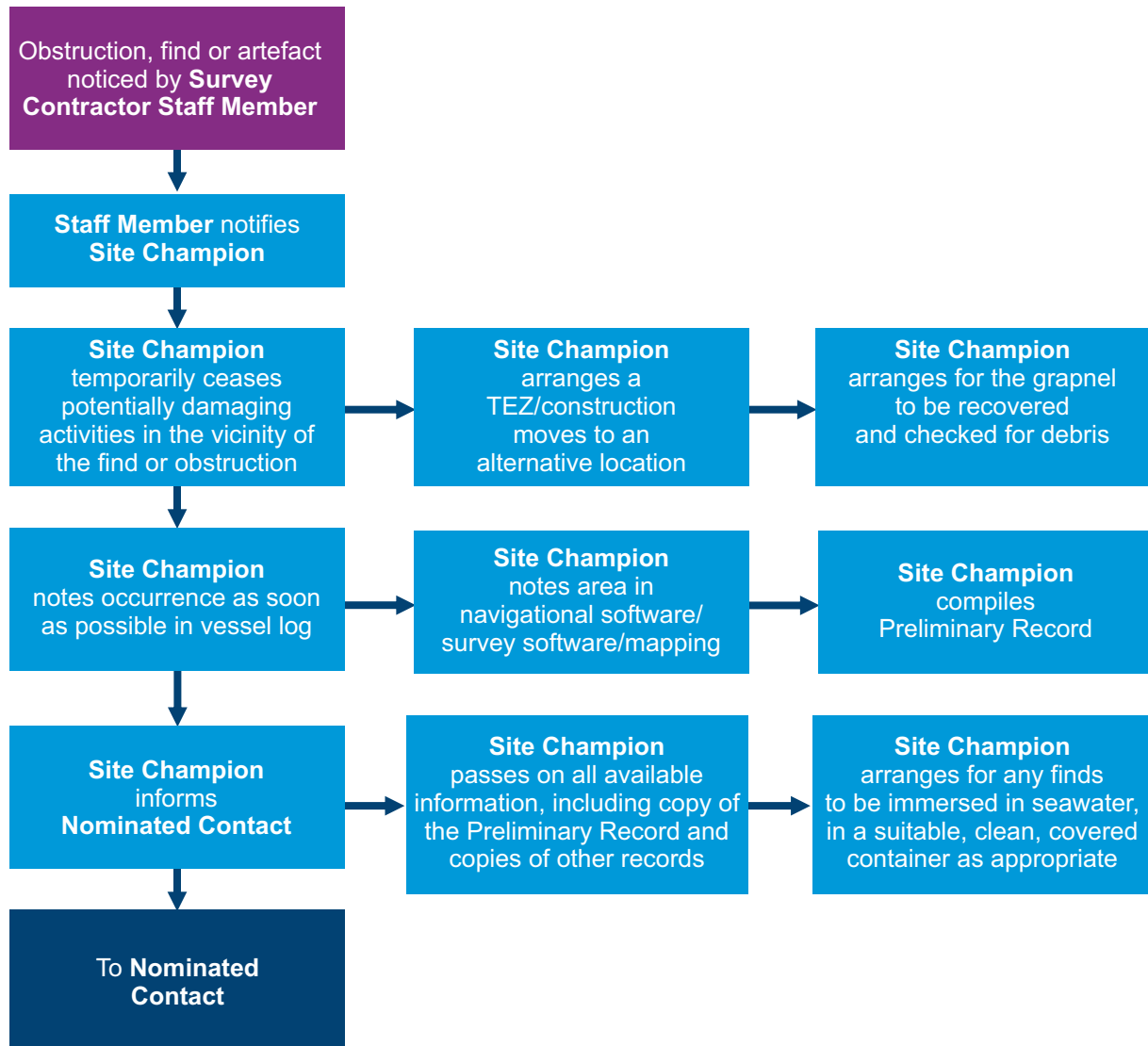


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Actions by Site Champion Flow Chart



Guidelines for identifying finds of archaeological interest can be found in the *Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries: Offshore Renewables Projects* (The Crown Estate, 2014). The Preliminary Record form for reporting archaeological discoveries to the Nominated Contact can be found in the Protocol document and on the Protocol website:

www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/marine/tcerenewables

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