

FINDS CARE · FREE RESOURCE

Finds Cleaning & Storage Checklist

A practical guide to handling, drying, labelling and storing finds without causing unnecessary damage.

What's inside

- ✓ Clear, practical steps you can use straight away
- 📄 Written for real UK detecting, not theory
- 📄 Plain-English guidance, checked against official sources
- ☆ Free to print, keep and share



**Written by
detectorists**



**Checked against
UK guidance**



**Free to print and
keep**

Stop for these before you handle a find

If it might be Treasure or archaeologically significant, stop. Photograph it, record the findspot and seek advice before cleaning. For suspected ordnance or weapons, do not touch, move away and call the police. Human remains: stop and contact the police.

✓ Stop

- ☐ Could it be Treasure or significant? If yes or unsure, stop and seek advice
- ☐ Is it part of a group, or in undisturbed ground? Stop and record it
- ☐ Is it waterlogged wood, leather or textile? Keep it wet, do not let it dry

Identify

- ☐ Photograph and record it first (see the Identification Checklist)
- ☐ Is it stable, or flaking, powdery or actively corroding?
- ☐ Is the material known? If not, treat as unidentified

Words explained

Active corrosion corrosion that is still spreading: bright spots, powder or flaking, not just an old stable patina.

Bronze disease a bright green, powdery corrosion on copper-alloy objects that spreads in damp air and can destroy them.

Safe handling

- ☐ Use clean, powder-free nitrile gloves
- ☐ Work over a soft surface to avoid drops
- ☐ Support fragile objects fully; never pick up by a thin edge
- ☐ Keep finds separate so they cannot rub together

Drying & labelling

- ☐ Air-dry gently, away from direct heat
- ☐ Never bake, microwave or force-dry a find
- ☐ Do NOT let waterlogged organics dry: seek a conservator
- ☐ Label with a reference that matches your logbook
- ☐ Record a private site code, not a public location

Storage

- ☐ Store each find separately in an acid-free bag or box
- ☐ Keep iron especially dry; it corrodes quickly in damp air
- ☐ Use silica gel in a suitable CLOSED container, not touching the object, and monitor it
- ☐ Check stored finds for new corrosion or bronze disease

Do not automatically use

These can cause irreversible damage and should never be a default beginner method: wire brushes, power tools, acid, vinegar, electrolysis, abrasive polish, household chemicals, oil or wax on unidentified objects, PVC flips or unknown plastics, and household tissue in direct contact.

Storage & condition log

FIND REF	MATERIAL	CONTAINER	STORAGE DATE	CONDITION	REVIEW DATE

If a find becomes unstable. Stop and consult a conservator, or your Finds Liaison Officer, the Treasure Trove Unit, or National Museums NI, depending on where you are.

This resource is provided for general information and personal record-keeping. Rules, official guidance and access arrangements can change. Check the current requirements for the place where you intend to detect.

Get more free metal detecting guides, templates and practical advice at [DetectoristWorld.com](https://www.DetectoristWorld.com).