

PITUFFIK SPACE BASE GUIDE

2025

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

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Pituffik Guide

This guide assists researchers planning fieldwork at or based from Pituffik Space Base, Greenland, as well as other travelers that support the US National Science Foundation. For additional information, researchers may contact the Battelle ARO project manager (PM), and other travelers may contact the Greenland Operations Manager.

Pituffik Space Base (PSB, fka Thule Air Base)

Established in 1951, PSB is the northernmost US Space Force (USSF) base at almost 77° N. Researchers are allowed access through cooperative agreements between the USSF and NSF. Battelle Arctic Research Operations (Battelle ARO) serves as the NSF liaison to support science using base infrastructure and to coordinate 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.

- USSF personnel in administrative and security forces roles
- Arctic Command 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 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 staff are on site as needed, but there is not a full-time staff presence 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.

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.

Battelle ARO reporting pathway: [EthicsPoint - Battelle Arctic Research Operations](#)

Planning Process

Science teams planning to work in Greenland must comply with all permitting requirements of Naalakkersuisut (the Government of Greenland). An overview can be found at:

[ExpeditionsGreenland.gl](#)

Additional Battelle ARO guidance: [Greenland Permitting](#)

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

Travel to Pituffik

See [Greenland – Battelle Arctic Gateway](#) **Greenland Guide** for details on Greenland deployment travel requirements.

Non-US citizens must consult the US Customs and Border Protection website at <http://www.cbp.gov> for information on visas.

Contact the PM or Greenland Operations Manager with questions prior to 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-sponsored 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 five weeks prior to deployment date. **It is the participant’s responsibility to update their profile and notify the PM of any changes prior to deployment, including travel with a new or different passport.**

The participant must travel with physical copies of clearance paperwork. Battelle ARO will provide specific directions prior to departure.

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. Deadlines for cargo details and delivery are well in advance of travel.

Air National Guard (ANG)

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

See [Greenland – Battelle Arctic Gateway](#) **Greenland Shipping, ANG Customs and Cargo**

See [Greenland – Battelle Arctic Gateway](#) **Cargo Tracking System (CTS)**

Air Mobility Command (AMC)

AMC cargo flights from McGuire AFB to Pituffik occur weekly. Cargo via AMC moves on a space available basis, subject to non-program priorities. Freight and handling charges apply.

Embassy Flights

Embassy charter flights between Nuuk and Pituffik or Copenhagen and Pituffik may have extremely limited space available. This option is not available as a primary cargo plan. Hazardous cargo is not accepted on Embassy flights.

Vessel

A resupply ship travels between the US and Pituffik once per summer. This is the most cost-effective means to move large cargo – it is not appropriate for small shipments or boxes. Advance planning and delivery are required to stage 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 4 weeks for delivery depending on size and cube of the package.

The APO address can be provided by the Science PM or Greenland Operations Manager.

Travel to Pituffik

Participants 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 or Greenland Operations Manager. Contact Tracy Sheeley shееley@polarfield.com or Kyli Cosper at kyli@polarfield.com for schedules.

Arrival and Departure at Pituffik

Upon arrival, USSF will provide an arrival briefing. Passport and clearance information must be carried on each person, not packed in checked bags. A temporary visitor credential is provided before travelers may leave the airport. A 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 or Hilltop Dispatch upon arrival at Bldg. 345 to provide the names, length of stay, and room numbers for each person in the group.*

Departure schedules and details will be posted on the local channels and in your travel paperwork.

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 does not routinely receive passengers. Transport from McGuire to BWI is approximately a 2.5-hour drive and ride share is the most likely option.

General Contacts:

Name	Description	Contact Info
Pituffik Space Base Operator	Operator	719.474.3840
Shanon Arriens, USSF Integration	NSF Support Agreement	x3831
Inussuk Housing	Storm Season updates	x2256
Air Greenland Office	Flight coordination	x3440
Tracy Sheeley, Battelle ARO Greenland Operations Mgr	B345 lodging or other issues	720.347.5313 shееley@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 details to supplement the basic information in this guide. The base maintains informational channels on the local television network with current information, including forecasts and weather conditions, flight schedules, local news and services, and other 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 overflow reservations (formerly North Star Inn)
- Truck allocation
- Airfield support coordination
- Air Greenland helicopter charter
- Warehouse space, limited heated and non-heated
- Lab space in Hangar 4 (H4) Lab
- Cargo movement (outlined in Cargo Section above)
- Field allocations: camping gear, survival bags, satellite phones, etc. Inventory is not maintained on base; needs must be communicated well in advance to ensure delivery for the project.

Note: Base Supply is limited 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 are responsible for alternate lodging costs. If an NSF team prefers to utilize Transient Lodging instead of B345, lodging arrangements and costs also become their responsibility.

Researchers and staff are expected to develop day-to-day working agreements with others sharing the facility. Materials and equipment may not be stored for the following year in 345. 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 or Greenland Operations Manager if you find appliances requiring service, equipment needing repair, or resupply needs (cleaning supplies, new linens, utensils, etc.)

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 comes out at a consistently cold temperature. A filter is provided on the kitchen faucet for any cooking, drinking or tea/coffee-making and an additional filtered water container is in the kitchen. Please note filter changes on the log on the refrigerator. d. A filter is also 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.

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 small 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. Wifi calling is available in most areas.

Outgoing Phone calls:

- Dial 0 to call the base operator and ask them to dial the number.

Incoming phone calls:

- Caller dials 719.474.3840 to reach the base operator and request your extension.
- B345 extension: x7345

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 Battelle ARO is researching more robust options for future use.

Wi-Fi is available at the Community Center.

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.

Bldg. 345 offers basic office technology (printer/scan/fax). The Community Center may be able to provide large print jobs (may incur a fee). There is no “consumer” IT support on the base.

Money

US dollars, and VISA/MasterCard credit and debit cards are accepted on the Pituffik Space Base. Some venues only accept cash and some only accept credit cards. 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 Wi-Fi.

- 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 and payment made at Building 100. Vehicle pick-up and drop-off location is at building 100.
 - 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 B 345.

All vehicles:

- It is the user's responsibility to review the Rules of the Road and 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.)

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.

Inussuk rented vehicles:

- Any damage to the vehicle during the lease period must immediately be reported to Service Call (ext.2111). The Vehicle Maintenance Shop Supervisor will estimate repair of the damage. 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 USSF, 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 Science Estimator/ Project Manager Kyli Cosper at Kyli@Polarfield.com with any questions.