

FOSSIL COLLECTING CODE OF CONDUCT

PLAN

Always research the area before your visit and plan to bring the correct tools and protective equipment. You'll find a vast range of information online, but you should also consider consulting a local geology group, or visiting a local library prior to your visit. Pay particular attention to the tools required to remove and protect. In some areas fossil collecting is prohibited. Check if permission is required before visiting.

SAFETY

The nature of fossil collecting means some locations can be extremely dangerous. Before visiting a location it's highly advisable to research the potential dangers and necessary precautions. Remember to bring the correct safety equipment to protect yourself, people under your care and other people in the vicinity. Do not take risks, be aware of local conditions such as tides and keep away from the base of the cliff.

PATIENCE

Fossil collecting requires a great deal of patience. By researching the area before your visit, you'll hopefully have the tools and equipment required to collect specimens without damaging them. Be patient and take your time. Remember, the preparation should take place at home. Whenever possible remove the specimen along with a little of the surrounding rock for protection. If you make an important discovery and do not have the correct equipment, or the find is too large. Do not risk destroying the fossil; contact your local museum for help and assistance.

PLANNING

Your initial planning should reveal the circumstances in which you may collect fossils. In many areas, collecting goes unregulated and is therefore the sole responsibility of the collector to respect the environment. In other areas, there may be rules that govern collecting. Please accept, understand and obey any SSSI rules, they are there to protect the geology for future generations.

REPORT

It's important that new and significant finds are reported to the scientific community to provide an opportunity for them to be studied. We would also encourage you to report important finds to your local museum.

PROTECT

Fossils are often fragile or vulnerable to damage if the necessary steps aren't taken to protect them. There are two aspects to protecting your finds – in the field and at home. In the field, you should bring a plentiful supply of newspaper to wrap finds. You should also try and prevent them from drying out (if relevant), as soaking those at a later stage could cause fractures. A simple plastic bag will usually do the job. Once at home you should store the fossils in a safe place away from direct sunlight.

LEAVE

Not every fossil should be removed from its location. In some instances it may be too large to move, or would break in the attempt.