

Planning your research

Research in Svalbard requires extensive planning. Challenges to fieldwork include strict environmental regulations, polar bears, crevasses, extreme weather, and poor communications coverage.

Your research project must be registered in [the Research in Svalbard \(RiS\) database](#) well in advance. Search through existing projects in the database to make sure your project is original and does not duplicate research and/or existing infrastructure. Registered projects will be assigned a unique RiS-ID number, which must be obtained before you can apply for a permit from the Governor of Svalbard, book flights to and accommodation in Ny-Ålesund, or do research at the Stanisław Siedlecki Polar Station in Hornsund.

Legislation

Svalbard-specific Norwegian legislation, notably [the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act](#) (2001) and regulations, is highly relevant to all field research in the archipelago. More often than not, field research will require an exemption from the environmental regulations and/or a permit from the Governor of Svalbard.

With some exceptions, general Norwegian legislation also applies to the entire Svalbard and regulates a number of research-relevant activities, including the use of radio frequencies, manned and unmanned aircraft operations, the processing of personal data, installations that may affect maritime safety and navigation, the handling of sources of radiation, marine scientific research, animal experiments, the use of airborne photo/video sensors, the ringing of birds, the launching of objects into space, and working arrangements.

[Find out more about legislation and permits](#)

Safety issues

Challenges to fieldwork include polar bears, unstable sea ice, glacier crevasses, avalanche, drifting icebergs, extreme weather and climate, poor communications coverage and scarce infrastructure. [The Governor of Svalbard](#) updates different guides and field logs on its webpages that will be helpful in your fieldwork planning.

The University Center in Svalbard (UNIS) offers safety courses which address Arctic- and Svalbard-relevant risks and challenges. Contact UNIS for further information.

[Guidelines for polar bear protection \(Governor of Svalbard\)](#)

[General safety instructions \(UNIS\)](#)

Logistics

Although infrastructure is scarce throughout Svalbard, a number of logistics services are available.

Air travel: Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) and Norwegian fly regular scheduled flights to Longyearbyen from Oslo and Tromsø. Note that Oslo and Tromsø are inside the Schengen Area (as opposed to the Svalbard islands), which means that travelers from outside the Schengen Area may need a visa for transiting mainland Norway (both ways) even if a visa is not required for staying in Svalbard. All passengers must present their passports before boarding a flight to Svalbard.

Cargo shipping: Bring Cargo is the sole provider of regular sea freight between the mainland (Tromsø) and ports in Svalbard (Longyearbyen, Ny-Ålesund and Svea).

General logistics: Both the Norwegian Polar Institute and the University Center in Svalbard (UNIS) offer logistics services to researchers.

Accommodation: Longyearbyen features a number of hotels, see [Visit Svalbard](#) for overview and booking. The Visit Svalbard booking portal can also be used to find accommodation in Barentsburg and the deserted Pyramiden settlement in Billefjorden.

For accommodation in Ny-Ålesund, contact [Kings Bay AS](#). Researchers must be affiliated with one of the permanent stations to conduct research in the Ny-Ålesund area. If you do not have an affiliation to one of the stations, contact the Norwegian Polar Institute's Sverdrup Station. A RiS-ID is required.

For accommodation in Hornsund, contact the [The Stanisław Siedlecki Polar Station in Hornsund](#). A RiS-ID is required.

Out of Longyearbyen: For air travels between Longyearbyen and Ny-Ålesund, contact [Kings Bay AS](#). For all other air travel in Svalbard, contact Lufttransport AS and the Governor of Svalbard. Helicopter and fixed-wing operations require a license from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as well as a permit from the Governor of Svalbard.

A number of operators offer flexible transport services by sea, including (the list is not exhaustive):

- [Arctica Expeditions](#)
- [Better Moments](#)
- [Henningsen Transport & Guiding](#)
- [The Norwegian Polar Institute](#)
- [Polar Charter](#)
- [Spitsbergen Travel](#)
- [Svalbard Adventure Group](#)

Snowcats can be hired from Henningsen Transport & Guiding and Spitsbergen Travel. Snowmobile transportation is available from Henningsen Transport & Guiding, Spitsbergen Travel and Svalbard Adventure Group.

Inside Longyearbyen: A shuttle bus runs between Svalbard Airport Longyear and the hotels as well as the Svalbard Science Center in Longyearbyen in connection with arrivals and departures. Taxis are also available outside the terminal building after arrivals.

Taxis, busses and rental cars can be found in Longyearbyen, see Visiting Svalbard's [overview](#). For cargo services inside Longyearbyen, contact [Pole Position Logistics](#).

Field equipment and provisions: General field equipment, such as rifles (require a license or permit from the Governor of Svalbard), flare guns, satellite phones and Personal Locator Beacons (PLB), may be rented from local stores in Longyearbyen. Svalbardbutikken (Coop) in Longyearbyen is a well-provisioned grocery store.

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