

# THULE GUIDE 2021

**Battelle Arctic Research Operations**  
<https://battlearcticgateway.org/>

Updated January 2021

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# Thule Guide

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This document is for researchers planning fieldwork at or based from Thule Air Base, Greenland. Please contact your Battelle Arctic Research Operations' project manager (PM) for further information on any topic.

Established in 1951, Thule is the US Air Force's (USAF) northernmost base at almost 77° N. Through cooperative agreements between the USAF and NSF, NSF researchers are allowed access to Thule, opening opportunities for the research community. Battelle Arctic Research Operations (Battelle ARO) serves as the NSF liaison in Thule to support science using Thule's infrastructure as well as coordinating external elements.

The Thule population includes representatives from government agencies and private contractors working to support Thule's military mission. The population can be over 700.

- USAF personnel in administrative and security forces roles
- Arctic Command (Danish Defense) personnel in the Danish Liaison Office
- Danish Police Inspector (DPI)
- Base Maintenance Contractor (Vectrus), all base support operations
- Air Greenland, Greenlandic air carrier by U.S. Embassy charter
- US contractors working at the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System site and other secured facilities around Thule
- Researchers funded by international agencies.

## COVID-19 update

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As of March 2020, travel to Greenland for research and operations has been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Significant requirements have been introduced by NSF and Greenland that impact fieldwork. Your PM will provide current information regarding travel to Greenland.

Current information on Greenland travel restrictions can be found at:

<https://visitgreenland.com/articles/corona-virus-status/>

The National Science Foundation has published information regarding COVID-19 and research.

More information can be found on NSF's

webpage: [https://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/coronavirus/](https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/coronavirus/)

Thule Air Base has additional restrictions.

Additional questions can be answered by Battelle Arctic Research Operations contacts contained within this guide.

## Battelle ARO Services in Thule

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Battelle ARO services in Thule include:

- ✦ Logistics support (transportation, air support, cargo movement, and facilities management)
- ✦ Military travel, base, and area clearances
- ✦ Lodging arrangements.
- ✦ Support coordination with appropriate agencies and contractors in Greenland

There is not a Battelle ARO permanent or seasonal personnel representative on base – Battelle ARO arranges personnel onsite as needed. Researchers are expected to be self-sufficient, and work with their Project Manager researchers for support requests.

While at Thule Air Base, participants are guests of the USAF, the Government of Greenland, and the Arctic Command while working under the auspices of the NSF. The arrangement is facilitated by a cooperative relationship between NSF and pertinent agencies. In the event of issues, notify Battelle ARO to maintain clear communication with our hosts.

## Planning Process

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Begin planning for your project by contacting your Project Manager (PM). Battelle ARO will work closely with you to keep logistics within the scope of NSF funding. Planning is an ongoing process that will likely be finalized a few weeks before your project deploys for the field.

After your initial contact with Battelle ARO, the next step is to ensure your project meets the Government of Greenland permitting requirements. Visit [www.nanoq.gl/expeditions](http://www.nanoq.gl/expeditions) to view requirements and download forms from the Ministry of Nature and Environment and Section of Industry, Energy, and Research for conducting scientific research in Greenland. Almost all projects require government approval; you can find guidelines and criteria on this webpage. In addition, some local science at Thule AB may require USAF permissions. Your Project Manager (PM) will work with you to coordinate with USAF personnel.

## Travel to Thule

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Visit Battelle ARO's website at <https://battlearcticgateway.org/> and review the *Greenland Guide* prior to your trip. If you are not a US citizen, consult the US Customs and Border Protection website at <http://www.cbp.gov> for information on visas.

Contact your Project Manager if you have questions prior to departure or enroute.

## Military Clearances

You will be asked to provide personal information on each member of your field party to Battelle ARO. This information is used to obtain military and country clearances from the USAF and the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, required at least 30 days prior to travel. Battelle ARO will also prepare a Letter of Introduction (LOI) from the NSF. The LOI states that you are an NSF researcher and allows access to AMC flights to and from Greenland.

Military personnel will refer to your LOI as “travel orders”. Personal information required for each field team member:

Name	Passport expiration date
Date of birth	Emergency contact
Place of birth	(Name, Phone and
Country of citizenship	Email)
Passport number	

## Harassment

NSF-supported Arctic Research field sites, camps and stations are managed by Battelle ARO using the following guidelines. Professional conduct and acceptable behavior are mandatory for participants during work and non-work hours. Participants are expected and required to work cooperatively, to treat others with dignity and respect, to follow the site-specific policies and procedures, and to contribute to a safe work and living space at all times.

Battelle ARO site manager has the responsibility and authority to address behavior issues and may remove from a field location any participant exhibiting unacceptable behavior. This includes but is not limited to harassment, alcohol misuse, unsafe work behavior, and not following the site-specific policies and procedures. For more information on NSF’s harassment policy visit: <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/issuances/in144.jsp?org=NSF>

## Cargo to Thule

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Several methods exist to send cargo to and from Thule Air Base. Availability, timeframes, and priorities vary greatly. Researchers must work with the project manager in advance to determine the most cost-effective, efficient, and feasible options for the project.

### Air National Guard (ANG)

The preferred mode of cargo movement is via 109<sup>th</sup> New York Air National Guard flights from Scotia, NY. Researchers will be asked to conform to the 109<sup>th</sup>’s schedule. Communicate all requirements as early as possible to your Project Manager, as space is often very limited. **Please refer to the Greenland Guide for details on how to prepare cargo for transport on the New York Air National Guard 109<sup>th</sup> flights.**

### Air Mobility Command (AMC)

Arrangements can be made via AMC cargo flights to Thule from McGuire AFB, which incur a freight and handling charge. Cargo via AMC is typically much more expensive than ANG and is on a space available basis, subject to non-program priorities.

### Embassy Flights

Extremely limited space *may* be available on flights between Kangerlussuaq and Thule. This option is an emergency back-up for a field failure only and not a primary cargo plan.

## Vessel

An annual resupply ship travels between the US and Thule every summer. This is the most cost-effective means to move cargo.

USPS/APOUSPS/APO can be used to send cargo and personal items with the following parameters:

- Packages may not exceed 70 lbs.
- Packages may not exceed 108" in combined length and girth. (L+W+H total inches)
- Packages being sent to APO/FPO addresses must be hand-delivered to the post office. (USPS requirement) Many merchants will not ship to APO/FPO addresses.
- Other local, state, and country restrictions may apply.
- Allow at least 3 weeks for delivery depending on size and cube of your package.

### Thule APO address:

Battelle ARO/NSF, Addressee Name  
PSC 1501, Unit 82501  
APO, AE 09704

## Travel to Thule

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Travel to and from Thule is possible via AMC (Air Mobility Command) flights, NSF-chartered Air National Guard flights, or limited international and inter-Greenland flights. Travel is coordinated with your Project Manager. Contact Kyli Cospier at [Kyli@Polarfield.com](mailto:Kyli@Polarfield.com) for schedules.

## Arrival in Thule

You will be greeted upon arrival at the terminal by a Battelle ARO representative, the USAF TSgt. Logistics Technician, or a USAF representative. You must carry your passport and clearance information on your person. You will receive an arrival briefing and must wait for your temporary visitor credential before leaving the airport. A free taxi service is available if no one is there to drive you to your lodging: directions on how to use the service are included in your briefing and posted in most buildings.

*If you arrive during Storm Season (15 September until midnight 15 May) and are not greeted by Battelle ARO staff, you **must** contact the Housing Department upon your arrival at Bldg. 345 to provide the names, length of stay, and room numbers for each person in your party.*

Names and numbers you may need during your stay in Thule:

- USAF Logistics Technician/Support Agreement, x2389
- Air Greenland Office, x3440
- VECTRUS Housing Dept. (mandatory during Storm Season), x2256
- Tracy Sheeley, [sheeley@polarfield.com](mailto:sheeley@polarfield.com), 720.347.5313 (for questions or issues with NSF lodging in Bldg. 345)

## Your Stay in Thule

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Battelle ARO does not always have a personnel presence in Thule. Your Project Manager will provide direction to supplement the basics in this guide.

### Support Services

The following services are arranged by Battelle ARO through your Season Plan:

- Accommodations:
  - Bldg. 345 – NSF supplied berthing and office space.
  - North Star Hotel
- Truck allocation
- Airfield support
- Air Greenland Bell 212 helicopter (contracting via Battelle ARO)
- Warehouse space, limited (contact your PM to communicate requirements)
- Lab space in Hangar 4 (H4) Lab
- Cargo movement (outlined in Cargo Section above)
- Base Supply (safety gear, tools, parts, small field items, office needs, housing supplies, bug nets, etc.)
- Base Exchange (grocery store with fresh/frozen/dry food, sundries, alcohol)
- Emergency facilities (hospital, 24 hr. radio monitor)

Battelle ARO can also provide camping gear, survival bags, satellite phones, etc. An inventory of these items is not maintained at Thule - identify these needs well in advance to ensure timely delivery for your project.

### Accommodations

#### Bldg. 345

Bldg. 345 is offered by the USAF to support and promote Arctic research. It is not an NSF owned facility; but used by a variety of international science agencies, with scheduling coordinated by Battelle ARO.

Bldg. 345 is configured with ten bedrooms, an office (with multiple desks), a dry lab, a cargo/dry storage room a common room with dining area and tv/lounge, four bathrooms, four showers, and laundry facilities. Beds are two to a room; **guests are expected to double up whenever necessary.**

Researchers are responsible to develop day to day working agreements with other researchers sharing the facility. Please be considerate of those who will use the facility after you! Do not leave materials/equipment for 'next season' in Bldg. 345. The facility is not for storage, and accumulation of equipment means less room for researchers to work and sleep. Any unapproved and unlabeled gear remaining at the end of each field season will be disposed of. Contact your Project Manager if you have long-term storage requirements.

Bldg. 345 receives limited janitorial services, so the upkeep and cleaning falls to researchers using the facility. A list of suggested housekeeping tasks is posted at various locations in the building. **Researchers are responsible for the upkeep of the offices, the kitchen and bathroom facilities! Please launder your linens before you leave and empty the trash in your room.** Notify your Project Manager if you find appliances requiring service or equipment needing repair (including wireless network maintenance) or if you have any needs such as cleaning supplies, new linens, or utensils.

Bldg. 345 may contain asbestos products and lead based paints - locations are clearly labeled. Both materials are safe in their current form unless disturbed. Avoid making dust or debris and do not physically alter the building or structure. Standing water in pipes may contain lead so please run the cold-water faucet until the water temperature runs consistently cold. It is recommended to use the filter on the kitchen faucet for any cooking, drinking, or tea/coffee-making. There is also a filter in the berthing hallway bathroom recommended for drinking water.

## North Star Inn

The North Star Inn is a full-service hotel. Rooms are private with shared bathrooms and common areas for cooking and lounging. The hotel offers a small business center – details in computer and internet section.

### North Star Desk Hours

Monday/Wednesday/Thursday: 0700-1000, 1300-1700 / Tuesday/Friday: 0600–1000, 1300-1600

## Food

### Dundas Buffet Dining Hall

If you stay in Bldg. 345 during the summer, Battelle ARO will allocate a meal card.

If you stay at the North Star, a meal card is issued at check-in.

Meal cards are the only payment method accepted by the Dining Hall (Dundas Buffet).

Cards can be “charged” with cash or credit/debit cards (with pin) at the Dining Hall, in the Base Exchange and at the North Star hotel. Different dollar amounts are allowed so a usable amount of funds for your length of stay may be added. The meal card works as a declining balance card.

### Dundas Buffet Hours

Monday – Friday: Breakfast 0500-0800, Lunch 1100-1300, Dinner 1700-1900

Saturday: Breakfast 0700-1000, Lunch 1100-1300, Dinner 1700-1900

Sunday: Breakfast 0700-1000, Brunch 1000-1300, Dinner 1700-1900

### Communal Kitchens and Food Procurement

Bldg. 345 and the North Star Inn are equipped with basic communal kitchens. Please be respectful of other users and clean up after yourself.

Limited food can be purchased at the Base Exchange or a small Danish deli adjacent to the Dundas Buffet.

### Phone and Tetra

Thule is on a US exchange. Mobile phone service works in Thule periodically but may be extremely expensive.

Outgoing phone calls: bring a phone card or purchase one at the Base Exchange (BX). Dial 0 to call the base operator and ask them to dial the toll-free number. (If you purchased an 'AT&T one' card, ask for "speed dial 4".)

Incoming phone calls: caller dials 719.474.3840 to reach the base operator and requests to be connected to your extension.

X 7345B345 extension

X 3276North Star extension (front desk)

- For those staying in North Star Hotel, if you want callers to call directly to your room (pertinent after hotel desk hours), provide callers your room extension, which the caller must give to the Thule operator.

Tetra trunked radios are used on the base, enabling radio to phone communications. Battelle ARO keeps a pool of tetras and one may be allocated during your stay.

### Computers and Internet

Bldg. 345: A wireless internet connection with limited bandwidth is available. The connection is provided by satellite and delivered through a phone line so many factors can affect internet speed. It is an expensive and shared resource. Bldg. 345 also has a shared DSL connection. The router has an administrative password, which is available upon arrival.

Bandwidth in Thule is limited and expensive. The following usage guidelines are in place:

- Science and work activities take priority over personal use.
- Certain Bandwidth-intensive activities are not permitted, including video conferencing (e.g., Skype) and downloading or streaming video content (e.g., YouTube).
- Disable auto-update features, cloud services, data synchronizing applications, podcast subscriptions, and other passive bandwidth uses on all computers and devices.
- Place devices on 'airplane mode' when not in use, to reduce background usage.

North Star Inn: One hour per night of Internet is provided through a "Hot Spot" connection. It can be used in the business center or through a wireless access point. Battelle ARO can install a wireless access point in the second-floor lounge (contact your project manager).

**Bring back-up storage devices to Thule to avoid the need for transferring large amounts of data and files while in Greenland. Large downloads should be avoided unless critical.**

Bldg. 345 offers basic office technology (printer/scan/fax). The Community Center can provide large or elaborate print jobs (may incur a fee). If you need specific printing capabilities (i.e., color printing), a dedicated printer/scanner, or extended IT usage, plan in advance – there is no “consumer” IT support.

### Money

US dollars, credit cards, debit cards, and personal checks are accepted on the Thule Air Base. The Base Exchange accepts credit cards, and debit cards with pin, and can give small amounts of cash back on your check/cash card when you make a purchase. The Danish Kroner currency is used in Greenland - you can exchange money at Thule’s Greenlandic post office for travel away from Thule.

### Medical

A hospital is located on the base with emergency and non-emergency care. HILLTOP is the Thule Emergency and Communications hub. Emergency information is posted around base.

### Weather, Safety, Check-outs

Weather at Thule can be unpredictable. As with field work anywhere in the Arctic, come prepared and be flexible! Temperatures range from 50F in the summer to -50F in the winter. Long nights start in autumn; long days and mosquitoes arrive in June. Thule is famous for its winds. Summer weather features that affect research operations the most are fog and rain. Fog can ground flight operations for days, preventing the helicopter from making field picks ups/drop offs and interrupting AMC service.

We recommend all researchers visit HILLTOP upon arrival to go over the features of the tetra radio and travel policies. HILLTOP is in Bldg. 287. Extension 2719.

- For “Off-base” travel, take both a tetra and a satellite phone (provided by Battelle ARO) for emergency use. Researchers are encouraged to share trip details and a check-in/out time w/ fellow researchers and HILLTOP, the communication hub on base. In storm season, you must also pick up, fill out and file a travel form at HILLTOP immediately prior to leaving base. Storm season is defined as Sept 15 – May 15.

### Shopping and Recreation

Life at Thule is far from roughing it. Look forward to comfortable living spaces, a wide selection of foods, friendly people, and a variety of social and recreational opportunities. The Community Center is an amazing resource with a theater, craft room, and a coffee bar. The gymnasium and sports facility are excellent. **Bring separate pairs of shoes for indoor and outdoor use (SNEAKERS for the gym) as you will not be allowed entry with outdoor shoes.**

## Base Exchange

The Base Exchange (BX) is a store selling a little bit of everything: groceries and toiletries, electronics, tobacco, souvenirs, and most anything you forget to bring. It contains a Barber Shop - appointments required.

***Some souvenirs made from certain animal products cannot be taken into the US; consult the US Customs and Border Protection's website at <http://www.cbp.gov/>.***

### Base Exchange Hours

Monday - Friday: 0800-2000 / Saturday: 1000-1900 / Sunday: closed

## Base Supply

With prior arrangement by Battelle ARO, you can get basic supplies for fieldwork like nails, duct tape, small hand tools, safety gear, etc.

## Transportation

Walking is a great mode of local transportation in Thule. NSF bicycles are available at Bldg. 345 for use. A free taxi service is also available at Thule for movement within the main base.

## Truck Rentals

Trucks are available for rental from Vectrus or through the NSF-owned (Battelle ARO-maintained and issued) fleet. Details are published in your Season Plan and provided by your Project Manager.

**Vectrus Rentals:** Go to the Administrative offices located in building 274 to sign the contract. They will direct you to the vehicle pick-up location (usually the Vehicle Maintenance Facility-Building 580). If you reserved a radio (free with Vectrus truck rental), pick it up from Hilltop Comms Center (building 1411).

**Battelle ARO fleet:** Your Project Manager will specify the vehicle pick-up location, usually outside Building 345.

### For all vehicles:

- It is the user's responsibility to stay informed of road and weather conditions. Driving is only allowed on marked and open roads. Off-road driving is not authorized. Seatbelts are mandatory for driver and passengers.
- It is the user's responsibility to keep the vehicle clean and tidy, including taking the vehicle through the wash bay at Vehicle Maintenance. For long term rentals a preventative maintenance plan can be established for your vehicle.
- Always carry a form of communication (tetra or satellite phone) while operating on the roads. (Both are required for off-base travel.)

### For NSF owned vehicles:

- Perform regular vehicle inspections and fill out the fuel logs and inspection check sheets provided in the truck.
- Any damage to the vehicle must immediately be reported to your Project Manager and any on-site Battelle ARO staff or NSF representative. If the damage is caused by abuse of the vehicle, the individual who signed the leasing agreement will be responsible to pay for the repair of the damage, upon return of the vehicle.

### For Vectrus rented vehicles:

- Any damage to the vehicle during the lease period must immediately be reported to Vehicle Management (ext. 2401). The Vehicle Maintenance Shop Supervisor will estimate repair of the damage. If the damage is caused by abuse of the vehicle, the individual who signed the leasing agreement will be responsible to pay for the repair of the damage, upon return of the vehicle. Also notify your Project Manager and any on-site Battelle ARO/NSF representative.
- The Vectrus leasing agreement includes all lubricants and one tank of diesel in the contract. Payment for any additional fuel is dependent upon the agreement between the lessee's organization, the USAF, and Battelle ARO.
- Liability insurance (damage to the vehicle or to other vehicles or persons) is included; however, personal insurance for the driver is not included in the leasing agreement.

## Air Greenland Helicopter Charter

If Battelle ARO has arranged a helicopter charter for you, it is your responsibility (with the help of your Project Manager) and the Air Greenland office to work out times for your flights. Air Greenland has a regular schedule ferrying people, mail and supplies to Greenlandic communities surrounding Thule, and will work your charter in with their existing tasking. Weather is a big factor in scheduling, necessitating the on-the-ground coordination between researcher and Air Greenland.

Please be prepared with cargo and weights prior to your flight date. Notify your Project Manager and Air Greenland of any oversized or hazardous cargo. If you are unsure if your cargo is hazardous, bring it to the attention of your Project Manager or Air Greenland.

Air Greenland is located in Hangar 4.

## About This Guide

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This guide is intended to offer an overview of what to expect in Thule and how to start your planning. It is not exhaustive and cannot provide all the information necessary. It does not substitute for a Battelle ARO-developed Season Plan.

This guide is updated annually, and suggestions and comments are welcome. Please contact Lead Greenland Science Project Manager Kyli Coper at [Kyli@Polarfield.com](mailto:Kyli@Polarfield.com) or Greenland Operations Manager Tracy Sheeley at [shееley@polarfield.com](mailto:shееley@polarfield.com) with any questions.