

Meteorite Identifications

If you think you have found a meteorite, please check if you can answer the following questions regarding your specimen with a “yes”.

1. Fusion crust?

Does the specimen have a smooth dark (black or brown) surface with no holes in it?

Yes. No.

2. Higher Density?

Is the specimen heavier than a common rock of the same size?

Yes. No.

3. Composition

3.1. Metal?

Is the specimen made out of compact metal?

Yes. No.

3.2. Rock?

Is the specimen made out of compact rock but shows small metallic inclusions on a freshly cut and polished surface?

Yes. No.

New: Don't use a magnet as this destroys much of the preserved natural magnetism in meteorites. This would compromise the use for science.

1x no: No meteorite:

If you answer any of the questions 1 to 3 with a “no” your specimen is probably not a meteorite. Meteorites are extremely rare and there are many look-alikes, called “[meteor-wrongs](#)”, some examples can be seen at the Field Museum in our 2nd floor exhibit.

3x "yes": Maybe a meteorite

If you have answered all of the five questions with a “yes” your specimen has properties shared with most meteorites, it still might be a terrestrial rock, however. To verify if it is a meteorite we need to analyze the specimen or a piece of it at least 1 inch in diameter. We would be happy to take a closer look.

We can only accept specimens sent in by mail our courier and only accompanied with the signed identification request form. We thank the ASU Center for Meteorite Studies for allowing us to adapt their form.



Stony meteorite Homestead (Ordinary chondrite L5). Photographer: John Weinstein, GEO86367_02d.



Iron meteorite Odessa (IAB main group). Photographer: John Weinstein, GN91195_10Ad.

To have your specimen identified, please fill out this form completely and return it with your specimen by mail or courier service

Important Specimen Identification Policies

We only identify specimens collected legally inside the United States.

Budgetary limitations and the risk of violating export laws prevent us from handling possible specimens from outside the United States.

We only return specimens to addresses within the United States. Budgetary limitations prevent us from returning specimens or related paperwork to international addresses.

We must see your specimen itself to be able to verify that it is a meteorite.

While pictures and descriptions of the entire rock can be helpful, they alone **are not** enough for us to make a positive verification. Lab results alone from another institution are also not enough for us to verify that you have a meteorite.

You should obtain delivery confirmation from the carrier you use to send your specimen, as the Center does not have enough personnel to inform you that we received your specimen.

The Center only accepts **one** specimen per household at a time.

Due to the high volume of specimens the Center receives on a weekly basis, as well as other responsibilities of our small staff, our specimen identification service takes **an average of 6 months**, but can sometimes take more than 12 months longer.

Do not bring your specimen to the Center in person. Specimens brought to the Field Museum cannot be accepted. Unsolicited personal visits are also strongly discouraged because we cannot guarantee that a member of our staff will be here to meet you.

Do not contact the Center to check on your specimen. Phoning or emailing the Center only slows the identification process, as it keeps us on the phone or computer rather than in the laboratory. If the Center has had your specimen for more than 6 months, and the Center has not contacted you about your specimen, the Center will be happy to respond to inquiries via email or phone regarding an estimated return date.”

We will **not** identify specimens purchased from a dealer, commercial vendor, auction house, etc. The goal of the Center’s identification service is to identify new specimens, not confirm claims made by other establishments.

Please complete the following checklist:

- 1) I confirm that my specimen was collected legally in the United States.
 AGREE DISAGREE

- 2) I agree to submit a piece of my specimen, at least 1 inch in diameter, for testing. I will **NOT** send photos or the results of other laboratories' analyses.
 AGREE DISAGREE

- 3) I agree to send only **one** specimen at a time.
 AGREE DISAGREE

- 4) I understand that it takes **an average of 6 months** to analyze and identify my specimen and may take longer. I will not contact the Center to check on my specimen before 6 months have elapsed, as this slows the identification process of not just my specimen, but of the over 200 specimens the Center receives every year.
 AGREE DISAGREE

- 5) I agree that the Center is at no time responsible for any loss or damage to my specimen, either as a result of postal delivery failure, the Center's negligence, an unforeseen accident, or any other cause. By submitting my specimen for this free analysis service, I agree to accept all risk of loss.
 AGREE DISAGREE

- 6) I agree that I will not submit any specimens purchased from ANYBODY, since the goal of the Center's identification service is to identify new specimens, not confirm claims made by other parties.
 AGREE DISAGREE

- 7) I agree that it is solely my responsibility, and not the Center's, to obtain delivery confirmation from my shipping carrier. I agree that I will not call or email to confirm whether the Center has received my specimen.
 AGREE DISAGREE

- 8) I will not send any kind of suspicious or potentially dangerous material to the Center for testing.
 AGREE DISAGREE

- 9) I agree to send a **self-addressed envelope with the correct postage for the entire package** if I desire the Center to return my specimen. I agree that my failure to send such an envelope is an indication that I do not desire the return of my specimen, and it serves as my authorization for the Center to dispose of the specimen when analysis is complete.
 AGREE DISAGREE

Please return all four pages completed and signed.



**Robert A. Pritzker Center for Meteoritics
and Polar Studies
Specimen Identification Form**

By signing below, I understand that by using the Meteorite Identification Service provided by the Robert A. Pritzker Center for Meteoritics and Polar Studies, I indicate my agreement to all the terms and conditions set forth on this form.

Signature

Date

Please fill out the following identification and specimen information:

Full Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

Daytime Phone _____ Email _____

Date of Fall/Find _____

Location of Fall/Find _____

Coordinates (if applicable) _____

Description of fireball (if applicable to fall) _____

Please send this completed form, along with your sample (or a small piece), to:

Meteorite Identifications
Robert A. Pritzker Center for Meteoritics and Polar Studies
Department of Geology
The Field Museum
1400 S. Lake Shore Dr.
Chicago, IL 60605-2496

Please return all four pages completed and signed.