



# The National Science Foundation Office of Polar Programs United States Antarctic Program

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USAP Code of Conduct Policy

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## Introduction

Without interruption since 1956, American scientists have been studying the Antarctic and its interactions with the rest of the planet. These scientists and supporting personnel make up the United States Antarctic Program (USAP), which carries forward the Nation's goals of supporting the Antarctic Treaty, fostering cooperative research with other nations, and protecting the Antarctic environment. By Presidential Memorandum (No. 6646, 1982), the National Science Foundation (NSF) was affirmed as the single point manager for funding and managing U.S. activities in Antarctica.

The USAP remains the largest National Antarctic Program and the world premier research it undertakes on the continent and in the surrounding oceans sustains a robust United States Antarctic presence. The preeminence of the USAP is predicated on the dedication and hard work of USAP science and logistics participants. Maintaining and carrying forward that tradition is a very high priority for NSF. The USAP has been highly visible and is growing evermore so, often with activities and events making the domestic U.S. and global news cycle on a regular basis. To preserve the health of and support for the USAP extremely high standards of professionalism are of utmost importance.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to restate important principles and expectations for professional conduct and acceptable behavior by all USAP participants. While non-exhaustive, this Code is a shared statement of commitment by all USAP participants to uphold the ethical, professional, and legal standards required to fulfill these principles and objectives.

## Code of Conduct

The National Science Foundation, in its role as manager of the USAP, seeks to ensure that the following objectives and guiding principles are complied with and promoted by all USAP participants:

- The foremost objective of your presence in Antarctica is to contribute to accomplishing the mission of the U.S. Government while fully adhering to all applicable international and national legal and policy requirements including Antarctic Treaty System requirements.
- Participants will all be treated with dignity and respect.

- Participants will work cooperatively to share experiences, lessons learned and to resolve differences.
- Participants will contribute effectively by exercising the highest level of professional and ethical behavior.
- It is everyone's responsibility to provide a safe workplace and to protect the Antarctic environment.

## Scope

This Code applies to all participants in the USAP, including government civilian personnel, official visitors, researchers, support contractors, military personnel, and foreign nationals working at or visiting a USAP station, ship, field camp, or other facility. It equally applies to all conduct occurring in foreign countries and the logistics gateway cities, Punta Arenas, Chile, and Christchurch, New Zealand, when participants are engaging in travel related to their USAP deployment. This Code also applies to personnel working in Antarctica under the sponsorship of the USAP at other National Antarctic Program facilities, field locations, and research vessels.

This Code sets minimum expectations for personal and professional behavior. More stringent requirements imposed by third parties (e.g., employing organizations, vessel or station management) on the participants remain fully in effect.

While not exhaustive, the following acts are examples of conduct that violate the fundamental principles and objectives outlined in this Code:

- Conduct that is offensive, indecent, or obscene.
- Disorderly conduct, including, but not limited to, behavior that interferes with USAP operations or actions that endanger one's self, others in the USAP community, or Antarctic operations.
- Failure to comply with the directions of authorized USAP officials in the performance of their duties.
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person, including but not limited to harassment, stalking, bullying or hazing of any kind whether the behavior is carried out verbally, physically, electronically, or in written form.
- Violation of the USAP Alcohol Policy.
- Violation of the USAP Housing Policy.
- Unauthorized possession or use of controlled substances, use of illegal drugs, or possession of drug paraphernalia. Being under the influence of illegal drugs or unauthorized controlled substances.
- Violation of safety procedures or engaging in activity that compromises the safety of others living and working in Antarctica.
- Dishonest conduct including, but not limited to, false accusations or warnings, forgery, alteration, or misuse of any USAP document, record, or identification; or giving information known to be false or misleading to a USAP official.
- Violation of the Information Technology Enterprise Rules of Behavior.
- Unauthorized entry, use, or occupancy of USAP facilities.
- Unauthorized taking, possession, modification, destruction, or use of government property (clothing, furniture, etc.) or the property of others.

- Solicitation of gifts. In general, Federal ethics laws prohibit the solicitation of gifts (for example, any gratuity, favor, food or entertainment). *See* 5 C.F.R. 2635.202(c)(2). USAP participants may not solicit gifts.
- Endorsements, expressed or implied, of products, services, or enterprises. Such endorsements are prohibited. *See* 5 C.F.R. § 2635.702. USAP and/or NSF facilities, property, logos, or insignias may not be used for endorsement purposes.

Violations of this Code of Conduct may be shared with current and future USAP or NSF Arctic program support contractors, federal agency partners, or grantee institutions. Further, violations of this Code of Conduct, and the other USAP Policies referenced herein, may result in adverse actions or consequences to the individual including, but not limited to, removal from Antarctica (i.e., from USAP stations, field camps, aircraft, or vessels), a ban from NSF-sponsored deployment to the Antarctic or Arctic, loss of grant, and referral to law enforcement authorities for criminal prosecution, as appropriate.

## **Policy Review**

This policy is valid until rescinded. It will be reviewed at an interval of not more than 5 years.