



# Greenland Travel Protocols for Infectious Disease Management

2024 Field Season

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The National Science Foundation's (NSF) goal for Infectious Disease management is for all operations and research projects to be successful with as little impact from illness as possible. Individuals are responsible for avoiding infection by utilizing the safe behaviors outlined below. Individuals should employ good practices to avoid infection throughout deployment. These travel protocols are subject to change at any time to manage risk in the program. As always, travelers must comply with national, state, local, and tribal travel restrictions. For Greenland Operations, NSF's focus is on preserving continuity of research and operations based out of the hub in Kangerlussuaq and at remote locations on the ice sheet.

## **Researcher Delay, Disruption, or Cancellation Due to COVID-19:**

NSF's Arctic Research Support & Logistics (RSL) program will not pay for the costs associated with recovering from COVID-19, including hotel, per diem, commercial flights, or other disruptions to research projects due to COVID-19. The RSL program will not support makeup field time or additional field seasons due to COVID-19 infections. This is consistent with any illness or injury that befalls a team member. Per the NSF Grant Terms and Conditions, the awardee institution is responsible for the work performed under the grant.

## **Masking During Travel:**

All travelers (including staff, contractors, researchers, students, and official visitors) **should wear high-quality masks** (e.g. KN95) during travel and anytime spaces are crowded. Personnel who test positive or have symptoms of COVID-19 or other respiratory illness may be restricted from performing their duties, which significantly impacts research and operations. To avoid these impacts, everyone is expected to follow the steps outlined below.

## **COVID-19 Testing Before and During Travel:**

Self-administered COVID-19 antigen tests are recommended for all travelers and are required for travelers to Kangerlussuaq and locations on the ice sheet such as Summit Station and Raven Camp. Test at home prior to departure and at every layover that requires an overnight stay in a new location to confirm you are COVID-19 negative before traveling to the field. For multi-day delays, test once at that location within 12 hours of departure. Take a photo of the test result and email it using the process outlined below.

## **Vaccination Requirements:**

An updated COVID-19 vaccination containing the omicron variant XBB resistance (September 12, 2023, or newer) is recommended for all travelers, and **required by the NSF for participants traveling to Kangerlussuaq and further afield, including Raven Camp or remote field camps, and anyone traveling to Summit Station.** Travelers to Kangerlussuaq should submit verification of vaccination to the HIPAA Compliant CU Anschutz mailbox ([arcticsupport@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:arcticsupport@cuanschutz.edu)) no less than 14 days prior to traveling. Those seeking a waiver of this requirement must submit the request to Greg Huey, the Battelle ARO Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) Team Lead for COVID-19 coordination, at least six weeks prior to travel. Greg Huey is trained and certified in confidentiality and HIPAA Compliance (+1 505-670-1878/[greg@polarfield.com](mailto:greg@polarfield.com)).

Travelers to other communities in Greenland or to Pituffik Space Base without visiting Kangerlussuaq are not required to be vaccinated.

## **Questions, Clarifications, and Waiver Requests:**

All questions and clarifications of this policy should be sent to the [HSE Team Lead](#). Requests for a [vaccination waiver](#) must be sent **at least 6 weeks** prior to travel. Protected Health Information (PHI), such as COVID-19 test results, should be sent to the [HSE Team Lead](#) and the HIPAA compliant [CU Anschutz](#) mailbox. Encrypted or password protected documents are preferred.

### **Deploying to Greenland via Air National Guard (ANG) Flight from Stratton Air Base (SAB):**

1. **Submit vaccination records to [CU Anschutz Medical](#)** no less than 14 days prior to deployment.
2. **Purchase and travel with 6 FDA approved at-home antigen test kits if traveling to Summit or 4 tests if traveling to Kangerlussuaq or other Greenland sites: [List of FDA Authorized COVID-19 At-Home Tests](#).**
  - a. Many at-home COVID-19 tests listed on the FDA website have shelf lives extended by up to 12-months. Extended dates for each are provided by the manufacturer and the FDA.
  - b. *Pilot* brand COVID-19 at-home tests have undergone a recall for tests with [specific lot numbers](#).
3. **Practice social distancing 10 days prior to travel to SAB** to avoid contracting any communicable diseases.
4. **Test within 12 hours before traveling to SAB.**
  - a. Email a photo of test results to [CU Anschutz Medical](#) and [HSE Team Lead](#).
  - b. If positive, do not travel. Contact your supervisor/project lead and the [HSE Team Lead](#).
5. **Fly to New York:** During travel, carry proof of vaccination, all test results, your remaining antigen test kits, and wear a mask.
6. **Test 12 hours before your flight to Kangerlussuaq.**
  - a. Email a photo of test results to [CU Anschutz Medical](#) and [HSE Team Lead](#).
  - b. If positive, do not travel. Contact your supervisor/project lead and the [HSE Team Lead](#).
7. **Fly to Kangerlussuaq:** During travel, wear a mask and carry proof of vaccination, all test results, and your remaining antigen test kits.
8. **Attend Kangerlussuaq orientation.**
  - a. If traveling to Summit, bring a COVID-19 test kit to the proctored test at the designated time.
  - b. Kanger Ops Team will record the test results in a HIPAA compliant manner.
  - c. In the event of a positive test result, coordinate with the HSE Team Lead to make adjustments for recovery time and changes to travel or other logistics.

### **Deploying to Greenland via Commercial Airlines (CommAir) and Pituffik via Air Mobility Command (AMC):**

1. When required, **submit vaccination records to [CU Anschutz Medical](#)** no less than 14 days prior to deployment.
2. **Purchase and travel with 6 FDA approved at-home antigen test kits if traveling to Summit or 4 tests if only traveling to Kangerlussuaq or other Greenland sites: [List of FDA Authorized COVID-19 At-Home Tests](#).**
  - a. Email a photo of test results to [CU Anschutz Medical](#) and [HSE Team Lead](#).
  - d. If positive, contact your supervisor/project lead and the [HSE Team Lead](#).
3. **Practice social distancing 10 days prior to traveling** to avoid contracting any communicable diseases.
4. **Test 12 hours before traveling.**
  - a. Email a photo of test results to [CU Anschutz Medical](#) and [HSE Team Lead](#).
  - e. If positive, do not travel. Contact your supervisor/project lead and the [HSE Team Lead](#).
5. **Fly CommAir/AMC.** During travel, wear a mask and carry proof of vaccination, all test results, and your remaining antigen test kits.
6. **If you have an overnight layover or multi-day delay, test within 12 hours of departure.**
  - a. Email a photo of test results to [CU Anschutz Medical](#) and [HSE Team Lead](#).
  - b. If positive, do not travel. Contact supervisor/project lead and the [HSE Team Lead](#).
7. **If traveling to Kangerlussuaq.** During travel, wear a mask and carry proof of vaccination, all test results, and your remaining antigen test kits.
  - a. **Attend Kangerlussuaq orientation.**
  - b. If traveling to Summit, bring a COVID-19 test kit to the proctored test at the designated time.
  - c. Kanger Ops Team will record the test results in a HIPAA compliant manner.
  - d. In the event of a positive test result, coordinate with the HSE Team Lead to make adjustments for recovery time and changes to travel or other logistics.

### **Illness while Deployed:**

1. For a positive antigen test or presence of a respiratory illness (fever, chills, fatigue, cough, etc.), the individual should immediately isolate and contact their supervisor/project lead, the [HSE Team Lead](#) and [CU Anschutz medical](#). A regular check-in schedule will be established.
2. If in Kangerlussuaq, contact the Kangerlussuaq Site Supervisor ([aro-kangerops@polarfield.com](mailto:aro-kangerops@polarfield.com)), the [HSE Team Lead](#), and [CU Anschutz medical](#).
3. If at a Field Site, contact supervisor/project lead, Battelle ARO Project Manager, [HSE Team Lead](#), and [CU Anschutz medical](#).
4. Medical resources for program participants are listed in the table below.
5. **For return to regular activity** (i.e. to continue deployment), follow isolation and masking policies:
  - a. When symptoms are improving and the participant is fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications, the participant can end isolation.
  - b. For 5 days after ending isolation/resolution of symptoms, the participant should mask when indoors and/or around others and minimize any unmasked time around others including eating alone.
  - c. Refer to the site-specific *Emergency Action Plan* and *Disease Containment Plan* for more information.
  - d. **Upon completion of isolation activities**, contact the [HSE Team Lead](#) and [CU Anschutz medical](#) to confirm clearance for return to regular activity.

### **Travel Southbound from Greenland via ANG or CommAir**

1. For a positive antigen test or presence of a respiratory illness (fever, chills, fatigue, cough, etc.), follow isolation and masking policies as previously described. Mask for a minimum of 5 days post isolation.
2. If traveling CommAir, follow the guidelines provided by the airline for safe travel.
3. For travel with the ANG, upon completion of isolation activities, contact the [HSE Team Lead](#) and [CU Anschutz medical](#) to confirm readiness to travel per the ANG guidelines.

## Medical Support Contact Information

Medical Support	
Consultation regarding non-urgent COVID-19 medical needs	Dr. David Young, Medical Director for Operations <a href="mailto:david.s.young@cuanschutz.edu">david.s.young@cuanschutz.edu</a> Dr. Elaine Reno, Medical Director for Physical Qualifications <a href="mailto:elaine.reno@cuanschutz.edu">elaine.reno@cuanschutz.edu</a> CU Anschutz Medical email <a href="mailto:arcticsupport@cuanschutz.edu">arcticsupport@cuanschutz.edu</a>
For urgent/emergent medical needs	<b>Telemed support is available 24-hours at +1 844-285-4555</b> <b>Ask for "Arctic Support"</b>
HSE Team Lead	Greg Huey <a href="mailto:greg@polarfield.com">greg@polarfield.com</a>

CDC updated the COVID-19 "isolation" period on March 1, 2024 and published unified Respiratory Virus Guidance bringing a practical approach to protecting against a range of common respiratory viral illnesses. A summary of the CDC Respiratory Virus Guidance updates may be found [here](#), and references and information from the CDC on Preventing the Spread of Respiratory Viruses can be found [here](#).

*As with other illnesses and injuries, researchers are responsible for additional field costs in the event of illness or injury within their project teams. NSF strongly encourages individuals to follow safe behaviors laid out in this protocol throughout deployment to avoid any infectious diseases and thereby prevent negative impacts due to illness on research projects or operations.*