



Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

Guidance Notes:

Application for a permit for a British expedition, vessel or aircraft to enter Antarctica

This guide is for anyone applying for a permit to carry out a British expedition, or to take a British vessel or aircraft to Antarctica. Please read these notes fully before completing the application form.

The Notes are divided into five parts:

- 1. Guidance on specific questions in the application form***
- 2. Application flow chart***
- 3. Frequently asked questions***
- 4. Useful links and resources***
- 5. Contact information***

The Application form and these Guidance Notes were revised and re-issued in July 2022 and replace any previous versions.

You may be invited to discuss your application with the Polar Regions Department prior to completing your application.

Please contact the Polar Regions Department if you have any queries regarding this guidance or the application form.

Part 1 – Guidance on specific questions in the application form

Please do not hold back any information when completing the form – failure to provide sufficient information will result in delays in issuing the permit.

It is particularly important that you provide full information in the sections on the planned activities and associated risk management plans dealing with possible emergencies and environmental protection. All applicable sections of the application form must be completed and the final page signed and dated.

All applicants MUST complete Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7. Section 6 should be completed by those whose expeditions include a vessel and/or aircraft. If the expedition includes entry to an Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA), mineral resource activity, interference with flora/fauna or removal of objects from a Historic

Site or Monument (HSM), please ensure you also complete the relevant separate application form.

Section 1 – Expedition Details

Question 1.1 - provide full name and contact details of the applicant for the permit. This should be the person who is the intended permit holder and will be legally responsible for compliance with its conditions. In most cases the applicant is the operator of the vessel or aircraft, or the lead organiser of the activities being undertaken in Antarctica

Provide a scan or photocopy of the biodata page of the passport of the applicant. These details are required for identification purposes.

Questions 1.2 – 1.7 - provide full details of the purpose of the visit to Antarctica, arrival and departure details and the areas you intend to visit. In 1.5 you should outline activities that are intended to be conducted, please see Annex A for listed activities, for any other activities please specify. Please be aware that for some activities we will require additional safety and environmental information.

Consistent with the agreement by the Antarctic Treaty Parties, the UK will not authorise operators organising or conducting tourist or other non-government activities in the Antarctic Treaty area (except in cases of emergency and for the purpose of enhancing human safety) to undertake any off-ship activities in Antarctica from vessels carrying more than 500 passengers. The UK will also not normally authorise the use of helicopters for recreational purposes in areas with concentrations of wildlife, which includes the Antarctic Peninsula region.

Snorkelling is not permitted, and diving must be conducted in a way that is consistent with the codes of practices and guidance associated with the Diving at Work Regulations 1997.

Please note you will not be allowed to visit areas or conduct activities not mentioned in your application. If you need to deviate outside the conditions of your permit you must contact the Polar Regions Department before doing so.

Question 1.8 – if you have obtained written authorisation from another Contracting Party to the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty for all the activities of your expedition, vessel or aircraft, you may not need to apply for a UK permit. Please discuss with the Polar Regions Department before completing this form.

Question 1.9 – provide details on the methods of transportation that will be used within Antarctica. Further questions on vessels and aircraft are located in Section 6 of the application form.

Question 1.10 – if you are, or plan to be, a member of the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) at the time of your visit to Antarctica, you may wish to refer to IAATO guidelines, operating procedures or by-laws in completing the application form. More details on IAATO can be found on their website: <https://iaato.org/home>.

Question 1.11 – provide details of any consultants or third parties who have advised with the planning of the expedition or the completion of the application form.

Section 2 – Expedition Personnel and Itinerary

Where you intend to undertake multiple Antarctic expeditions within one (Antarctic summer) season, approximately November - March, these may be applied for in a single application. However where there are different details, such as different expedition leaders, crew and routes, you should ensure these are clearly set out, reprinting relevant questions where applicable.

Question 2.1 – 2.2 – provide details of the main contact point for the expedition and the expedition leader, where these are different to the applicant details in Question 1.1 or 1.10.

Question 2.3 – list all the visitors and expedition staff who you know at the time of completing the form will be taking part in activities in Antarctica. This will include passengers and guests, expedition staff such as guides, doctors, instructors (on land expeditions) and all crew who will be on the vessel or aircraft whilst it is in Antarctica. Do not list any individuals who are already included on another permit (which may be from another Contracting Party) – this may apply to crew members of a vessel which have not been permitted by the UK.

List which participants have experience appropriate for the proposed activity operating in polar or equivalent environments. Such experience may include survival training in cold or remote areas, flying, sailing or operating other vehicles in conditions and over distances similar to those being proposed in the activity.

We understand that details can change prior to departure. It will be a condition of the issuing of any permit that you submit a revised passenger list prior to departure. If your application relates to a large passenger vessel (such as a cruise ship) you may not need to include details of all passengers, only staff. However please discuss this with the Polar Regions Department.

Question 2.4 - if you are visiting any areas protected under the provisions of the Antarctic Treaty, such as Antarctic Specially Protected or Managed Areas you should say so here. If in doubt, please discuss with the Polar Regions Department in advance.

Visits to Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPA) or to a CCAMLR Ecosystem Monitoring Program (CEMP) are prohibited, except in accordance with a permit issued under Section 9 of the Antarctic Act 1994. Anyone planning to visit an Antarctic Specially Managed Area (ASMA) must comply with the relevant Management Plan. It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine whether their itinerary includes visiting any such places and to complete details in the application. It is prohibited to damage, remove or destroy an Antarctic Historic Site and Monument (HSM). You will need to submit a separate application if you intend to carry out work such as the conservation of the Historic Site & Monuments. Please discuss any proposals in advance with the Polar Regions Department who will consult relevant experts in assessing your application. The Antarctic Treaty Secretariat (ATS) website provides current details of ASPAs, ASMAs, their management plans and HSMs - http://www.ats.ag/devPH/apa/ep_protected.aspx?lang=e.

Question 2.5 - if you intend to move on glaciated terrain you should provide specific information in the risk management plan on the experience of guides and expedition members and the type of equipment that will be used. You must list the crevasse rescue equipment that will be carried and detail any expedition member's experience and training in its use.

Question 2.6 – if you intend to operate a Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) also known as an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) or drone, you must provide as much detail as possible including on the experience of the operator and that it will be suitable for operation in the cold conditions. They are not to be operated for recreational use in coastal areas.

Question 2.7 – provide as full details as possible of the proposed itinerary of the expedition, vessel or aircraft in Antarctica. All activity should be included. You should add additional information to the application form using a format that shows as much detail as is possible e.g. with a map or chart showing routes or proposed key sites to visit etc.

Regularly visited locations may be referred to by name. Other sites should include the latitude and longitude. For more than single night stays, the date of arrival and departure should be detailed.

Where you intend to undertake multiple Antarctic expeditions within one (Antarctic summer) season, approximately November - March, these may be applied for in a single application. Individual itineraries for each expedition should be included.

Depending on the proposed itinerary, the experience of the applicant and the suitability of the vessel, permits (where granted) may restrict the areas to be visited by the expedition, vessel or aircraft.

Section 3 – Logistics Support and Communications

Questions 3.1 – provide full information on the logistical support required by the expedition, vessel or aircraft while in Antarctica. Please include copies of all contacts for the provision of such support. Provide full details on any requirement for vessels or aircraft to refuel in Antarctica. You should be aware that due to the high environmental risks associated with the refuelling of vessels, it may not be possible for the Polar Regions Department to grant a permit that includes some forms of vessel or aircraft refuelling.

Question 3.2 – provide details of whether the expedition, vessel or aircraft plans to use accommodation or other facilities in Antarctica or create any temporary infrastructure, under the terms of the Environmental Protocol Measure 4 (2004) agreed by the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty; it is expected that all expeditions will be able to demonstrate they can operate without needing to rely on the support of facilities of others, including national Antarctic Programmes. This includes the requirement for all expeditions to be fully insured.

Question 3.3 – if the activity requires the creation of temporary infrastructure or the creation of depots, detail the provisions that have been made to remove such facilities or depots at the end of the expedition or journey. All material taken to Antarctica must be removed at the end of the expedition.

Questions 3.4 – 3.5 – provide details of the communications equipment carried on the expedition, vessel or ship and the protocols for its use and contingency arrangements in the event of loss of contact. You must ensure these are in date at the time of expedition(s).

Section 4 – Medical and Safety Information

Questions 4.1 – 4.4 – provide details of the medical capabilities of expedition members, the suitability of safety equipment, the details of medically trained members and details of any company, vessel or aircraft safety plans. In completing this section you should be able to demonstrate the following, especially if you are organising or conducting activities without the continual supervision or support in Antarctica of another operator:

- all participants are proficient in the use of such equipment;

- all participants are medically, physically and psychologically fit to undertake the activities in Antarctica as set out in 2.7; and
- adequate first-aid equipment is available during the activity and that at least one participant is proficient in advanced first aid.

Section 5 – Emergency Procedures, Contingency Planning and Insurance

Question 5.1 – provide details of two emergency contact points who can be contacted in the event of an incident. Also provide contact details for the expedition, vessel or aircraft itself while in Antarctica.

Questions 5.2 – 5.4 - all applicants for permits to visit Antarctica must demonstrate compliance with a number of requirements. These include:

- appropriate contingency plans and sufficient arrangements for health and safety. A risk assessment to determine risk levels and to assess the adequacy of controls should be prepared
- appropriate contingency plans and sufficient arrangements for search and rescue (SAR). Full details of the SAR plan must be included as part of the permit application. This must include plans for evacuation out of Antarctica
- appropriate contingency plans and sufficient arrangements for medical care and evacuation. Based on a risk assessment of possible scenarios, contingency plans should be drawn up for responding to such risks. For example, this may include planning for all adverse weather conditions; arrangements for loss of radio and other communications; up to full evacuation plans from Antarctica
- All equipment, including clothing, communication, navigational, emergency and logistic equipment is in sound working order, with sufficient backup spares and suitable for effective operation under Antarctic conditions

Each contingency plan and health and safety guidelines should specify a nominated individual in the expedition who is responsible for them.

Operators who are IAATO members will be able to rely on IAATO's mutual assistance provisions, unless they are operating in a remote area or outside the normal tourism season. For non-IAATO members we will require a much more detailed SAR plan. No health and safety, search and rescue or medical evacuation plans and arrangements should be reliant on support from other operators or National Antarctic Programme (for example the British Antarctic Survey) without their express written agreement. When operating a vessel, reliance on a nearby Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) is not sufficient contingency. A 'buddy' vessel or a pairing arrangement would be the strong preference.

Question 5.5 – provide details of adequate insurance or other arrangements to cover any costs associated with SAR and medical care and evacuation. Insurance must explicitly cover all of the proposed activities to be undertaken in Antarctica and be sufficient to fund any potential medical evacuation from Antarctica. It has been known that even though an insurance policy is 'worldwide' it has not actually covered Antarctica. Please ensure Antarctica is explicitly mentioned. Applicants must attach copies of any contracts and/or insurance policies, together with any other appropriate supporting documentation, as part of the permit application(s).

Question 5.6 – you must complete a comprehensive risk assessment, which should link to the activities you plan to undertake whilst in Antarctica. For example, if you are mountain climbing, your activities may be; the climb itself, walking to the mountain, overnight camping etc, and an assessment of all risks associated with all such activities must be included. If the space allocated within the form is inadequate, submit your own risk assessment forms, however ensure that these contain at least the same level of information required by the application form.

Section 6 – Vessel and Aircraft Details

Under the UK Antarctic permitting process, vessels which require a permit from the FCO, or are being operated as part of a UK expedition, should be compliant with the Polar Code insofar as it may apply to them. The Polar Code is split into two parts – Part I-A places additional requirements on SOLAS vessels and is mandatory. Part II-A places additional requirements to MARPOL and is mandatory.

It is the responsibility of the Operator to ascertain whether they are required to comply with the Polar Code. If uncertain, further advice from the relevant Registry should be obtained.

To show compliance, when submitting the permit application, you should also include a copy of the Polar Ship Certificate and confirm that a Polar Waters Operation Manual is held, if these have been issued by the Flag State.

There may be other exceptions which applicants should raise in advance with the Polar Regions Department.

For those planning to take a private yacht to Antarctica, the Polar Regions Department, in conjunction with industry experts, has produced [Antarctic Yachting Guidelines](#). This gives advice on what considerations they should make and help with the permitting process. The Polar Regions Department strongly recommends that first time Antarctic yachters and even more experienced travellers consult this useful and informative guide as part of their planning and before submitting a permit application.

If you intend to operate a submersible (manned, remotely operated and/or autonomous) or remotely operated or autonomous surface vessels, you should include details in this section 6, reprinting relevant questions where applicable. Please note that additional safety and environmental information will be required and you should raise this in advance with the Polar Regions Department.

In respect of emergency arrangements, applicants should be aware that reliance on other passing traffic will not be deemed to be sufficient arrangements for SAR. All vessels should closely follow the International Maritime Organisation's enhanced contingency planning guidelines for passenger ships operating in areas remote from SAR facilities. Tourist vessels not participating in the IAATO or Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP) vessel tracking schemes should report their positions regularly to the relevant Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre. You are also strongly advised that where there is no buddy or pairing arrangement, your application may be unsuccessful.

Questions 6.1 – 6.11 – provide details of the vessel and crew, which you intend to take to Antarctica, as well as details of the operator and the vessel contact information.

Question 6.12 – provide detail on compliance with the Polar Code.

Questions 6.13 – 6.17 – complete these questions if your expedition includes travel on a UK-registered, UK overseas Territory, Crown Dependency registered vessel, or on a vessel which is registered in a non-Antarctica Treaty Party and is not subject to the Polar Code. If in doubt please contact the Polar Regions Department.

If you are not intending to take such a vessel to Antarctica or the vessel is compliant with the Polar Code you should leave this section blank.

Questions 6.18 – 6.21 - provide details of the aircraft which you intend to operate in Antarctica, as well as details of the pilot and their experience. Provide copies of the standard operating procedures that you intend to follow in Antarctica, in particular in relation to the operation of aircraft in proximity to wildlife and other aircraft. You should refer to http://www.ats.aq/documents/recatt/Att224_e.pdf which provides detailed and important information on the requirements under the Environmental Protocol for the safe operation of aircraft in Antarctica.

The standard operating procedures must cover the contingency arrangements in the event of aircraft failure and the arrangements for the safe recovery of passengers from where they may have been landed; refuelling; and, in the event of a fundamental failure of the aircraft, how the aircraft will be recovered and removed from Antarctica.

You will need to provide a copy of the appropriate insurance certificates for the aircraft, including evidence that the insurance includes provision for the complete recovery and removal of the aircraft from Antarctica. You will also need to provide copies of the pilot's licence.

If you intend to operate a helicopter(s) in Antarctica, you should discuss this in advance with the Polar Regions Department. There are conditions that will be attached to the permit. For example this includes:

- the aircraft must not be operated over, or land at, sites of locations which, in the event of an emergency or other incident, cannot be readily and swiftly assisted by expedition crew coming from its support board or other suitable means.
- The aircraft should not be flown in a manner which would disturb bird and seal concentrations, and should comply with the Guidelines for the Operation of Aircraft near Concentrations of Birds in Antarctica, as appended to the ATCM Resolution 2(2004).

You will also need to provide details on adequate experience, suitable equipment and that adequate emergency and risk assessment plans are in place.

If you are not intending to take such an aircraft to Antarctica, you should leave this section blank. Details of any Remotely Piloted Aviation System (RPAS) already included in section 2.6 does not need to be repeated in this section.

Section 7 – Environmental Impact: Preliminary Environmental Assessment

Assessing and mitigating the environmental impact of the proposed expedition, vessel and/or aircraft activity in Antarctica is a vital element of the permit application process. This section is a preliminary assessment to determine the degree of impact of the planned activity on the Antarctic environment.

In cases where the proposed activity may have a more severe environmental impact, a further comprehensive and detailed environmental impact assessment may be needed. This would take the form of either an Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE), or a Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation (CEE). On application you will be informed if this is necessary for your expedition, vessel or aircraft. The Polar Regions Department will normally require that these are prepared professionally by the applicant. Additional time in the application process should be allowed if there is doubt about the need for such an assessment. Additional time should also be allowed for scrutiny of the impact assessments. Activities that would typically require an IEE or CEE would include: pioneering a new route or new travel technique across a significant region in Antarctica or at an unusual time; or in ways which may otherwise have more than a minor or transitory impact. Other activities would be the construction or modification of a British research station in Antarctica.

You should be aware that the Polar Regions Department will not normally authorise activities for non-scientific purposes which are likely to have more than a minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment.

Fundamental to the protection of the Antarctic environment are measures to prevent the introduction of non-native species. Introduced species and diseases could significantly damage native ecosystems. Transport of such visitors can be minimised by careful cleaning and checking of clothing, footwear, food, equipment and vehicles used in Antarctica. IAATO has produced guidelines for boat, clothing and equipment decontamination appropriate for small boat landing operations. It can be downloaded from <http://iaato.org/decontamination-guidelines>

One of the most prolific introduced species worldwide is rats, which are present at most departure points for Antarctica. Special care must be taken to avoid their spread. Where applicable, vessels must have valid de-ratting exemption certificates. Other potential measures may include rat guards on mooring lines, bait stations and regular inspections.

No live animals, other than registered assistance dogs, should be intentionally carried on any vessel visiting Antarctica.

Question 7.1 - Provide a summary of the activities and justification of why it needs to take place in Antarctica.

Question 7.2 – A full list of Antarctic Specially Managed Areas (ASMAs) can be found on the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat (ATS) website at:

https://www.ats.aq/documents/ATCM40/WW/atcm40_ww004_e.pdf.

A full list of Historic Sites and Monuments (HSMs) can be found on the ATS website at

https://www.ats.aq/documents/recatt/att596_e.pdf.

Further Visitor Site Guidelines can be found on the ATS website at

https://www.ats.aq/devAS/ats_other_siteguidelines.aspx?lang=e

Additional information can also be found on the IAATO website at

<https://iaato.org/guidelines-and-resources>

You should provide details of how you will ensure all members of the expedition abide by management plans and guidance which apply to sites the expedition intends to visit.

Question 7.3 – If you are not sure if a site you intend to visit has been visited before, provide details.

Question 7.4 – Removal of rock, soil or fossils from Antarctica is prohibited unless you have a permit to do so. You may need to consider completing a Specialist Activity Permit Application Form.

Question 7.5 – Taking, capturing of, or interference with any marine or terrestrial flora and fauna in Antarctica is prohibited unless you have a permit to do so. You may need to consider completing a Specialist Activity Permit Application Form.

Question 7.6 – The deliberate introduction to Antarctica of any non-native marine terrestrial animal seed, micro-organism or non-sterile soil is prohibited unless you have a permit to do so. You may need to consider completing a Specialist Activity Permit Application Form.

Question 7.7 – Provide detail on any hazardous substances that you intend to take into Antarctica.

Question 7.8 – Provide as much detail on any equipment you intend to install in Antarctica. You can provide information on a separate sheet if required.

Question 7.9 – Provide as much detail as possible if you intend to store fuel within the Antarctic terrestrial environment.

Questions 7.10 – 7.11 - Provide details on the expected amount and arrangements in place for wastes which will be generated

The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty designates Antarctica as a “*natural reserve, devoted to peace and science*”. Further details can be found on the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat website at: <https://www.ats.aq/e/ep.htm>. [Annex III](#) on Waste Disposal and Waste Management and [Annex IV](#) on Marine Pollution sets out in more detail the obligations. Permit holders will need to ensure vessels comply as appropriate with MARPOL and the Polar Code (where applicable) waste management practices.

Question 7.12 – Explain how you will ensure that all activities will comply with current Antarctic environmental legislation, including the [Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty](#).

Question 7.13 – Provide detail on how you will ensure all members of the expedition are aware of their environmental responsibilities. This should include disturbance of wildlife, introduction of non-native species, waste disposal, respecting historic sites and minimising trampling impacts.

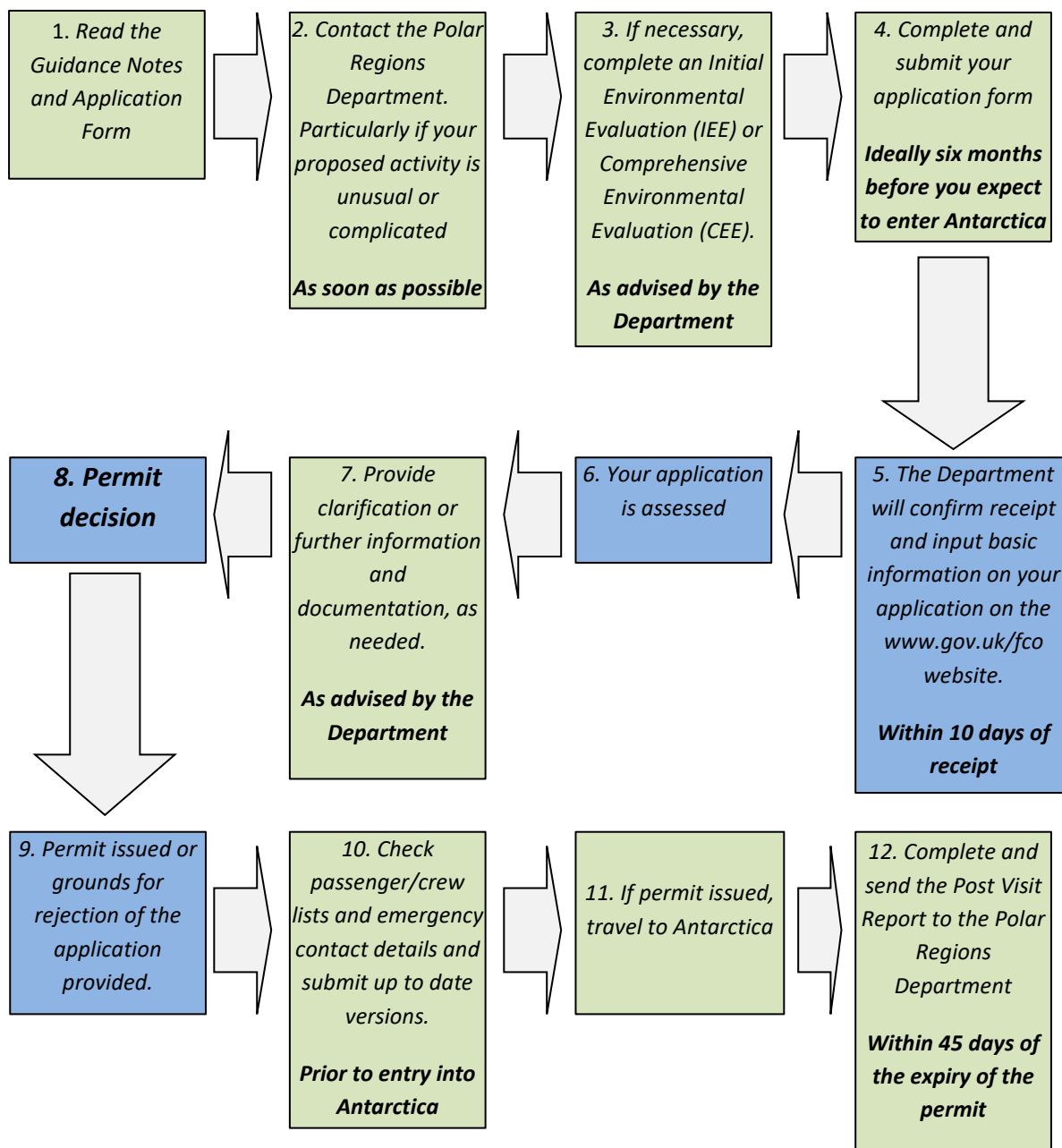
Question 7.14 – The Polar Code Part II-A places mandatory requirements regarding pollution prevention on all vessels in addition to those contained in MARPOL. If your expedition involves the operation of a vessel and you have completed Section 6A, provide confirmation that all the necessary obligations have been met.

Question 7.15 - Complete the Environment Impact Matrix with each activity you intend to undertake, ensuring you cover the possible impact of that activity on the environment and how it will be mitigated.

Part 2 – Application flow chart

The following flow-chart provides an overview of the process of applying for, assessing and granting a permit to take a British expedition, vessel or aircraft to Antarctica.

Action for applicants is shown in green and for the Polar Regions Department in blue.



Part 3 - Frequently asked questions

This section provides answers to the questions most frequently asked by applicants for an Antarctic permit. For further questions, contact details can be found on Page 16.

Q. Why do I need a permit to enter Antarctica?

The UK's Antarctic permitting process is designed to protect the unique and fragile natural environment and to ensure that expeditions, vessels and aircraft are suitably prepared to operate safely in a harsh and demanding location. The application form seeks to establish the necessary information to assess this suitability.

Q. Under what legislation is a permit required?

The Antarctic Act 1994 & the Antarctic Act 2013, together with the Antarctic Regulations 1995 (as amended) implements the environmental provisions of the Environmental Protocol, to the Antarctic Treaty, which was agreed in 1991.

Q. Who needs to complete an Application form?

Any person on a British expedition to Antarctica or taking a British vessel or aircraft into Antarctica. A British expedition is one organised in the UK, or where the last place of departure for Antarctica is the UK, a British Overseas Territory or a Crown Dependency. 'Expedition' includes a single person and is a tour or journey of any purpose, including activities such as landing ashore, skiing, kayaking, small boat activities, climbing, diving or any related activity.

Q. I am a passenger on an organised visit to Antarctica – do I need to apply for a permit?

Probably not. It is likely that the organiser of your trip – such as the tour operator if you are joining a cruise ship - will do this. But you should confirm this with them before travelling in the first instance. If still in doubt, please contact the Polar Regions Department.

Q. I am a scientist / film crew travelling on an expedition / vessel that is applying for a permit from another country – do I need to apply for my own permit?

Probably not. If the expedition / vessel operator is obtaining written authorisation from another Contracting Party (country) to the Environmental Protocol of the Antarctic Treaty you should ensure that you will be included on that authorisation. However please contact the Polar Regions Department if you have any questions.

Q. I am not a UK national, do I still need a permit?

Possibly. If you are organising an expedition from the UK or the final port of departure for Antarctica is the UK or a UK Overseas Territory (such as the Falkland Islands or a Crown Dependency) you may still require a permit. Please contact the Polar Regions Department to discuss further.

Q. What is a British vessel or aircraft?

A British vessel or aircraft is one that is registered in the UK. Vessels or aircraft registered in British Overseas Territories or the Crown Dependencies should also apply for a permit in the same way. If successful, the permit may be issued in the name of the Governor of the Overseas Territory or the equivalent for the Crown Dependency, but the process is administered by the Polar Regions Department.

Q. I already have a permit from another country – do I still need to apply?

If the expedition, vessel or aircraft has been granted written authorisation by another Contracting Party (country) to the Environmental Protocol of the Antarctic Treaty it may not require a separate permit from the UK. However please contact the Polar Regions Department with these details.

Q. What will happen if I travel to Antarctica without a permit or breach the conditions of the permit while in Antarctica?

The Antarctic Act 1994, together with the Antarctic Act 2013 and accompanying Regulations establish criminal offences. Any person on a British expedition who enters or remains in Antarctica without either a permit issued under the relevant Acts, or written authority from another Contracting Party to the Environmental Protocol, will be guilty of an offence.

If a person whose place of final departure for Antarctica was in the UK (or, for example, the Falkland Islands) enters Antarctica without the necessary permit or authorisation, the operator of the vessel or aircraft on which he enters Antarctica, and the master of that vessel or the commander of that aircraft, will each be guilty of an offence.

Similarly any breach of a condition of a permit is an offence. **The maximum penalty for those found guilty of offences under the Act is two years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.** A permit may also be suspended or revoked.

Q. What are the boundaries of Antarctica for these purposes?

‘Antarctica’ includes all sea, land and ice-shelves south of 60° latitude

Q. Can someone else pass me their permit?

No. Permits are not transferable. Permits are only valid in the name of the applicant.

Q. Can a permit be issued for more than one year?

Permits will not normally be issued for a period of more than one Antarctic (summer) season. e.g. November to March.

Q. I intend to carry out more than one trip this season, do I need to complete more than one application form?

Probably not. As long as you show the different dates, activities and itineraries, one application form should be sufficient. Please contact the Polar Regions Department to discuss in more detail.

Q. When should I apply?

You must allow at least two months if you have previously obtained a permit for summer activities, or at least four months for a new or unusual application. More time may be

needed if the application is for a major activity or is particularly complicated. It is strongly recommended that you submit your application or at least make contact with the Department at least six months prior to your intended date of travel. Please contact the Polar Regions Department as soon as possible to discuss your plans.

Q. What will happen if I apply late?

The Polar Regions Department cannot guarantee that permits will be issued if applicants apply without leaving sufficient time for the proposed activity in Antarctica to be assessed. Travelling to Antarctica without a permit is a criminal offence.

Q. What is in the permit and what will I do with it?

The permit will set out the conditions on which you are allowed to enter Antarctica and will confirm the activity you have agreed to undertake to comply with the provisions of the Environmental Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty, as included within British legislation. The permit must be carried with you while in Antarctica and must be produced if requested.

Q. Is there anything I need to do once I return from Antarctica?

Once you return from Antarctica you will need to complete a Post-Visit Report within 45 days of the expiry of the permit. This short report provides straightforward information on how the visit to Antarctica was carried out and enables the Polar Regions Department to meet its international obligations under the Antarctic Treaty and to evaluate and improve its service.

Q. Will any other permits be required?

You should complete the Application form if you are taking a British expedition, vessel or aircraft to Antarctica.

You may also need to make a separate application if your activity in Antarctica involves:

- staying on a British research station;
- undertaking mineral resource activities;
- undertaking activities which might interfere with fauna, flora or marine organisms;
- introducing non-native animals or plants;
- entering specially protected areas; or
- conservation of a Historic site or monument.

Please contact the Polar Regions Department as soon as possible if any of these activities apply.

Q. What will happen to the information I provide in the application form?

Within 10 days from the confirmation of receipt of an application basic details will be published on the FCO website in accordance with regulation 4(2) of the Antarctic Regulations 1995 as amended. While an application is being assessed the applicant must make a copy available for inspection or provide a copy to any person who requests it in writing, subject to reasonable charges. The UK will also exchange information about visitor activity in Antarctica as and where necessary, in particular if there are potential implications for other Parties to the Antarctic Treaty. The FCO will treat the information you provide in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation. Our privacy notice can be found [here](#).

Q. What can I do if my application is not accepted?

The Polar Regions Department will always work with you to resolve any difficulties in relation to your application to take a British expedition, vessel or aircraft to Antarctica. In the event that the provisions of the Antarctic Act and accompanying Regulations cannot be met, then the Department must decline to issue a permit. Under the provisions of the Antarctic Regulations 1995/490 you may have grounds to appeal against that decision and the Polar Regions Department will inform you of this provision at the time of the decision.

Part 4 – Useful links and resources

This section provides a range of links and resources which may assist with the completion of the Application form and your visit to Antarctica.

UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office – Antarctic pages:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visits-to-antarctica-how-to-apply-for-a-permit>

Antarctic Treaty Secretariat:

https://www.ats.aq/index_e.html

Yacht guidance:

http://www.ats.aq/documents/ATCM35/ww/atcm35_ww005_e.pdf

Link to the list of ASPAs, ASMAs and HSM pages on the ATS website:

<https://www.ats.aq/e/protected.html>

Link to Visitor Site Guidelines page of ATS website:

<https://www.ats.aq/devAS/Ats/VisitorSiteGuidelines?lang=e>

International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators:

<http://iaato.org/home>

IAATO has produced guidelines for boat, clothing and equipment decontamination appropriate for small boat landing operations. It can be downloaded from

<http://iaato.org/decontamination-guidelines>

Wildlife Awareness Manual (2nd Edition) – C.M. Harris (2021). Available from:

<http://www.era.gs/resources/wam/index.shtml>

Please note some details relating to environmental protection have been updated since publication and should be verified

COMNAP Non-Native Species Voluntary Checklists

<http://comnap.mammothweb.co.nz/home/non-native-species-voluntary-checklists/>

SCAR Codes of Conduct for governing fieldwork and the use of animals in Antarctica

<https://www.scar.org/policy/scar-codes-of-conduct/>

Southern Ocean Cruising – Sally & Jerome Poncet:

<http://www.era.gs/resources/soc/index.shtml>

Please note some details relating to environmental protection have been updated since publication and should be verified.

International Maritime Organisation:
<http://www.imo.org/en/Pages/Default.aspx>

Part 5 – Contact information

You may be invited to discuss your application with the Polar Regions Department prior to completing your application. It is recommended that you contact the Department as early as possible in the planning of your visit to Antarctica, particularly if the activity is unusual or complicated. Contact details are as follows:

Telephone – 0207 008 1639 or 0207 008 2616

E-Mail – polarregions@fco.gov.uk

Address – Polar Regions Department
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
Room W2.72
King Charles Street
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SW1A 2AH

Failure to discuss your proposed activity with the Department or to submit an application in time may result in the Department being unable to assess your application and issue a permit.