



Regulations relating to motor traffic in Svalbard

Date	FOR-2002-06-24-723
Ministry	Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment
Dep/Dir	Department for Marine Management and Pollution Control, Governor of Svalbard
Published	In 2002, booklet 8
Entry into force	1 July 2002
Last amended	FOR-2024-03-01-360 from 1 June 2024
Applicable to	Svalbard
Legal basis	LOV-2001-06-15-79-Section 80, LOV-2001-06-15-79-Section 81, LOV-2001-06-15-79-Section 82, LOV-2001-06-15-79-Section 83
Published announcement	12 July 2002
Corrected	15 March 2021 (punctuation in lists adapted to universal design)

Table of Contents

Regulations relating to motor traffic in Svalbard1
Table of Contents2
Chapter I. General provisions.....3
Chapter II. Off-road motor traffic on ground that is not snow-covered or on thawed ground.....4
**Chapter III. Off-road motor traffic on snow-covered and frozen ground and on ice-covered rivers,
lakes and marine areas4**
Chapter IV. Use of aircraft for tourism purposes.....6
Chapter V. Motor traffic at sea.....6
**Chapter VI. Permits for motor traffic on application, appeals, penalties, amendments and entry into
force7**

Legal basis: Issued by the Ministry of Environment (now Ministry of Climate and Environment) on 24 June 2002 pursuant to the Act of 15 June 2001 No. 79 relating to the protection of the environment in Svalbard (Svalbard Environmental Protection Act), Section 80, Section 81, Section 82 and Section 83.

Amended by the Regulations of 24 June 2002 No. 1084, 12 May 2013 No. 469, 15 March 2013 No. 284, 20 December 2013 No. 1689, 19 December 2013 No. 1757, 10 April 2014 No. 525, 6 December 2016 No. 1465, 20 April 2018 No. 599, 12 March 2019 No. 219 (entry into force 12 March 2019), 12 March 2019 No. 219 (entry into force 1 June 2019), 11 March 2020 No. 268, 11 March 2020 No. 268 (entry into force 1 June 2020), 4 March 2021 No. 633 (entry into force 15 March 2021), 4 March 2021 No. 633 (entry into force 1 June 2021), 22 June 2021 No. 2122 (entry into force 1 July 2021), 24 February 2022 No. 297 (entry into force 1 March 2022), 24 February 2022 No. 297 (entry into force 1 June 2022), 1 March 2023 No. 295 (entry into force 3 March 2023), 1 March 2023 No. 295 (entry into force 1 June 2023), 1 March 2024 No. 360, 1 March 2024 No. 360 (entry into force on 1 July 2024).

Amended by the Regulations of 6 February 2024 No. 225 (entry into force on 1 January 2025).

Corrections: 10 January 2013 (commentary), 14 January 2014 (graphics), 01 May 2014 (remarks to Section 2), 13 December 2016 (guiding text Map B), 15 March 2021 (punctuation in lists adapted to universal design).

Chapter I. General provisions

Section 1. (*purpose*)

The purpose of these Regulations is to regulate the use of motor vehicles and aircraft based on overall considerations of public interest, including opportunities for the general public to experience Svalbard's wilderness, and with a view to protecting Svalbard's natural environment.

Section 2. (*scope*)

These Regulations apply to the entire land area of Svalbard and its waters extending to the territorial limit.

The Regulations apply to off-road motor traffic and motor traffic on ice-covered rivers, lakes and marine areas. For hovercraft and hydrocopters, the Regulations also apply to traffic on the open sea. Furthermore, the Regulations apply to the use of aircraft for tourism purposes.

0 Amended by the Regulations of 20 December 2013 No. 1689 (entry into force on 1 January 2014).

Section 3. (*definitions*)

For the purpose of these Regulations, the following definitions apply:

- (a) permanent resident: corresponds with the definition of permanent resident in Section 3, first paragraph (i) of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act;
- (b) visitor: corresponds with the definition of visitor in Section 3, first paragraph (j) of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act;
- (c) *motor vehicle*: engine-powered mode of transport, for use on or off road;
- (d) *tracked vehicle or snowmobile*: engine-powered vehicle fitted with tracks;
- (e) *tracked vehicle*: a motor vehicle designed mainly for the carriage of passengers or goods and/or to tow another vehicle, that is fitted with tracks and may be fitted with a steering ski or steering wheel, and that has an unladen weight of more than 400 kg and a design speed of more than 30 km/h;
- (f) *snowmobile*: a motor vehicle designed mainly for the carriage of passengers or goods and/or to tow another vehicle, that is fitted with tracks and may be fitted with a steering ski or steering wheel, and that has an unladen weight not exceeding 400 kg and a design speed of more than 30 km/h;
- (g) aircraft: engine-powered mode of transport for use in the air;
- (h) tourism activities: corresponds with the definition of tourism activities in the Regulations of 27 June 2002 No. 731 relating to camping activities in Svalbard, Section 2a (a).
- (i) hovercraft or hydrocopter: motor craft capable of travelling on water, snow, ice and dry land;
- (j) underwater vehicle: manned motorised vehicle for use under water.

Section 4. (*due care*)

Traffic by motor vehicle or aircraft in Svalbard shall take place in a way that does not harm, pollute or in any other way damage the natural environment or cultural heritage or result in unnecessary disturbance to humans or the fauna.

Chapter II. Off-road motor traffic on ground that is not snow-covered or on thawed ground

Section 5. (*prohibition against motor traffic*)

Off-road motor traffic on ground that is not snow-covered and on thawed ground is prohibited unless otherwise provided in or under the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act or these Regulations.

Section 6. (*motor traffic in the land-use planning areas*)

Necessary off-road motor traffic in accordance with an approved land-use plan is permitted in connection with:

- (a) the extraction of raw materials, including exploration activities, mining operations and the extraction of deposits;
- (b) construction and building activities except for cabins;
- (c) the operation and maintenance of buildings and other infrastructure necessary for the operation of settlements.

Chapter III. Off-road motor traffic on snow-covered and frozen ground and on ice-covered rivers, lakes and marine areas

Section 7. (*prohibition against motor traffic*)

Off-road motor traffic on snow-covered and frozen ground and on ice-covered rivers, lakes and marine areas is prohibited unless otherwise provided in or under the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act or these Regulations.

Section 8 (off-road use of snowmobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles on frozen and snow-covered ground for permanent residents)

Permanent residents are permitted to use snowmobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles on snow-covered and frozen ground in the following areas:

- (a) areas marked in yellow as shown on the map in Appendix 1;
- (b) mapped trail between Kjellströmdalen and Agardhdalen, marked by a solid black line as shown on the map in Appendix 1;
- (c) areas marked in green until 1 March of each season as shown on the map in Appendix 1.

Section 8a. (*use of snow mobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles on sea ice for permanent residents*)

Permanent residents are permitted to use snow mobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles on ice-covered marine areas adjacent to areas mentioned in Section 8 (a) and (c), except for areas mentioned in the second paragraph. Between Agardhbukta and Wichebukta in Storfjorden, motorised traffic shall follow the nearest passable route on the sea ice along the shore.

It is prohibited to use snow mobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles after 1 March on the sea ice between Agardhbukta and Richterfjellet in Storfjorden. It is prohibited to use snow mobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles after 1 March on ice-covered marine areas in Van Mijenfjorden, Van Keulenfjorden, Tempelfjorden and Billefjorden marked in red on the map in Appendix 1.

This prohibition does not apply to necessary motor traffic on the shortest passable route on the sea ice in areas shown on the map in Appendix 1:

- (a) in Van Mijenfjorden, Tempelfjorden and Billefjorden in order to cross the fjords transversely;
- (b) along the shore on the north side of Van Mijenfjorden.

For the purpose of these Regulations, 'passable route' means a route that is safe, secure and where the fauna is not unnecessarily disturbed. It is not permitted to stay or stop on the sea ice beyond what is necessary for safe passage.

Section 8b. (off-road use of snowmobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles on frozen and snow-covered ground for visitors)

Visitors are permitted to use snowmobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles on snow-covered and frozen ground in the following areas:

- (a) areas marked in yellow as shown on the map in Appendix 2;
- (b) areas marked in blue as shown on the map in Appendix 2 if they are participating in tourism activities or are accompanied by permanent residents;
- (c) mapped trail between Kjellströmdalen and Agardhdalen marked by a solid black line as shown on the map in Appendix 2 if they are participating in tourism activities or are accompanied by permanent residents;
- (d) areas marked in orange as shown on the map in Appendix 2 if they are accompanied by permanent residents in Ny-Ålesund.

Section 8c. (off-road use of snowmobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles on ice-covered marine areas for visitors)

Visitors are permitted to use snow mobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles on ice-covered marine areas adjacent to areas mentioned in Section 8 (a), (b) and (d), except for areas mentioned in the second paragraph. Between Agardhbukta and Wichebukta in Storfjorden, motorised traffic shall follow the nearest passable route on the sea ice along the shore.

It is prohibited to use snow mobiles, tracked vehicles and electric bicycles after 1 March on ice-covered marine areas in Van Mijenfjorden, Van Keulenfjorden, Tempelfjorden, Billefjorden and Dicksonfjorden marked in red as shown on the map in Appendix 2.

This prohibition does not apply to necessary motor traffic on the shortest passable route on the sea ice in areas as shown on the map in Appendix 2:

- (a) for the crossing of Tempelfjorden and Billefjorden;
- (b) along the shore on the north side of Van Mijenfjorden if they are participating in tourism activities;
- (c) on Van Mijenfjorden to access cabins.

For the purpose of these Regulations, 'passable route' means a route that is safe, secure and where the fauna is not unnecessarily disturbed. It is not permitted to stay or stop on the sea ice beyond what is necessary for safe passage.

Section 9. (commercial traffic)

In these Regulations, commercial traffic means traffic in connection with the purposes mentioned in Section 6.

For necessary commercial traffic, tracked vehicles or snowmobiles may be used:

- (a) in areas marked in yellow on the accompanying Map A and on adjacent marine areas;
- (b) in the mapped trail through the area marked in green in the accompanying Map A.

The trail is marked as a dotted red line on the accompanying Map A, and runs along the bottom of the valley of Reindalen from Sørhytta up to Reindalspasset, and then down along the bottom of the valley of Lundstrømdalen to Kjellstrømdalen.

If weather or snow conditions make it difficult to use the areas mentioned in the second paragraph (a), an alternative trail along the bottom of the valleys of Bolterdalen and Tverrdalen may be used.

Section 10. (*temporary amendments*)

The Governor of Svalbard may make temporary amendments to Section 8 and Section 9 if this is considered necessary to protect the fauna or natural environment otherwise, or if required for other special reasons.

Chapter IV. Use of aircraft for tourism purposes

Section 11. (*aircraft for tourism purposes*)

The use of aircraft for sightseeing is prohibited in Svalbard.

Nevertheless, the use of aircraft to fly to and from Svalbard and between the settlements in Svalbard is permitted when this takes place in the form of scheduled flights where tourists are passengers, or equivalent types of passenger transport.

Chapter V. Motor traffic at sea

Section 12. (*hovercraft and hydrocopters on the open sea*)

The use of hovercraft and hydrocopters is prohibited in marine areas that are not ice-covered and in a continuous belt stretching one nautical mile out from land.

Section 12a. (*prohibition against icebreaking*)

The breaking of fast ice is prohibited. For the purpose of these Regulations, fast ice means continuous land-fast sea ice.

This prohibition does not apply to motor traffic:

- (a) to keep the fairways leading to the ports in Longyearbyen and Barentsburg open;
- (b) to ensure supplies to Ny-Ålesund;
- (c) for the Norwegian Coast Guard's performance of necessary tasks where such tasks cannot otherwise be performed.

Section 12b. (*motor traffic on sea ice near haul-out areas for walrus*)

Motor traffic at sea closer than 150 metres from haul-out areas for walrus is prohibited. This prohibition does not apply where it would prevent necessary access to buildings, docks and similar structures.

Motor traffic at sea at speeds greater than 5 knots closer than 300 metres to haul-out areas for walrus is prohibited.

For the purpose of these Regulations, haul-out areas means land where multiple walruses congregate.

Section 12c. (*speed limits at sea near seabird colonies*)

Motor traffic at sea at speeds greater than 5 knots closer than 500 metres to land during the period 1 April to 31 August near seabird colonies as shown on the map in Appendix 3 is prohibited.

Section 12d. (*prohibition against underwater vehicles*)

The use of underwater vehicles for commercial activities is prohibited.

Chapter VI. Permits for motor traffic on application, appeals, penalties, amendments and entry into force

0 Amended by the Regulations of 20 December 2013 No. 1689 (entry into force 1 January 2014, previously Chapter V).

Section 13. (*permits on application*)

The Governor of Svalbard may on application grant permission for:

- (a) motor traffic for permanent residents in Sør-Spitsbergen National Park, Forlandet National Park and Nordvest-Spitsbergen National Park and the crossing of sea ice on Van Keulenfjorden;
- (b) motor traffic for permanent residents in Ny Friesland in Nordaust-Svalbard Nature Reserve;
- (c) motor traffic in the land-use planning areas in connection with the building and construction of cabins;

The Governor of Svalbard may in other circumstances grant exceptions from the provisions when required by the purpose of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act, as well as for scientific investigations, works of substantial societal importance and in other special circumstances.

In the consideration of applications, emphasis shall be placed on the purpose of the application, the risk of environmental damage and the goal of restricting motor traffic in Svalbard. If a permit is issued, the grounds for the decision shall show how these considerations have been evaluated.

The permit shall be restricted temporally and geographically and may be restricted to apply to specific instances only. Conditions may be stipulated in the permit. The permit may be altered or rescinded if required by environmental considerations.

Section 14. (*appeals*)

Individual decisions made by the Governor of Svalbard pursuant to these Regulations may be appealed to the Norwegian Environment Agency in accordance with the provisions of the Public Administration Act.

Section 15. (*penalties*)

Any person who wilfully or negligently contravenes provisions laid down in these Regulations is liable to fines or a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year. If a risk of substantial environmental damage has occurred or been caused or if there are especially aggravating circumstances, a term of imprisonment not exceeding three years may be imposed.

An accomplice is liable to the same penalties.

Section 16. (*entry into force*)

These Regulations enter into force on 1 July 2002.

