

PITUFFIK SPACE BASE GUIDE

2024

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

Updated January 2024

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Pituffik Guide

This guide assists researchers planning fieldwork at or based from Pituffik Space Base, Greenland. Contact the Battelle ARO project manager (PM) for additional information on any topic.

COVID-19

Since March 2020, travel to Greenland has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Current NSF protocols related to deployment are maintained [here](#) .

Researchers are responsible for abiding by all federal, regional, and local COVID-19 guidelines and requirements.

Pituffik Space Base (fka Thule Air Base)

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

The population, which can total 700+, includes representatives from government agencies and private contractors working to support the Pituffik Space Base military mission.

- 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 (Inussuk Group), 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 in the area
- Researchers funded by international agencies

Battelle ARO Services at Pituffik

Battelle ARO (B-ARO) operates under a contract with the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) to provide logistics support for both NSF-sponsored research projects and projects funded by other research agencies. <https://battlearcticgateway.org/>

Battelle ARO services include:

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

Battelle ARO provides staff on site as needed, but not a representative on base. Researchers are expected to be self-sufficient, and work with the Project Manager for support requests.

While at Pituffik Space Base, participants are guests of the USSF, the Government of Greenland, and 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.

NSF Policy: Principles for Conducting Research in the Arctic

<https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/arctic/conduct.jsp>

Government of Greenland:

<https://exp.gl/Legislation--Logistics>

Polar Code of Conduct

NSF-supported Arctic research field sites, camps and stations are managed in accordance with NSF policy:

NSF Polar Code of Conduct: https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/documents/policy/polar_coc.pdf

NSF Harassment Notice: <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/issuances/in144.jsp?org=NSF>

Battelle ARO has the responsibility and authority to address issues and may remove any participant who is exhibiting unacceptable behavior from a field location.

Planning Process

Battelle ARO will work closely with the research team to keep logistics and support within scope. Planning will be an ongoing process that will be finalized a few weeks before the project deploys for the field.

Science teams planning to work in Greenland must comply with all permitting requirements of the Government of Greenland. An overview can be found on the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Justice website: <https://exp.gl/About>

Additional permit links: <https://exp.gl/Permit-Application/Additional-Permits>

Projects working at Pituffik SB may require USSF permissions. The Project Manager (PM) will assist with coordination with USSF personnel.

Travel to Pituffik

Visit the Battelle ARO website at <https://battlearcticgateway.org/> and review the [Greenland Guide](#) prior to your trip. Non-US citizens must consult the US Customs and Border Protection website at <http://www.cbp.gov> for information on visas.

Contact the PM if there are questions prior to departure or during travel.

Military Clearances

Battelle ARO processes military and country clearances for the USSF and the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which are required at least 30 days prior to travel. Battelle ARO will prepare a Letter of Authorization (LOA) from the NSF. The LOA states that you are an NSF researcher and allows access to AMC flights to and from Greenland. Military personnel refer to the LOA as “travel orders.”

Battelle ARO processes a clearance for participants traveling on military aircraft. The PM will provide a secure link for participants to upload the required details. Data must be entered at least four weeks prior to their deployment date. **It is the participant’s responsibility to notify the PM of any changes prior to deployment, including travel with a new or different passport.**

Cargo to Pituffik

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

Air National Guard (ANG)

109th New York Air National Guard flights from Scotia, NY are utilized for cargo movement when practical. ANG flights are limited and researchers must conform to the flight schedule; all cargo requirements must be communicated as early as possible to the PM.

Please refer to the [Greenland Guide](#) for details on how to prepare cargo for transport on the New York Air National Guard 109th flights.

[Cargo Tracking System \(CTS\)](#)

Air Mobility Command (AMC)

AMC cargo flights from McGuire AFB to Pituffik incur a freight and handling charge. Cargo via AMC is typically more expensive than ANG and moves on a space available basis, subject to non-program priorities.

Embassy Flights

Embassy charter flights between Kangerlussuaq and Pituffik **may** have extremely limited space available. This option is not available as a primary cargo plan but could be utilized as emergency back-up for a field failure.

Vessel

A resupply ship travels between the US and Pituffik once per summer. This is the most cost-effective means to move cargo. Advance planning and delivery are required and the vessel is best utilized for staging cargo the year prior to planned fieldwork.

Post

USPS/APO can be used to send cargo or personal items:

- Packages may not exceed 70 lbs.
- Packages may not exceed 108" in combined length and girth. (L+W+H total inches)
- Packages must be hand-delivered to the post office. (USPS requirement) Many vendors do 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.

APO address:

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

Travel to Pituffik

Researchers can travel to and from Pituffik via AMC (Air Mobility Command) flights, NSF-chartered Air National Guard flights, or limited international and intra-Greenland flights. Travel is coordinated with the Project Manager. Contact Tracy Sheeley sheeley@polarfield.com or Kyli Cospier at kyli@polarfield.com for schedules.

Note: In the event of AMC passenger flight delay, it is rare but possible that passengers may depart on a cargo mission that returns to McGuire instead of BWI. This is only utilized in event of need. Differences in travel include longer travel time (~12 hour flight), no food provided, rudimentary lavatory. Arrival at McGuire entails providing passport and VISA documentation, which may incur further delay, as McGuire is not set up to receive passengers. Transport from McGuire to BWI is approximately a 2.5 hour drive and ride share is the most likely option.

Arrival in Pituffik

Upon arrival, the USSF will provide an arrival briefing. Passport and clearance information must be carried on each person, not in checked bags. A temporary visitor credential is provided before travelers may leave the airport. Free taxi service is available for transport to lodging: directions on the service are included in the briefing and posted in most buildings. If Battelle-ARO staff are present, they will meet arrivals at the airport.

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

General Contacts:

Name	Description	Contact Info
Pituffik Space Base Operator	Operator	719.474.3840
USSF Logistics Technician	NSF Support Agreement	x2389
Inussuk Housing	Storm Season updates	x2256
Air Greenland Office	Flight coordination	x3440
Tracy Sheeley, B-ARO	B345 lodging or other issues	720.347.5313 sheeley@polarfield.com
HILLTOP	Emergency/Comms Hub	x2719 / Bldg. 287
Bldg. 345	NSF lodging	x7345

Stay in Pituffik

Battelle ARO does not have a permanent personnel presence on base. The Project Manager will provide specific details to supplement the basic information in this guide.

The base maintains informational channels on the local television network. Refer to these for forecasts, flight details and other current local news and helpful information.

Support Services

Battelle ARO provides or coordinates a variety of services at Pituffik, including:

- Accommodations:
 - Bldg. 345 – NSF supplied berthing and office space
 - Transient lodging (formerly North Star Inn)
- Truck allocation
- Airfield support
- Air Greenland helicopter
- Warehouse space, limited (contact the PM to communicate requirements)
- Lab space in Hangar 4 (H4) Lab
- Cargo movement (outlined in Cargo Section above)
- Base Exchange (grocery store with fresh/frozen/dry food, sundries, alcohol)
- Emergency facilities (hospital, 24 hr. radio monitor)

- B-ARO allocations: camping gear, survival bags, satellite phones, etc. This inventory is not maintained on base, so needs must be communicated well in advance to ensure on-time delivery for the project.

Note: Base Supply is only available to Inussuk (Base contractor) personnel: safety gear, tools, parts, etc. are not readily available at Pituffik.

All requirements must be identified to the PM during the planning process and will be documented in the Season Plan.

Accommodations

Bldg. 345

Bldg. 345 is offered by the USSF to support and promote Arctic research. It is not an NSF owned facility. Battelle ARO coordinates scheduling for the building which is used by a variety of international science agencies.

Bldg. 345 is configured with ten bedrooms, an office (with multiple desks), dry lab, 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 share rooms at times of high population.**

If Bldg 345 is full, NSF-funded projects and staff take priority for lodging. Other projects will be bumped and lodging costs are their responsibility. If an NSF team prefers to utilize Transient Lodging instead of B345, lodging costs become their responsibility.

Researchers are responsible to develop day to day working agreements with other researchers sharing the facility and leave the facility in good shape for the next arrivals. Materials and equipment may not be stored for the following year as space is limited and storage can impact other users. Any unapproved and unlabeled gear remaining at the end of each season will be disposed of. Contact the PM regarding long-term storage requirements.

Bldg. 345 receives limited janitorial services. **Researchers using the facility are responsible for upkeep and cleaning of the offices, kitchen and bathroom facilities.** A list of suggested housekeeping tasks is posted at various locations. **Please launder bed linens and empty trash prior to departure.** Notify the PM if you find appliances requiring service, equipment needing repair, or resupply needs (cleaning supplies, new linens, or utensils.)

Bldg. 345 may contain asbestos products and lead based paints - locations are clearly labeled. Do not disturb any labeled area or elsewhere in the facility. Avoid making dust or debris and do not physically alter the building or structure.

Standing water in pipes may contain lead. Run the cold-water faucet until the water at a consistently cold temperature. Use of the filter on the kitchen faucet for any cooking, drinking or tea/coffee-making is recommended. A filter is installed in the berthing hallway bathroom for drinking water.

Transient Housing (formerly North Star Inn)

The North Star Inn transitioned to Transient Quarters in October 2021 and is managed by Inussuk. Rooms are private, bathrooms are communal and reduced services are offered: cleaning prior to check-in, linens and towels staged and swapped every 7 days. There are common areas for cooking and lounging and a small business center.

Reservations are requested via the PM. Payment is required at check-in. Credit cards with PIN are accepted (American Express is not accepted.). Wi-Fi is included with stay.

Front Desk Hours: Monday – Thursday 0800–1600 Friday 0600-1600
Opening hours will adjust according to flight times.

Food

Dundas Buffet Dining Hall (Bldg. 107)

Meal cards are the only payment method accepted at Dundas Dining Hall. Battelle ARO will allocate a card for those staying in Bldg. 345. Transient housing stays include a meal card.

Meal cards can be “charged” with cash or credit/debit cards (with pin) at the Dining Hall, in the Base Exchange and in Transient Housing. Rates of purchase are flexible to allow an amount that can be used based on the length of stay. 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 Transient Quarters are equipped with basic communal kitchens. The Base Exchange and a small Danish deli at the Dundas Buffet offer limited food shopping options.

In inclement weather, on-base travel may be restricted. Keeping a small amount of food staged for this contingency is advised, particularly during Storm Season.

Phone and Tetra

Pituffik Space Base is on a US exchange. Mobile phone service works periodically but may carry extremely expensive costs.

Phone calls:

Outgoing calls require a phone card, which are available for purchase at the Base Exchange or prior to travel to the base.

- 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 your extension.
- Housing Extensions:
 - Bldg. 345: x 7345
 - Transient Housing Front desk: x 3276
 - Or provide the guest room ext to the Base Operator to be connected directly.

Tetra trunked radios:

These units enable radio to phone communications and are widely used on the base. Battelle ARO keeps a pool of Tetras for allocation as required.

Computers and Internet

Internet connectivity is provided at Pituffik Space Base to support everyday operational and science communications related activities. The internet communications connection is limited and relies on legacy commercial ISP infrastructure. Be prepared for slower speeds and lowered overall performance.

Bldg. 345 is equipped with a wireless internet connection. Bldg. 345 also has a shared DSL connection. The router has an administrative password, available upon arrival. Data is extremely limited and has a cap that cannot be exceeded each month. The following guidelines are in place for network usage:

- Do not use online streaming services (YouTube, Spotify, Netflix).
- Avoid use of video on teleconferencing and collaboration apps (Zoom, Teams, Webex).
- Disable auto-updates to phone apps and network storage services.
- Place devices on ‘airplane mode’ when not in use to reduce background usage.
- Perform backups and operating system updates prior to arrival to the base.
- Laptop operating systems and anti-virus software updates are approved for network security if necessary.

If overtaxed, the system becomes unusable for all parties and science functions will be impacted. There is no work-around due to the legacy infrastructure, and B-ARO is researching more robust options for future use.

Wi-Fi is available at the Community Center and a limited satellite service is available as part of a base pilot program.

Bring back-up storage devices to Pituffik to avoid the need for transferring large amounts of data and files while in Greenland. Avoid large downloads 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). Specific printing capabilities (color printing), a dedicated printer/scanner, or extended IT usage, must be arranged in advance– there is no “consumer” IT support.

Money

US dollars, and VISA/MasterCard credit and debit cards are accepted on the Pituffik Space Base. Some venues only accept cash. 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 and the base post office offers currency exchange. There are no ATMs on base.

Medical

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

Weather, Safety, Check-outs

Weather at Pituffik can be unpredictable. As with all Arctic field work, researchers must be prepared and stay 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. Pituffik is famous for wind. Summer weather features that impact research operations include fog and rain. Fog can ground flight operations for days, preventing the helicopter flights and interrupting AMC service.

Specific travel requirements apply based on weather conditions. Conditions are available on the base TV network, via radio and intercom system and via email. Upon arrival, review posted weather conditions and travel parameters, which are posted in all buildings.

All researchers are encouraged to visit HILLTOP (Bldg. 287, ext. 2719) upon arrival to review Tetra radio features and base travel policies.

“Off-base” travel:

- Researchers should carry 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 (Sept 15 – May 15), a travel form is required. Pick up, fill out, and file at HILLTOP immediately prior to leaving base.

Shopping and Recreation

Pituffik offers comfortable living spaces, a wide selection of foods, friendly people, and a variety of social and recreational opportunities:

- The Community Center offers a theater, craft room, and coffee bar with wifi.
- The gymnasium and sports facility are excellent. Separate pairs of shoes for indoor and outdoor use (sneakers for the gym) are required - entry is not allowed in outdoor shoes.

Base Exchange

The Base Exchange (BX) sells various items: groceries and toiletries, electronics, tobacco, souvenirs, etc. A Barber Shop - appointments required – is also here.

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

Base Supply is not accessible to users outside of Inussuk. Plan accordingly to bring tools and field supplies.

Transportation

Walking is a great mode of local transportation. NSF bicycles are available at Bldg. 628 for use. A free taxi service is also available for movement within the main base.

Truck Rental

Trucks may be rented from Inussuk or allocated from the NSF-owned (Battelle ARO-maintained and issued) fleet. Details are published in the Season Plan and provided by the PM.

Inussuk Rentals:

- The rental contract must be signed at the Administrative offices located in building 274. They will provide the vehicle pick-up location (usually the Vehicle Maintenance Facility Building 580).
 - A radio may be reserved at no charge with Inussuk truck rental and will be available for pick up from Hilltop Comms Center.

Battelle ARO fleet:

- The Project Manager will specify the vehicle pick-up location, usually at 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. A preventative maintenance plan can be established for long term rentals.
- The user must 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:

- It is the user's responsibility to perform regular vehicle inspections and fill out the fuel logs and inspection check sheets provided in the truck.
- Any damage to the vehicle must be reported promptly to the Project Manager and any on-site Battelle ARO staff or per the posted Emergency Action Plan.

For Inussuk 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. It must be reported to the Project Manager, on-site Battelle ARO or per the posted EAP.
- The Inussuk 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 / Other Flight Charters

Researchers that have a helicopter charter arranged by Battelle ARO must organize the flight times with the Air Greenland Office, with the help of the Project Manager. Air Greenland has a regular flight schedule that moves people, mail and supplies to Greenlandic communities surrounding Pituffik. The science charter will be worked into the existing schedule. Weather is a significant and real-time schedule impact, necessitating the on-the-ground coordination between the researcher and Air Greenland. Air Greenland is located in Hangar 4.

Be prepared with cargo and weights prior to the scheduled flight date. Notify the Project Manager and Air Greenland of any oversized or hazardous cargo. If assistance is needed to confirm hazardous status or any questions, contact the Project Manager or Air Greenland.

If air charters with other vendors are a component of the season plan, the Project Manager will provide specific details on arrangements and required permissions.

About This Guide

This guide is intended to offer an overview of what to expect at Pituffik and the steps needed to initiate the planning process. It is not exhaustive and cannot provide all the information necessary for a safe and productive deployment to Pituffik Space Base. It does not substitute for a Battelle ARO-developed Season Plan.

This guide is updated annually, and suggestions and comments are welcome.

Contact Greenland Operations Manager Tracy Sheeley at sheeley@polarfield.com or Lead Greenland Science Project Manager Kyli Cosper at Kyli@Polarfield.com or with any questions.