



## Guidelines for Research Activities in Nunavut during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Updated: August 31, 2021

This guidance document is intended for researchers who plan to undertake research activities in Nunavut during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidelines apply primarily to research activities licensable under Nunavut's *Scientists Act*, and to researchers who wish to utilize Nunavut Arctic College (NAC)'s research facilities during the pandemic. We will update this document regularly as the public health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our territory continue to evolve. Please be advised, the COVID-19 situation in Nunavut is dynamic and variable; and as such the current version of these guidelines may not reflect all recent public health orders and restrictions. If you are planning to undertake research in Nunavut you are responsible for ensuring that you have the most current, accurate, information on public health measures that relate to your specific research activities. For more information about these guidelines please contact the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI): [jamal.shirley@arcticcollege.ca](mailto:jamal.shirley@arcticcollege.ca).

### NRI's Scientific Research Licensing Services

Please note that NRI is currently receiving a higher-than-normal volume of research applications and license renewal requests as the restrictions on travel to Nunavut are loosened. As a result, NRI may require additional time to review and process license applications and to complete our community consultations. Please ensure that your license applications and renewal requests are submitted to NRI as early as possible (preferably at least 90 days prior to your desired start date for research). We understand that COVID-19 has forced many researchers to defer, postpone, modify, and even cancel your planned research activities in Nunavut in 2021. **If you have received or applied for a 2021 scientific research license from NRI, please notify us immediately should you need to alter, defer, or cancel research activities.** A license amendment may be required for certain changes to a project (e.g. significant changes to the timing, duration, methods, and location of research activities, or to the names of research team members).

Before amending a research license, NRI might need to conduct further community consultation and/or secure additional regulatory approvals which will require additional processing time. We thank you for your patience and understanding.

## **Travel to Nunavut to Undertake Research**

It is now possible to travel to any community in Nunavut to conduct research activities; however, all travel requests must first be approved by Nunavut's Chief Public Health Officer. Unvaccinated people wishing to travel to Nunavut **must complete a minimum fourteen-day isolation period at a place designated by the Chief Public Health Officer**. All unvaccinated travellers requesting permission to enter an isolation hub must complete the [Isolation Reservation Request form](#) and submit it to [nuisolationreservations@nunavutcare.ca](mailto:nuisolationreservations@nunavutcare.ca).

NRI strongly recommends that any researchers planning to visit Nunavut should be fully vaccinated to reduce the risks associated with introducing COVID-19 in-territory or contributing to any transmission within the territory.

If you are fully vaccinated, you may choose to be exempted from the isolation requirement under the current Nunavut Travel Restriction Order. You are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after the final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. All vaccinated travellers intending to travel to Nunavut must complete a [Vaccinated Travellers Declaration form](#) and submit it to [vaccineexemptions@gov.nu.ca](mailto:vaccineexemptions@gov.nu.ca) in order to receive a letter of authorization permitting travel. The letter must be presented to the air carrier upon check-in for verification. Travellers must sign a legally-binding declaration of vaccination stating they are fully vaccinated with a Health Canada approved vaccine. Declarations will be audited on a regular basis to verify compliance and false declarations may result in fines.

Please allow 72 hours for a response verifying receipt of your email. There is a high volume of vaccine exemption requests and letters will be prioritized based on travel date. Please wait to submit your request until one month prior to your date of departure, otherwise it will not be considered.

NOTE: In the event a positive COVID-19 case occurs while you are in a Nunavut community, travel to and from the affected community may become restricted, and in-community isolation requirements may come into force. Plan your research field activities to account for possibly having to stay longer than anticipated (e.g. budget time and money for extended accommodations).

Prior to finalizing any travel plans to a Nunavut community, please ensure that the appropriate local authorities (e.g. the Mayor or senior administrative officer) and any local research collaborators or partners are fully aware and supportive of your planned visit.

## **Marine (Ship-Based) Research**

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 by sea, Transport Canada has extended an Interim Order restricting the ability of pleasure craft to operate in Canadian Arctic waters. Vessel operators wishing to conduct ship-based research in Nunavut should contact Transport Canada's Marine Safety and Security Division to determine whether this restriction applies, and if so, to request an exemption from the Order. Research vessel operators must also obtain permission from Nunavut's CPHO if they plan to make landfall in any Nunavut community. Isolation requirements may be required for unvaccinated ship personnel who plan to enter a Nunavut community.

## **Land-Based Research**

If you plan to travel to Nunavut to conduct field activities at remote research locations, you must also obtain authorization from Nunavut's CPHO. If you need to transit through a Nunavut community even briefly while travelling to a remote field location you need to obtain an isolation exemption approval from the CPHO (if you are vaccinated) or complete the 14-day isolation period at an approved isolation hub prior to travelling to Nunavut (if you are unvaccinated). If you are vaccinated, contact [vaccineexemptions@gov.nu.ca](mailto:vaccineexemptions@gov.nu.ca). If you are unvaccinated, contact [nuisolationreservations@nunavutcare.ca](mailto:nuisolationreservations@nunavutcare.ca).

Researchers requesting to enter remote or non-populated areas of Nunavut via private transportation and without coming into contact with Nunavut residents may be permitted to enter Nunavut without an isolation exemption and without completing an isolation stay. All requests must be submitted to the CPHO at [cphotravelrequests@gov.nu.ca](mailto:cphotravelrequests@gov.nu.ca) with the following information:

- Names of all travellers requesting the exemption;
- Requested dates of travel;
- Brief summary of reasons for travel;
- Proof of consent of activities by the landowner; and
- A contingency plan detailing how the applicant will avoid contact with hamlets or populated areas in the event of a health or safety emergency.

## **Gatherings for Community-Based Research**

Currently, there are no restrictions on outdoor gatherings. Indoor gatherings in dwellings are restricted to a household plus 15 people. Individuals must maintain social distancing of two metres wherever it is safe and practical to do so.

All other indoor gatherings in conference facilities, community halls, places of worship or rental meeting spaces are restricted to 100 people or 75% capacity of the meeting place, whichever is less.

Before travelling to a community, please check <https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/nunavuts-path> to see the most up-to-date public health orders.

If a COVID-19 infection occurs in the community while you are visiting, please suspend any research activities immediately.

NOTE: Multi-year license holders who wish to travel to a Nunavut community to continue research activities that were approved prior to the pandemic must obtain confirmation from local authorities that the community is still supportive of the research proceeding.

Non-compliance with applicable COVID -19 related public health measures may result in a research license being revoked or suspended.

## **Access to Nunavut Arctic College Research Facilities**

NAC's research facilities (including laboratories and bunkhouses) in Arviat, Iqaluit, Igloolik, Rankin Inlet, and Cambridge Bay are open to the public. These facilities may be utilized by: NAC staff, faculty, and students; research personnel who hold a valid scientific Nunavut research license; and community research affiliates. You may request permission to use the facilities by contacting NAC's manager of research support services, Rick Armstrong, at [rick.armstrong@arcticcollege.ca](mailto:rick.armstrong@arcticcollege.ca). Each request must include the following information:

- proof of CPHO approval for travel to Nunavut (for non-Nunavut residents)
- Description of the research activity to be undertaken and why access to NAC facilities is needed;
- Proof that the user(s) possesses the experience, training, and knowledge to safely undertake the research activity proposed; and
- Description of the health and safety measures to be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (PPE, cleaning and disinfection, social distancing).

NOTE: Users are responsible for bringing all necessary personal protective equipment, including appropriate gloves, face masks, sanitizer, lab coats, and eye protection, to safely undertake research activities in NAC facilities. NAC is not able to provide any PPE to visiting users. Users will also need to comply with any additional health and safety measures required for specific research activities. Users who require research support services from the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI) must submit an [NRI logistics support request form](#).

## **Additional COVID-19 Information and Resources**

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Nunavut, all visiting researchers should:

- Stay home if you feel unwell;
- Maintain physical distancing from others;
- Wash or sanitize your hands often;
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve;
- Avoid touching your face;
- Wear effective masks; and
- Throw used tissue in the trash right away.

Researchers are strongly encouraged to consult the websites below for more information on the measures being taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Nunavut:

<https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/chief-public-health-officer-orders>

<https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/nunavuts-path>