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## TABLE 11.1 Defining Attributes of Disaster Archaeology

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1. **Problem solving:** Disaster archaeology is intended to solve problems, such as determining the identification of victims and collecting evidence relevant to the disaster.
  2. **Assigned task:** Disaster archaeology does not follow an archaeological research agenda; instead, it responds to requests of authorities at the scene.
  3. **Medicolegal requirement:** Disaster archaeology requires very high standards of collection, recording, and interpretation, so as to possibly withstand court challenges.
  4. **Empirical minimalism:** Disaster archaeology requires conclusions to be based on the simplest and fewest assumptions.
  5. **Archaeology leads:** Disaster archaeology depends on archaeologists maintaining very high standards in their initial identification and documentation, since other specialists will depend on the reports for their own studies.
  6. **Situational awareness:** Those working in disaster archaeology must be knowledgeable about what the various agencies involved are expected to do.
  7. **Attitude is everything:** Those working in disaster archaeology must be aware of the structure of emergency services management, including its hierarchical structure, and archaeologists must be able to work in a cooperative and egalitarian way.
  8. **Safety is always first:** The safety and health (including emotional health) of those involved in disaster archaeology is always the first priority.
  9. **Confidentiality is critical:** It is important that evidence and information is not compromised or contaminated; discretion must be used in discussing information on-site and afterwards, and archaeologists should not be doing interviews at the scene; limits on disclosure may go on for many years and perhaps indefinitely; archaeologists should not necessarily expect to publish their work, including photos, in peer-reviewed journals.
  10. **Archaeology speaks for the victims:** Those working in disaster archaeology are uniquely situated to provide emotional and legal closure.
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Source: Based on Gould 2007.