

Introduction

The United States Antarctic Program (USAP) supports researchers working in Antarctica, whether in the Continental region (McMurdo Station, South Pole Station, and inland field camps), the Peninsular region (Palmer Station and island field camps), or on USAP research vessels (*R/V Nathaniel B. Palmer* and *R/V Laurence M. Gould*). Though each of these different areas poses unique environmental challenges, the USAP abides by safety requirements and waste handling and environmental protection policies that are standard throughout the program. In addition, much of the equipment that the USAP issues to researchers is the same at all locations.

This edition of the Field Manual for the USAP has been revised to include both common and area-specific information. When a chapter contains information specific to both regions, the chapter will begin with common information, followed by McMurdo-area information and then Palmer-area information.

If you are new to the program, this manual will help prepare you for the time you will spend in Antarctica. Read it thoroughly before packing and leaving, as you will find helpful and important information regarding planning and preparation, clothing, extra equipment you may wish to take, and what to expect in the field.

(NOTE: If you are deploying to remote locations in Antarctica, you should have a strong background in cold weather survival or, at the very least, you should

employ a safety-survival guide with previous Antarctic experience. A remote field camp in Antarctica is not the place to learn cold weather skills.)

Finally, this is intended to be a reference manual and it should be taken into the field with you. Many chapters contain information on the equipment you will be issued, some of which is very specific to polar work. Also, detailed information on trouble-shooting radios, Zodiacs, and snowmobiles is included. Systems that are unique to working in polar environments, such as roped travel with Nansen sleds or crevassed area travel with snowmobiles, are discussed, and valuable advice is provided on rescue techniques.

Use of this manual, and adherence to the guidelines set forth within it, will enhance both your safety and productivity while working in Antarctica.

RPSC Field Support Staff welcomes any comments or feedback on this manual.