



Regulations relating to camping activities in Svalbard

Date	FOR-2002-06-27-731
Ministry	Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment
Dep/Dir	Governor of Svalbard
Published	In 2002, booklet 8
Entry into force	1 July 2002
Last amended	FOR-2020-06-22-2122 from 1 July 2021
Applicable to	Svalbard
Legal basis	LOV-2001-06-15-79-Section76
Published announcement	12 July 2002
Corrected	1 May 2014 (Remarks)
Abbreviated title	Regulations relating to camping activities in Svalbard

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Legal basis: Issued by the Governor of Svalbard on 27 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 76.

Amended by the Regulations of 12 March 2013 No. 469, 22 June 2021 No. 2122 (entry into force on 1 July 2021).

Amended by the Regulations of 6 February 2024 No. 233 (entry into force on 1 January 2025).

Corrections: 31 January 2003 (Remarks were added), 1 May 2014 (Remarks).

Chapter I. Introductory provisions

Section 1. (*purpose*)

The purpose of the Regulations is to regulate tenting and camping activities to ensure that such activities do not adversely impact Svalbard's virtually untouched environment with respect to continuous wilderness, landscapes, flora, fauna and cultural heritage. This includes:

- ensuring safety with respect to polar bears; and
- safeguarding the general public's experience of wilderness and local culture.

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 all persons planning or carrying out tenting or camping activities in the areas mentioned in the first paragraph. When carrying out tenting or camping activities as part of tourism activities, field activities and research and education activities, the undertaking is responsible for ensuring compliance with these Regulations.

Section 2a. (*definitions*)

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

tenting and camping activities: the use of tents or other temporary facilities for overnight stays, meals, instruction, shelter or similar purposes;

tourism activities: the organisation by natural or legal persons, in return for payment, of access and passage, activities or stays with services or transport of persons on land or at sea within the scope of the Regulations or other facilitation of tourism stays in Svalbard;

field activities: the organisation by natural or legal persons, in return for payment, of access and passage, activities or stays with services or transport of persons on land or at sea within the scope of the Regulations, or other facilitation, albeit not defined as tourism stays in accordance with (b);

research and educational activities: activities in Svalbard operated by research institutions, educational institutions, institutes and state-owned companies domiciled in Svalbard that provide services and facilitate the use of infrastructure for research and scientific activities.

Chapter II. Permits

Section 3. (*permit requirement*)

Tenting and camping activities as part of tourism activities, field activities and as part of research and educational activities require permission from the Governor of Svalbard.

Other than for activities mentioned in the first paragraph, tenting and camping activities in the same place for a duration of one week or more require permission from the Governor of Svalbard.

However, permission is not required in areas that are specifically designated for tenting and camping activities in accordance with the land-use plan.

Section 4. (*permit application*)

Permit applications for tenting and camping activities shall include the information necessary to assess whether or not a permit should be issued and the relevant conditions. Applications shall at least account for the following:

- (a) which location is planned to be used;
- (b) the time and duration of the stay;
- (c) the number of persons staying at the camp;
- (d) the type of accommodation and location in the terrain; and
- (e) how safety in relation to polar bears, food storage, waste management and sanitation conditions will be safeguarded.

The Governor of Svalbard may request further information.

The application shall be submitted to the Governor of Svalbard no later than four weeks prior to the planned tenting or commencement of camping activities.

Section 5. (*permission*)

When the Governor of Svalbard decides whether to grant a permit and stipulates conditions, emphasis shall be placed on whether the tenting or camping activities may;

- (a) entail a risk of damage, wear and tear or other disturbance to protected cultural heritage, fauna, flora or the natural environment in general;
- (b) jeopardise safety in relation to polar bears;
- (c) conflict with the goal of protecting the wilderness nature of Svalbard;
- (d) damage or obstruct other lawful activities;
- (e) conflict with the goal of safeguarding the public's experience of wilderness.

The Governor of Svalbard may alter the conditions in the permit, set new conditions, and, if necessary, rescind the permit for planned or already commenced tenting or camping activities if there is reason to fear such risks as mentioned in the first paragraph.

Chapter III. Placement and tidying

Section 6. (*placement*)

Tenting or camping activities shall be carried out in such a manner as to minimise damage or wear to vegetation. To the extent possible, tents and other installations shall be placed on ground that is free of vegetation.

Section 7. (*distance from leisure cabins, inhabited buildings and cultural heritage*)

Tenting or camping activities is prohibited within 100 metres of leisure cabins and inhabited buildings without permission from the owner or the person who on behalf of the owner disposes of the leisure cabin or inhabited building.

Within the security zone around automatically protected cultural heritage, it is prohibited to erect tents, carry out camping activities, light fires or undertake similar activities. However, tenting on frozen and snow-covered ground is permitted in the security zone. The security zone is the area extending 100 metres in all directions from the visible or known perimeter of a fixed element of cultural heritage, unless the Governor of Svalbard has prescribed a different delimitation.

Section 8. (*tidying*)

Stones, sticks and other objects that have been used to fasten tent canvas, or for guying, to form shelters, seating or fire pits, and other installations in connection with the camping activities, shall be tidied up and returned to the place they were found.

All equipment and waste shall be removed at the end of the tenting or camping activities. Waste must be taken to an approved waste management facility.

Section 9. (*fire pits*)

Lighting fires on ground covered by vegetation or directly on ground covered by muck soil is not permitted. Fire pits shall be tidied and the remains of the fire shall be removed to the extent possible.

Chapter IV. Polar bear safety

Section 10. (*information*)

All persons carrying out tenting or camping activities in Svalbard are required to familiarise themselves with information and recommendations on necessary measures to avoid the risk of polar bear attacks and to ward off attacks without injuring or killing the animal.

Section 11. (*measures to avoid and, if necessary, ward off polar bear attacks*)

Necessary measures shall be taken to be able to ward off a polar bear attack without injuring or killing the animal.

Suitable means of frightening and chasing off polar bears shall be available at the camp, for example flare guns and flare pens equipped with thunder flashes, signal cartridges, or sirens. Such equipment shall be stored so that it is readily accessible.

Tenting or camping activities that require an application pursuant to Section 3, first paragraph, shall be secured by an awake and organised polar bear guard whenever there are people in the camp. However, this does not apply to stays in temporary small cabins, barracks or similar facilities.

Chapter V. Penalties and entry into force

Section 12. (*penalties*)

Contraventions of provisions and decisions issued in or pursuant to these Regulations are punishable pursuant to the rules in Section 99 of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act.

Section 13. (*entry into force*)

These Regulations enter into force on 1 July 2002.