

Regulations relating to camping activities in Svalbard

Laid down by the Governor of Svalbard on 27 June 2002 pursuant to section 76 of the Act of 15 June 2001 No. 79 relating to the protection of the environment in Svalbard (the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act).

Chapter I. Introductory provisions

§ 1. (purpose)

The purpose of these regulations is to regulate camping activities so that they do not damage the virtually untouched environment in Svalbard with respect to continuous areas of wilderness, landscape elements, flora, fauna and cultural heritage: this includes

- providing for the safety measures needed with respect to polar bears, and
- maintaining opportunities for the general public to experience the wilderness and taking into account the interests of the local community.

§ 2. (scope)

These regulations apply to the entire land area of Svalbard and its waters out to the territorial limit.

Nevertheless, the regulations do not apply to areas that have been specially set aside for camping activities pursuant to a land-use plan.

These regulations apply to any person involved in planning or carrying out camping activities in such areas as are mentioned in the first paragraph. In the case of camping activities organized by a tour operator pursuant to the Regulations of 18 October 1991 No. 671 relating to tourism and other travel activities in Svalbard, the tour operator is responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of these regulations.

Chapter II. Permits and notification requirements

§ 3. (permits)

Any person that is planning camping activities outside land-use planning areas, or within land-use planning areas where there is no approved land-use plan, shall hold a permit pursuant to section 57 of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act if such camping activities involve the provision of overnight accommodation for the general public on a permanent basis.

Applications for such permits shall contain the information required pursuant to section 4 of these regulations. The provisions of section 59 of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act apply correspondingly.

Applications will be processed and decisions taken pursuant to the provisions of Chapter VII of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act.

§ 4. (Notification requirements)

Any person that plans camping activities lasting for one week or more in the same locality shall notify the Governor's office of this. The notification is to be sent to the Governor's office at the latest three weeks before the camping activities are to begin.

The notification shall include information on:

- which locality the applicant plans to use,
- the date and duration of the stay,
- the number of people who are to stay in the camp,
- the type of accommodation that will be provided and its siting in relation to topographical features.

The notification shall also include an account of plans for safety measures with respect to polar bears, storage of food, waste management and sanitation.

No notification is necessary for camping activities that require a permit pursuant to section 3.

The Governor may in special cases grant exemptions from the provisions of section 4, and may lay down other provisions relating to time limits and the content of the notification.

§ 5. *(changes or prohibition of camping activities)*

The Governor may require notified plans for camping activities to be changed, and may lay down specific requirements for equipment and the siting and organization of a camp, if he finds that the plans may:

- entail a risk of damage, wear or other disturbance to protected elements of the cultural heritage, fauna, flora or the natural environment otherwise,
- represent a safety risk with respect to polar bears,
- conflict with the goal of maintaining the wilderness character of Svalbard,
- entail damage or nuisance for other lawful activities,
- conflict with the goal of maintaining opportunities for the general public to experience the wilderness.

Requirements to make changes in notified plans may also apply to the continuation of camping activities that are already in progress, if risks such as are mentioned in the previous paragraph arise or there is reason to fear such risks.

The Governor may in special cases prohibit planned camping activities or the continuation of camping activities that are already in progress.

Chapter III. Siting camps and clearing up after use

§ 6. *(siting camps)*

Camping activities shall be organized so that damage or wear to the vegetation is avoided as far as possible. Tents and other equipment shall whenever possible be placed on ground that is free of vegetation.

§ 7. *(distance from leisure cabins, inhabited buildings and elements of the cultural heritage)*

Camping activities are prohibited at a distance of less than 100 m from leisure cabins and inhabited buildings without the permission of the owner or the person who on behalf of the owner has the use of a leisure cabin or a building.

Within the security zone around protected elements of the cultural heritage, it is prohibited to erect tents, camp, light fires or undertake similar activities. The security zone is the area

extending for 100 metres in all directions from the visible or known perimeter of protected structures and sites, unless the Governor has prescribed that it shall be delimited differently.

§ 8. *(clearing up)*

Stones, stakes and other objects that have been used to fasten tent canvas or guy ropes, or to form shelters, seats or fireplaces, and any other structures erected in connection with camping activities, shall be cleared away and replaced where they were found.

All equipment and waste shall be removed when camping activities come to an end. Waste must be removed and delivered to approved reception facilities.

§ 9. *(camp fires)*

No fires shall be lit on ground that is covered by vegetation or directly on ground covered by soil. Camp fires shall be cleared up after use and any remains of fires shall be removed as far as possible.

Chapter IV. Safety measures in respect of polar bears

§ 10. *(information)*

Any person that engages in camping activities in Svalbard has a duty to familiarize himself with information and recommendations on the safety precautions necessary to avoid the risk of polar bear attacks and to ward off an attack without injuring or killing the animal.

§ 11. *(measures to avoid and if necessary ward off attacks by polar bears)*

It is prohibited to lure, pursue or otherwise seek out polar bears in such a way as to disturb them or expose either bears or humans to danger.

Necessary measures shall be taken to avoid the danger of polar bear attacks and to ward off an attack without injuring or killing the animal.

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

In the case of camping activities that require a permit pursuant to section 3 or are subject to the duty of notification pursuant to section 4, the area of the camp shall be safeguarded by means of at least one recognized method of warning of the presence of polar bears, for example trip-wires with flares, guard dogs or a polar bear watch routine.

Chapter V. Penal measures and entry into force

§ 12. *(Penal measures)*

Any person that wilfully or negligently contravenes the provisions of these regulations or prohibitions or orders issued pursuant thereto is liable to fines or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year. If substantial environmental damage or a risk of such damage has 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.

§ 13. *(entry into force)*

These regulations enter into force on 1 July 2002.