

## **Travel To and From Antarctica 2023/24**

### **1. General:**

- a. Travel by the most direct and convenient route at the start of your tour to Antarctica will be arranged for you by British Antarctic Survey (BAS). You will not have the option to make your own arrangements for travelling south.
- b. You will be able to view your planned travel via the SOUTH database. For those external to BAS, a password and link to view your travel remotely will be provided.
- c. It is an individual's responsibility to obtain any required visas. All non-UK citizens are advised to check whether they need visas for entry (even in transit) for their planned gateway country.
- d. If you are travelling by plane, approximately 2 weeks before your planned departure from the UK, the Polar Ops Support Team will contact you by e-mail with travel details for the southbound journey. On receipt, you must reply to the POST team to:
  - Confirm receipt of travel documentation
  - Confirm how you are getting to the airport
  - Raise any queries you may haveIf you don't contact us, we will not know whether you have received your tickets.
- e. In the 23/24 season BAS will organise group transport to/from BAS Cambridge to the departure airport.
- f. If you do not wish to use the transport from BAS Cambridge, you may make your own arrangements to travel to/from the airport and then (depending on the arrangements made for your project) you may be able to retrospectively reclaim reasonable expenses incurred:
  - Internal UK flights cannot be reimbursed (excluding overseas UK e.g., Northern Ireland)
  - If being collected from / dropped off at the airport, mileage can be claimed one-way between the airport and your home address
  - Other reasonable claims include travel by public transport in economy class (e.g., rail, coach)
  - You cannot claim for travel to/from BAS Cambridge as this is your UK place of work (HMRC does not allow reimbursement for travel between your home and place of work)
  - If in doubt, please ask the Polar Operations Support Team

### **2. Travel to Gateway Guidance**

Below pertains to BAS Cambridge Staff & AEP

- a) Travel is booked by BAS for the most operationally relevant date, and by a route & carrier that is assessed to be appropriate and safe. The BAS Polar Operations Support Team (POST) retain control over all travel to Antarctica & Antarctic Gateways to prevent & mitigate impact of any issues that may arise throughout travel.

- b) The POST team have a complete view of BAS operations and can alter travel plans last-minute as required by operational stressors. An individual arranging their own travel would not have all the information necessary to manage their travel in the same way, this may have negative operational, and cost, impacts.
- c) Flights for deployment south will be booked from London Heathrow or RAF Brize Norton in the UK. Staff should be in the UK and ready to deploy in line with their planned departure date.
- d) Should staff be resident outside of the UK they will be required to arrange their own travel to the UK to meet their planned deployment flight, unless travelling directly from their home country represents a carbon & cost saving or other exceptional circumstances apply. In this case, or in the below circumstances the traveller should contact the POST Manager ASAP.
  - If a traveller will be working for BAS overseas directly before their deployment date South, though this circumstance should be avoided by timing travel appropriately.
  - Should a member of staff have no option (family circumstances etc.) but to be abroad on their deployment date.
- e) When within the above guidelines and approved by POST Manager, the cost of economy class travel to the UK to meet deployment flights can be reimbursed via i-expenses or a non-employee T&S claim.
- f) Flexibility in the above rules will be at the POST manager's discretion.

### 3. COVID-19 Antarctic Travel Guidance

- a. Please ensure you follow the latest government guidelines.
- b. We recommend you carry a record (paper and/or electronic) of your Covid vaccination.
- c. Face coverings are always recommended, even if it not mandated.
- d. Should you feel unwell whilst travelling, with COVID-19 symptoms or any other illness, please notify BAS immediately. BAS will follow infection control procedures and may delay your onward travel until the next appropriate departure date where applicable.

### 4. Aircraft baggage allowances:

- a. Baggage allowances vary depending on the route flown and you WILL be restricted in the amount of luggage you may carry. Unless specifically agreed in advance, BAS will not cover any excess baggage charges.
- b. **BEWARE: The smallest baggage allowance across the WHOLE of your journey will be applied.** Your TOTAL personal baggage allowance on the Dash 7 will be **31kg**. (The weight of BAS-issued kitbags have already been allocated and are not included in the 31kg). e.g. If you have carried 55kg of personal luggage on the MOD flight to the Falklands, the additional 23kg luggage will be left behind to continue the journey by

ship later in the season. You must inform the Support Team if you are carrying extra baggage.

- c. There are different restrictions if you are transferring from Rothera to Halley by air or travelling on non-BAS shipping. If in doubt, please contact the Polar Operations Support Team.
- d. Restrictions on the size, weight and content of hand luggage apply to all aircraft, including MOD flights. Most airlines now insist on only one piece of hand luggage. Please carefully read the instructions which will be issued with your tickets and ask if you have any questions.
- e. If you wish to take a laptop computer, always keep it with your person whilst travelling; you should include it in your one piece of hand luggage.
- f. Hazardous materials, including biological materials, may NOT be carried on any flight. These include firearms, flammable liquids, mercury (including thermometers) and fireworks. Batteries are also restricted, although you may carry small quantities within or with electrical equipment. If you have any queries about items you intend to carry, please contact the Support Team as soon as possible.

## **5. Meals and Accommodation at your Gateway:**

- a. Gateway-specific guidance will be issued with your travel details 2-weeks before travel. All transfers & accommodation will be booked by our agent's in-country.
- b. If you are booked into full board accommodation you may not claim expenses for any further meals purchased. If you are booked in B&B accommodation you may claim back the costs of lunch & dinner per [gov. T&S rates](#) – **you must keep receipts.**
- c. We will endeavour to keep you in the same single occupancy accommodation for the entire duration of your stay wherever possible. Please be aware in the case of prolonged onward travel delays we may be required to move your accommodation or switch to dual occupancy accommodation depending on availability.
- d. In the event of an extended stay in the gateway BAS will cover reasonable data roaming charges to allow communication with your group and BAS agents. Evidence of payment must be provided; this can be a screenshot. Where possible we ask that BAS staff use a BAS device.

## **6. Onward Travel to Antarctica:**

### **a. On BAS Aircraft (Dash 7):**

- 1) If you are flying to Rothera, you will depart on the BAS Dash 7.
- 2) There will be a pre-flight briefing prior to boarding the aircraft at the gateway.
- 3) Transport is provided from the accommodation to the airport. Full details will be provided by the agent in country.

- 4) BAS aircrew will inform you about the flight, weather and timings. Please note:
- Flight duration is a minimum of 4½ hours (average 5½) but could be as long as 11 hours if diversions are taken due to bad weather.
  - It is BAS policy that you are equipped with suitable Antarctic clothing for the journey. For your own comfort you will be required to take warm, comfortable shoes, a windproof fleece, a warm hat or gloves and sunglasses for the journey and for when you arrive into Rothera.
  - A packed lunch will be provided for the southbound flight.
  - You may provide your own snacks to eat during the journey if you wish (no fresh fruit/vegetables).
  - Tea/coffee is available on the aircraft; you are strongly advised to carry extra water with you to avoid problems with dehydration during the flight.
  - Toilet facilities on the Dash 7 are basic; make sure you go before boarding!

**b. By Ship:**

If you are travelling to Antarctica on a ship, transport to the vessel will be arranged by agents in country.

## **7. Travelling home from Antarctica:**

- a. Travel from your Antarctic station will normally be by BAS ship or Dash-7 to FI or White Desert flight to Cape Town. BAS will arrange your northbound flight to the UK.
- b. Approximately 1 week before the start of your return journey you will receive travel details from the Station Leader.
- c. It is possible that you will return north by a different route to that of your southbound journey in which case a more restrictive baggage allowance may apply. Please note that BAS will not cover any excess baggage costs to account for this difference, but you may have the option to consign cargo to the ship for later return to UK.
- d. On return from Antarctica, you are responsible for clearing your personal baggage through Customs and will be liable for any duties levied. BAS will not pay any duty on your behalf.
- e. BAS will organise transport from the airport of arrival in UK to BAS Cambridge. Anyone returning to UK from Antarctica may use this transport.
- f. If you do not wish to use the transport to Cambridge you may make your own arrangements and, if appropriate, retrospectively reclaim reasonable travel expenses incurred.

## **8. Making your own way home**

- a. Please see own way home Q&A and policy document.

## **9. Important Things to Remember about your travel:**

Before travelling, you **MUST** ensure that:

- Your passport will have more than 6 months' validity left at the time you are due to return from Antarctica.
- You have any visas required for countries that you will visit.
- You have sufficient money with which to purchase meals during airport stopovers (if appropriate, reasonable costs for meals taken at airport stopovers can be reclaimed retrospectively).
- Credit/debit cards will be in-date for the period for which you will be away.
- Your baggage is within the weight/size limits for every leg of the journey.
- All baggage, including hand luggage, is clearly labelled. This information is vital in tracing it if anything goes missing in transit.
- Friends and relations know your e-mail address and know how to contact you in an emergency. HR will pass onto all BAS staff a Next of Kin (NOK) handout before your trip south. All external participants will receive this document from the Polar Operations Support Team.
- Any COVID related requirements have been met – entry paperwork etc.
- Carry vaccination proof with you.

## Contact Details:

For further information or if you have any queries about your travel, please contact the Operations Support Travel Team:

**Megan White** – [megth@bas.ac.uk](mailto:megth@bas.ac.uk)

**Tel. (within business hours): 01223 221 458**

**Travel on-Call (emergency out of hours): +44 7740 537782**

**August 2023**