



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

Updated: October 20, 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 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 across the Territory; and as such the current version of these guidelines may not reflect the most recent public health orders. If you are planning to undertake research in Nunavut you are responsible for ensuring that you understand the most current, accurate public health measures that relate to your specific research activities. For more information about these guidelines, or to report errors or omissions, please contact the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI): 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 have loosened. As a result, NRI may require additional time to review and process license applications and to complete our community consultations. Please submit your license applications and renewal requests 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 your 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 may need to conduct additional community consultation and/or secure additional regulatory approvals which will require extra processing time. We thank you for your patience and understanding.

Travel to Nunavut to Undertake Research

It is possible to travel to 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.

NRI strongly recommends that any researchers planning to visit Nunavut 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 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 be 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. If you are unvaccinated, contact 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 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

The restrictions on indoor and outdoor gatherings in Nunavut vary between communities and are continuously updated in response to new COVID-19 infection incidents, recoveries, and other factors. Masks are mandatory across the territory, and individuals must maintain a distance of 2m from others in public other than members of their immediate household.

Before travelling to Nunavut research, please frequently check the Nunavut Government's COVID-19 information online at <https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/nunavuts-path> for the most up-to-date public health measures for the community you intend to visit.

Travel to a community experiencing active COVID-19 infections is strongly discouraged. If a COVID-19 infection occurs in a community after you've arrived to conduct research, please suspend your research activities immediately and follow all public health measures stipulated by the CPHO.

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 research license; and community research partners. You may request permission to use the facilities by contacting NAC's manager of research support services, Rick Armstrong, at 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 any research activity proposed; and
- Description of the health and safety measures to be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (personal protective equipment, 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 resources 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 logistics 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>