

Texas Law on Metal Detecting

Metal Detecting on Private Property

An individual who wants to use a metal detector on private property in Texas should get the permission of the landowner. It is a good idea to get the permission in writing. The treasure hunter and landowner should address how they want to cover digging on the property, such as how the treasure hunter plans to dig and fill holes.

The parties should determine what will happen if the treasure hunter finds valuable artifacts. The landowner may want to receive payment or a percentage of the sale of the items.

Metal Detecting in City Parks

Municipal regulations in cities such as [San Antonio](#) and [Houston](#) may permit metal detecting in city parks. A city may require an individual to get a permit to engage in this activity. This is true in San Antonio, where a candidate must submit a completed application to engage in metal detection.

San Antonio's [guidelines for metal detecting](#) in city parks limit the use of metal detectors to developed parks that do not contain designated archaeological sites and are not designated natural areas. The guidelines limit use of metal detectors in certain areas, such as ball fields. Detectorists may not use tools of any kind for digging. If they find an archaeological artifact, the permit holder is required to notify the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, and the state of Texas retains ownership of the artifact.

In Houston, it is prohibited to disturb plants and animals in a city park. Metal detector users may not destroy public property. This means they cannot dig in the ground of a public park to retrieve an artifact that they locate with a metal detector.