

Shaler North Hills Library

Metal Detector Guidelines

This brochure will guide you through proper use and care of the Library Metal Detector as well as good practices in the field.



Welcome!

Care of Equipment

- Please be careful when transporting the detector.
- Check over all the parts when borrowing and before returning.
Let Library staff know of any concerns.
- Always use with adult supervision.
- Do not store outdoors or in your vehicle. Store in its case when not in use.

Items

Garrett Ace 400 Metal Detector in Black Storage Case

Backpack with:

- MineLab Pro-Find Pinpointer with Holster
- Two Diggers in holders (Minelab and Garrett)
- Headphones
- Gloves
- Collector Aprons/Pouches (3)
- Batteries

Black Binder with:

- Guidelines Brochure
- TWO Manuals
- Photo of parts
- Comment notebook

Usage Tips

For best detecting results thoroughly read the Garrett Ace-400 Manual:

<https://www.kellycodetectors.com/pdf/manuals/ace-400-english.pdf>

Turning on and Settings

Once powered on, the machine will turn on to the last setting that was used

You may want to change your settings based on your location:

- Coin or Relic mode is ideal for parks (eliminates iron and most trash)
- Jewelry is okay to use in parks as well but will have more mixed signals
- Zero-disc mode is great for farms and other unspoiled lands

You will most likely not need to change the sensitivity setting as it adjusts automatically.

Hearing a lot of jumpy beeping is an indicator to reduce the sensitivity setting.

Practice proper swinging by keeping the coil about an inch above the ground, and swing slow from left to right, keeping the coil parallel to the ground (avoid lifting the coil like a pendulum).

Using the Pinpoint Button

When you find a strong solid steady signal, use the Pinpoint Button on the machine to help locate a more precise location of your find (review manual for more detail on Pinpoint Function). Using the Pinpoint button helps you from digging unnecessarily.

Using the Handheld Pinpointer

Once the Pinpoint button on the metal detector locates the approximate middle of your target, you will use your handheld pinpointer to probe the ground and then where you hear a solid strong beep, that is where you will want to cut your plug.

It is possible that your target may be too deep for the handheld pinpointer to find prior to digging. In this case, dig your initial plug based on the metal detector's Pinpoint process, then use the handheld pinpointer inside the hole and around the dirt plug to locate your target.

Cutting a Plug to Retrieve Your Find

Digging in the ground is called 'cutting a plug'.

Note that dry ground (like found during the summer months) is the worst time to detect in yards. In dry, hot weather you are more likely to kill or damage the grass from digging the plug.

Cut straight up and down about two (2) inches to each side of your target.

Cut a horseshoe shape, keeping the last part of the plug intact.

Flip the plug up and over.

It is a good idea to use a towel or frisbee to place plug and dirt onto to make for easy return.

Use the handheld pinpointer to help more precisely locate your target.

Returning the Soil and Replugging the Hole

Brush all soil/dirt back into the hole and carefully flip the plug back into place.

Stamp down on the edges so it blends back into the ground.

If it is very dry you should rehydrate the plug.

Fluff up the grass around the plug.

As much as possible, leave the area looking as it did before you dug your plug.

Proper Etiquette While Metal Detecting

Permissions

Always make sure you have permission to metal detect in the area you plan to detect in. Federal, state, county, and local parks all have different rules regarding this. Private property should never be entered without permission.

You may also need permission in public places such as parks and forests. You will need a permit for any Allegheny County Park. You should check or register with your local municipality for detecting in their parks.

SHALER TOWNSHIP does NOT permit detecting in its parks (as of 9/2025).

Do not detect in areas that interfere with other park patrons such as ball fields, shelters, golf courses, playgrounds, etc.

Guidelines

- Follow all local, state, and federal laws related to metal detecting.
- Respect private property and never metal detect an area without permission.
- Pack out what you pack in, and properly dispose of any trash you find.
- Leave all gates, structures, and personal property as they were before.
- Fill in every hole you dig. Leave no trace you were there.
- Never dig in a way that harms vegetation, wildlife, or changes natural features.
- Report any significant historical artifacts to local authorities.
- Be an ambassador for the hobby by being courteous and thoughtful at all times.

General Tips

Do your research so you know the area you are detecting may hold items that will be interesting to find.

Know your location (parks give you more trash signals than untarnished land like a farm).

Have realistic expectations of what you might find.

Spend time really learning the sounds of the machine.

Trouble Shooting and Testing

It can help to do some 'test runs' to get a sense of how the metal detector works. Try taking out your pocket change, spread it on the ground (no digging required), then wave the metal detector over it and listen for what each coin tone sounds like. Do the same with a nail, a pull tab, and gum wrapper or tin foil.

Make sure your detector and handheld Pinpointer are not being interfered with by nearby electronics or metal clothing/shoes/jewelry, etc.

When you think you found something but the beep is not strong or is chattering, try moving your detector in a different motion (go top to bottom instead of left to right) to see if you get a better signal (the way the target lays in the ground affects what it reads as).

Our Thanks to the North Pittsburgh Past Finders!

Tips & usage guidance provided by the North Pittsburgh Past Finders. Check them out on the web or on Facebook.

If you enjoyed metal detecting, consider joining a club like North Pittsburgh Past Finders where you can learn even more!

<https://www.northpittsburghpastfinders.com/>



Check out our Library of Things!

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Books...And So Much More!

Shaler North Hills Library

shalerlibrary.org

412-486-0211

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