

Guidelines



Registration and reporting in the Research in Svalbard database

You must register the planned project in the Svalbard Science Forum's RiS database and apply via The Governor of Svalbard's database for permission. Reporting back to the Governor after the fieldwork is completed must also be done through the RiS database.

Notification and reporting of tour schedule

If you are completing fieldwork outside of Management Area 10, you must comply with the Governor of Svalbard's notification requirements. The Governor sets the requirements for what such a notification must contain. For a group, it is sufficient to send a joint notification form. The Governor requires that the notification is sent electronically.

After you have completed the fieldwork, you must fill in and submit a report form (electronic) to the Governor.

Insurance

Individual travellers must have insurance or a bank guarantee to cover expenses related to potential searches, rescue operations or patient transport that may be necessary in connection with the trip. It is expected that researchers/employees are covered by their research institutions and we therefore do not require researchers who are going out in the field to take out separate search and rescue insurance.

Students conducting fieldwork should expect to have to take out search and rescue insurance if they do not have confirmation that their research institution will cover a possible search and rescue operation.

Participants in fieldwork

For security reasons, the Governor of Svalbard needs to know who is participating in the fieldwork. Make sure that all participants are included in the RiS registration including their respective dates of birth and, if necessary, in the notification form.

Visa requirements

Individuals who have a visa requirement for the Schengen Area must apply for a visa well in advance of the trip. The application is submitted to the nearest Norwegian embassy or consulate. When entering Svalbard, you leave the Schengen Area. Therefore, it is important that you apply for a double-entry visa so you can enter the Schengen Area twice, once when travelling up to Svalbard and once on the return

journey. More information can be found on the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration's website.

Time in the field

For security reasons, the Governor of Svalbard needs to know when and where the fieldwork is taking place. Make sure that all planned time in the field is registered in the RiS database. Remember that the time in the field is not necessarily the same as the project period.

Location

Enter the location of your fieldwork in the Research in Svalbard database. Be as precise as possible. If you are going to carry out fieldwork at multiple locations, make sure each one is registered. There are different provisions that apply within and outside Management Area 10.

In Management Area 10, there are no special registration requirements for travellers. Outside Management Area 10, The Governor of Svalbard requires individual travellers to complete a notification form.

If you want to carry out fieldwork within national parks or nature reserves, you must adhere to the regulatory requirements. These vary for the different protected areas. Transportation and fieldwork in such areas usually requires permission from The Governor, and you must apply for an exemption from specific provisions and justify why the work must be done in the protected area. Projects that can equally well be carried out outside protected areas shall be restricted to non-protected areas.

In some protected areas there are traffic bans for all or parts of the year.

Camping

Camping requirements are regulated in the "Regulations relating to camping activities in Svalbard" as well as in the provisions in the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act. In particular, note the distance requirement for cultural monuments and that you must have permission from The Governor of Svalbard if you wish to stay in the same location for more than a week. The protection zone around fixed cultural monuments is 100 metres.

Camping activities must be carried out so that damage to vegetation is avoided to the greatest extent possible. As far as possible, tents and other installations must be set up on ground that is free of vegetation.

Transport

Depending on your transportation needs, you may need additional permits. Note that permits are required for all helicopter landings and airdrops, including on sea ice or

on vessels. It is important that the transport is planned carefully so that the applications and permits cover the requirements.

You have an obligation to give notification for all transport outside Management Area 10. For transport via snow scooter outside Management Area 10, all travellers must have permission from The Governor.

Fauna

The rules concerning the disturbance of wildlife are very strict and also cover handling and collection. It is prohibited to move animals that are found dead in the wild or parts of animals that are found dead in the wild. The exceptions to this are naturally shed reindeer antlers. Report any interesting discoveries to The Governor of Svalbard.

All disturbance of fauna requires permission from The Governor pursuant to Section 30 of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act. Avoid causing any unnecessary disturbance.

The handling, marking and monitoring of animals must be approved by the Norwegian Food Safety Authority before the application is sent to The Governor. The processing time at the Norwegian Food Safety Authority can be long, so make sure you allow good time for this.

Moving fauna requires permission from the Norwegian Environment Agency. Importing fauna to Svalbard also requires permission from the Norwegian Environment Agency, see Section 26 of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act. Various provisions apply to the export of zoological specimens and some require approval from the Norwegian Food Safety Authority. The Norwegian Environment Agency processes applications for the export of parts from CITES-listed species such as polar bears.

Flora

It is forbidden to damage or pick plants in Svalbard pursuant to Section 28 of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act. The collection of plants for research or teaching is permitted if this does not significantly impact the plant population at the site. For all collection of flora that may have a significant impact on the plant population at the site, you must have permission from The Governor of Svalbard pursuant to Section 29 of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act.

You do not require permission to collect fungi and seaweed.

Moving plants requires permission from the Norwegian Environment Agency. Importing plants to Svalbard requires permission from the Norwegian Environment Agency in accordance with Section 26 of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act.

You do not require permission to export plant material from Svalbard to Norway if the plants are native to Svalbard. For other plants, you should contact The Governor of Svalbard. For further transport to other countries, please contact the customs authority in the destination country.

Geology

In general, no separate permits are required for the collection of loose stones and fossils. This does not apply to all protected areas. Therefore, it is necessary to check the regulations for the relevant protected areas.

For geological work that involves physical alteration to the terrain, you must have permission from The Governor of Svalbard pursuant to Section 57 in the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act.

Cultural heritage

The regulations governing cultural heritage are very strict, cf. Chapter V in the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act. All fixed and loose cultural monuments and objects dating from before 1946 are automatically protected. This includes all traces of human activity such as buildings and structures as well as all kinds of objects made by humans. Evidence of human graves of all kinds are protected regardless of their age. The same applies to skeletal remains at slaughter sites for walruses and whales and skeletal remains from polar bears in connection with self-shooting traps. The protection zone around fixed cultural monuments is 100 metres. Therefore, you must stay outside this zone if setting up camp or lighting a bonfire. It is forbidden to move automatically protected cultural monuments and objects even if they are found on the coast or in other exposed areas. If in doubt, assume that the object is protected.

Soil, ice, snow and water samples

You do not require permission for taking soil samples or extracting ice cores from glaciers. You also do not require permission for taking snow samples and water samples (salt and fresh water).

Installations

If you are planning to set up installations, it may be necessary to apply for permission from several parties in addition to The Governor of Svalbard. The Svalbard Environmental Protection Act applies to the whole of Svalbard. All major installations outside the planning areas with approved land-use plans require permission from the office of the Governor of Svalbard pursuant to Section 57 in the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act. Remember to specify the exact location on a map.

The four largest settlements in Svalbard and the areas surrounding these are governed by land-use plans: Longyearbyen, Ny-Ålesund, Sveagruva and Barentsburg. Projects and installations within these planning areas must comply with the land-use plans and may potentially require permission from the planning authority. Therefore,

first assess if the project complies with the current land-use plan and then submit a notification or application to the planning authority. If you are in doubt, contact Longyearbyen Community Council in Longyearbyen, Kings Bay AS in Ny-Ålesund, Store Norske Spitsbergen Kulkompani in Sveagruva and The Governor of Svalbard for projects in Barentsburg. Aside from Longyearbyen Community Council in Longyearbyen, The Governor of Svalbard is the planning authority in the planning areas. The planning authority can also help you with practical questions. Installations and other projects also require permission from the landowner.

Fuel depots

If you plan to establish a fuel depot in Svalbard, you need permission from the office of the Governor of Svalbard. Note that you also need permission to leave jerry cans out. You can apply to have a fuel depot electronically on The Governor of Svalbard's website.

Safety

Anyone who travels outside of settlements, with the exception of visitors and residents who are taking part in organised tours, is required to know how to protect themselves against polar bear attacks. Necessary measures shall be taken to avoid the danger of polar bear attacks and to ward off an attack without injuring or killing the animal.

Any person travelling outside the settlements, with the exception of visitors and permanent residents who are taking part in organised tours, shall be equipped with appropriate means of frightening and chasing off polar bears.

It is mandatory to secure campsites against polar bears. We strongly recommend that you familiarise yourself with potential hazards in Svalbard and appropriate preventive safety measures. Make sure you are familiar with how to use a firearm and flare gun. We recommend that everyone who is going out into the field takes a safety course. The proper handling of firearms is important for the safety of yourself, other people and the polar bear.

All traffic outside Management Area 10 must be accompanied by an emergency beacon and The Governor of Svalbard must know the identity of the transmitter. This will be included in the notification form.