

Getting Permission

What to say



It would be a good thing to try to find out the name of the property owner first as it makes you look more 'prepared'. Think about what you're going to ask the landowner. Here are a couple of examples:

"Hello, Mr. <Landowner's Name>. My name is <Name> and I was wondering if you would give me permission to metal detect on your property."

"Hello Mrs. <Landowner's Name>, my name is <Name> and I've been looking at your property every day driving back-and-forth to work and was wondering if you would give me permission to metal detect on your property. I don't leave holes in your lawn and I don't damage any other property. I also take full responsibility for my being on your property. In return for permission I will also remove any and all trash I find or dig up.

After this initial introduction, answer any questions or concerns the property owner may have and, most important, do not lie! Lies will catch up sooner or later but most likely sooner.

If the property owner asks to share the finds, you of course agree, but also suggest that you might find any lost jewelry for them. In short, you want to make new friends and that way secure possible future hunts on their property or their friends' properties referred to you by your new friends. They might become interested enough to join you for a treasure hunt. That could lead to another family joining the club. Possibilities are infinite!

If the property owner says yes, you should do try to search immediately, if possible. Property owners sometimes change their minds.

If the property owners say no, thank them for their time, hand them your detectorist card, and suggest that if they need help locating a septic cover, pipes, property markers, lost tools, lost jewelry, or anything else, to give you a call. NEVER start arguing as to why they wouldn't allow you to detect.



At other times, property owners may follow you around to check for themselves what and how you're doing. That's fine. As a matter of fact, the property owner's curiosity may make a new detectorist friend! If you have an extra detector, bring it along just for moments like this and let the

property owner check it out. After you gain the landowners' trust, they may give you the names and addresses of their friends or neighbors for you to do some detecting.

A couple more suggestions: First impressions are very important, so make sure you are clean, wear clean clothes, and NO SUNGLASSES! Direct eye contact is the best method to gain the property owner's attention. If your appearance is that of a 'Most Wanted' person or someone working the yard all day, they may keep the door shut, or tell you to leave immediately, or that you're trespassing. .

First Impression

Ok, you've hunted all the parks, public schools, medians and abandoned "locations" in your area and everything is hunted out. Now what do you do? Take a road trip, move to some exotic place that is always featured in one of the monthly treasure magazines or just go up to a stranger's door in your town and ASK PERMISSION to hunt it! Most Th'ers would prefer to do the first two options because the third scares the dickens out of them.

Let me give you some tips that will open up more sites than you can possibly hunt in 10 lifetimes. All it takes is some common sense mixed with a good dose of courtesy and a smidgen of salesmanship. Most of us do our hunting on weekends and can't wait to hit the road at first light and hunt until dark, in order to get as much time swinging the coil in as possible.

While this is an admirable trait, it is best saved for road trips or areas where you don't have to ask a homeowner for permission. Put yourselves in their position, they too have been at the grind all week and Saturday or Sunday morning may be their day to sleep in. Guess how receptive they are going to be to someone pounding on the door or ringing the bell a half dozen times at 7AM or 8AM. Plan your first stop to arrive at the neighborhood about 9:45. Most folks are up and about by then and haven't gone off for the day.

Before you leave home, take an inventory of your appearance. Don't wear beat up, ripped, torn or filthy old clothes that you save for digging in the dirt. Avoid the Johnny Cash look, try to wear bright colors, like clean faded jeans, chambray shirts, polo shirts with a collar, or jumpsuits if that is your style. Remember you are going to be meeting strangers, they have absolutely no idea how nice you really are in spite of your appearance. If you're a man, shave. Always comb your hair and use deodorant. An unkempt appearance won't open many doors.

Avoid T shirts as your outer garment unless spotlessly clean and devoid of any slogans, cute sayings or political statements. You have very few seconds to make that first impression, your T-shirt will speak louder and first to a stranger. Especially taboo are shirts that infer violence or make risqué statements. They may be fun to wear at a gathering of like minded people but they are certain to stereotype you before you even say hello. Gents, avoid the torn tank top or bare chested look, if you want to show off your pectorals go to the beach. Ladies avoid short shorts, tube tops , tank tops or the unfettered look. If you want to be ogled join the guys at the beach. If you are like me and have a large belly and small hips, wear a belt and/or suspenders to hold up your jeans, the only moon the owner wants to see is in the sky!

Know the neighborhood you are about to search. Take time to do some research, drive through it without a detector and make a list of the places that really look good to you. That way when you come back you are not a car full of strangers prowling the neighborhood. Look hard at the neighborhood and yard size. It isn't a problem if you hunt by yourself, but if you bring partners along with you, you need to have a good feel for how many hunters a yard will support. The average yard will comfortably allow two hunters to move around without crosstalk and overcrowding. If the yard is over an acre, 3 hunters can search the place without making the owner feel like he is being scoured clean. It is hard for most of us to tell a hunting partner he or

she can't come along with us on occasion but the alternative is to have you and six of your closest friends arriving at a 75 by 100 city lot!!

If there are two or more of you hunting, send only one to the door, don't have your buddies lounging around on the lawn with their equipment while you get the OK. The others should stay in the car until you walk back and tell them it is a go or no go. Decide who is going to do the asking in advance. Don't argue about who is going to the door for 5 minutes while sitting in front of the house. Chances are the homeowner saw you drive up easier to get all the dirt back in without a big brown stain on the grass. If you use a survival knife or some other lethal looking digging tool, don't start sharpening it up or tossing it into nearby trees or the lawn while killing time. Sure we all have some potential life threatening tools if used by a lunatic but we don't want to convey that image to the still nervous owner, keep it out of site in its holder until you need to use it.

Once you start hunting, wear earphones. Loud beeping will become a water torture to the owner and imply a multitude of valuable targets whether or not they are. While you have your earphones on, remember you can't hear voices well nor can your partner so remove them if you want to talk to each other. Don't scream across the yard to each other or curse or holler what have you found. At best it is rude and at the worst it may get you tossed out.

Have some prearranged hand signals with your partner if you find something neat, a tap on the top of the head might mean silver or relics. If you want to discuss a find stroll over to your partner and casually talk about it, save your bragging and joy until you are in the car and leaving the property. Carrying on over a find is a sure way to lose it to the homeowner or point out to him and the neighbors that there is "real treasure" here and that they better keep it to themselves. By the way, it goes without saying - remove trash you find as well as treasure when you search a yard.

Don't let a non productive yard reflect on your attitude as you depart. It is not the owner's fault that there was nothing there or that you failed to find your intended targets. Thank them for their hospitality as profusely as you would had you found \$10 face value in old silver. Let them know that it is a treasure HUNTING hobby, and not necessarily a treasure FINDING hobby, and that is what makes it fun. You'll come across as polite and grateful and may even get a tip from the owner to another yard where they know that there might be something.

When asking permission, I always tell the home owner that I will show them anything I find before leaving. The key word is SHOW. Notice I didn't imply "sharing". I don't know what I am going to find and I certainly don't want to give it away before all my efforts are even begun.. You control what you show. The items are in your apron or pouch so common sense and a bit off salesmanship is crucial at this point.

A Barber dime may be just another coin to them, but to you it may be of great significance. Same with large cents, wheaties and memorials. If you tell the home owner you found a hand full of pennies and offer them to pick a few, odds are they will wave you off. If, on the other hand, you point out the large cent telling them it is fairly rare and may be of some value, what do you think they will do?

Lastly, treat the homeowners and their property with respect. Treasure hunting on someone's property without permission is trespassing. Removing an item without permission is theft. There is no such thing as abandoned or unowned property. Check with the local tax assessor if in doubt. There are an awful lot of great finds yet to be made in private yards. How you search them impacts all of us. Once you find the owner, get permission and enjoy some of the best hunting you'll ever do, you'll make many friends in the process!