



Introduction

BAS works in accordance with the Environmental Protocol, the UK Antarctic Act and equivalent Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands legislation, setting environmental policy and working with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to lead on Antarctic environmental affairs. The Protocol requires all activities to be planned and conducted to limit adverse environmental impacts. BAS is committed to environmental stewardship of the Polar Regions.

Environmental Strategy objectives

- To lead on Antarctic environmental affairs by shaping Antarctic environmental policy
- To continually improve our environmental performance
- To conserve biodiversity, science, and heritage values
- To exceed compliance and drive best practice



Before departure

- Attend the Pre-Deployment Environmental Briefing
- Ensure any cargo you are consigning for shipment is biosecure. Biosecurity kitbags are held by each BAS science group and there are three biosecurity stations across BAS Cambridge. Supply Chain Logistics reserves the right to reject any cargo put forward for consignment that is not biosecure
- Ensure your clothes, footwear and other personal belongings are free of soil, seeds and plant fragments before leaving for Antarctica and South Georgia. Clothing, equipment and luggage may be inspected upon arrival on station
- Take only environmentally benign toiletries – no microplastics in scrubs or toothpastes, avoid harsh chemicals
- Remove as much packaging as possible prior to departure e.g. cardboard on toiletries. Where practicable, use reusable batteries
- Do not bring non-essential energy-using equipment to stations

Do not pack any prohibited and restricted items (including but not limited to)

- PCBs (Polychlorinated Biphenyls)
- Polystyrene chips
- Elemental mercury
- Any living plant, animal, or micro-organism
- Non-sterile soil or compost

- Non-native species/seeds/bulbs/cuttings/plants
- Untreated wood where bark remains attached
- Perishable foods

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and permits

Activities are only conducted in Antarctica and South Georgia after an EIA has been undertaken to assess the possible environmental impacts. Some activities may also require a permit before they are allowed to proceed. Project/science leads must ensure all members of their team are aware of the agreed mitigations in the EIA and conditions of any permits.

On station/ship/aircraft

- Follow the requirements of any EIA or conditions of any permit for your projects
- Do not flush anything (other than pee, poo and small amounts of loo roll) down the toilets
- Minimise the waste you produce and ensure waste is segregated and disposed of properly
- Minimise resource use where possible including energy, water and consumables
- Do not litter, including tea bags, cigarette ends or food scraps either on land or overboard
- Eradicate and report any non-native species found on a BAS station, ship or aircraft such as rats or flies
- Use the bootwash facilities provided on stations and ships



In the field

- Follow the requirements of the EIA or conditions of any permit for your projects
- If you are permitted to enter a protected area, carry the permit and management plan with you, and pay particular attention to the conditions of the permit
- Do not remove, destroy or damage Historic Sites or Monuments or the artefacts within or around them
- Do not build cairns
- Do not pollute lakes or water courses (this includes urinating!)
- Do not paint or engrave names or graffiti on rocks, buildings or other structures
- Secure your equipment, stores and wastes to prevent damage/loss to the environment from high winds
- Biosecure equipment and clothing when travelling between intra-regional areas or between different colonies of wildlife to prevent transfer of non-native species and disease
- Manage fuels and hazardous chemicals to prevent leaks or spills, ensure containers are in good condition and free from rust. Avoid refuelling in strong winds, utilise drip trays or plant nappies and ensure spill absorbents are close to hand

- Remove everything you take into the field unless otherwise authorised to do so
- Open burning or dumping of waste is prohibited. All waste (except sewage/food waste) is removed from BAS stations

Minimise disturbance to wildlife and vegetation

- Do not feed, handle or disturb birds or seals, or approach too closely for photographs (stay at least 5m from wildlife). Walk slowly around them and remain quiet
- Do not use vehicles, boats, or aircraft in any way that will disturb wildlife
- Do not collect samples of plants, eggs, bones, rocks, meteorites, or fossils. No 'recreational' sampling
- When walking, use established routes where possible
- Do not walk or drive over extensive areas of moss or lichen
- Do not bring non-native animals, plants or seeds to Antarctica and South Georgia
- Prevent light pollution – switch off external lights and close blinds

Incident reporting

- Report all environmental incidents ASAP (and within 24 hours) either to station/ship management or on Maximo/AINME
- Example incidents include but are not limited to: finding of non-native species, oil/chemical spills, bird strikes, deviation from EIA, animal incidents or losses of equipment

Additional resources

- [Guide to Going South](#)
- [Waste Management Handbook](#)
- [BAS Biosecurity Regulations](#)
- [AINME/Maximo](#) – what to report
- [Antarctic wildlife](#) – basic information you need to know
- [Environment Office Digital Workspace](#) pages

For more information please contact the BAS Environment Office at environment@bas.ac.uk

