

DRAFT

Principles for Conducting Research in the Arctic (2018)

U.S. Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC)ⁱ

INTRODUCTION

The Arctic environment is home to four million people including diverse Indigenous communities. The Arctic is subject to numerous international treaties, national, state, and local regulations designed to preserve Arctic ecosystems essential to the ways of life of its many residents. The Principles for Conducting Research in the Arctic (hereafter the Principles)ⁱⁱ are guidelines to conduct responsible and ethical research, and to encourage respect for all people and the environment. The Principles align with U.S. Arctic policyⁱⁱⁱ and are applicable across the scale and disciplinary breadth of research in a rapidly changing Arctic.

Researchers are encouraged to adopt these Principles across all stages of research:

- Be **Accountable**
- Establish Effective Two-way **Communication**
- **Respect** Local Culture and Knowledge
- Build and Sustain **Relationships**
- Pursue Responsible **Environmental Stewardship**^{iv}

The audience for the Principles includes academic, federal, state, local, and tribal researchers and all other entities conducting research in the Arctic. While the primary audience for the Principles is the broad Arctic research community, the Principles are also relevant to other organizations working in the Arctic (e.g., the military, non-governmental organizations, or the private sector). For researchers who must adhere to human subjects research requirements^v, these Principles provide additional guidance for research done in the Arctic context.

THE PRINCIPLES

1. Be Accountable

1.1 Promote a work environment that is safe and harassment-free for all people.

Principal investigators and co-investigators are responsible for all decisions and actions made on their project(s), including those of subordinates.

1.2 Act with integrity and honor verbal and written commitments. Integrity is one foundation on which researchers can build strong relationships with Arctic residents. Building trust among researchers, collaborators, and partners can have a positive impact on communities and improve the likelihood of the success of current and future projects. For example, appropriate acknowledgment(s), and/or compensation

given to all knowledge holders who contribute to research efforts could facilitate future collaborations.

- 1.3 Maintain data confidentiality in accordance with existing standards and requirements when handling personal and/or culturally sensitive information and data or personally identifiable information.

2. Establish Effective Two-way Communication

- 2.1 Researchers and stakeholders should establish effective two-way communication to discuss expectations, objectives, and potential outcomes of the research at all stages of the project including planning, data collection, analysis and conclusions. Researchers should identify all sponsors and collaborators and sources of financial support and are encouraged to seek guidance from the community about the most effective and preferred methods of communication and any schedule limitations.
- 2.2 Coordinate with communities and local governments to avoid disruptive activities. For example, avoid disturbing subsistence and other traditional activities by planning field work and coordinating research vessel tracks, aircraft flight paths, and other field activities with potentially impacted Arctic residents and local governments. Health researchers should coordinate with the local tribal health organization to avoid conflicts that might disrupt delivery of necessary health services to the communities engaged in research.
- 2.3 Identify potentially sensitive data and observations and discuss steps that could be taken to reduce the likelihood of any harm to the community. Researchers are encouraged to share research results with communities prior to broader release, especially in cases where the project's results could be of concern.

3. Respect Local Culture and Knowledge

- 3.1 Respect is enhanced by mutual understanding. Researchers are encouraged to learn about the history of the region of their studies, its cultures, languages, and organizational structure.
- 3.2 Be open to new viewpoints and be aware of and acknowledge differences and biases when discussing analysis and interpretation of data and observations with residents.
- 3.3 Consider the well-being of Arctic residents when developing research goals, and work closely with community leaders or representatives to resolve conflicts if they arise.
- 3.4 Respect hunting, fishing, and gathering practices, and adhere to local rules and regulations and locally-adopted research guidelines.

4. Build and Sustain Relationships

- 4.1 Long term research relationships are built on sincere and sustained engagement. As research concepts develop, researchers and interested communities should determine their level of collaboration. Not all research will be of direct interest to Arctic residents, nor may all communities have the capacity to participate. These factors should not be assumed prior to discussions with tribal and community leaders. When possible, include local research priorities in projects.
- 4.2 Consider developing a community engagement plan, with community involvement, and building relationships with community representatives. For projects involving Arctic residents as research collaborators or study subjects, pre-determining who collects, owns, manages, evaluates, and disseminates the data will allow projects to proceed more smoothly.
- 4.3 Researchers and Arctic residents may perceive benefits and risks differently, thus potential outcomes, benefits, and risks of a research project for the community and the environment should be discussed. Where possible, researchers are encouraged to engage with residents to aid in research design, planning, data collection, storage, analysis, interpretation, and reporting.

5. Pursue Responsible Environmental Stewardship

- 5.1 Scientific research, and Indigenous and local knowledge contribute to stewardship of the Arctic environment. Researchers should seek to minimize the impact of their research on the environment and avoid disturbing cultural resources.
- 5.2 Avoid disturbing wildlife that is not the subject of the research. Researchers need to be aware of local regulations and coordinate with applicable wildlife experts to avoid causing unnecessary stress on individuals, herds, or populations of animals that may respond to human presence.
- 5.3 Minimize noise, vegetation trampling, and other environmental impacts by following practices such as low-impact camping, following all waste handling and removal regulations, and reducing energy consumption.

ⁱ The Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 (ARPA), Public Law 98-373, July 31, 1984, as amended by Public Law 101-609, November 16, 1990, provides for a comprehensive national policy dealing with national research needs and objectives in the Arctic. The ARPA establishes an Arctic Research Commission (ARC) and an Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) to help implement the Act. Since its inception, IARPC activities have been coordinated by the National Science Foundation (NSF), with the Director of the NSF as chair. A Presidential Memorandum issued on July 22, 2010, made the NSTC responsible for IARPC, with the Director of the NSF remaining as chair of the committee.

ⁱⁱ The original *Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic*, (available at: <https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/arctic/conduct.jsp>) were prepared by the Interagency Social Science Task Force at the direction of the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC), and were revised in 2018 to reflect current research disciplines and approaches, and renamed *Principles for Conducting Research in the Arctic*. The Principles will be reviewed by IARPC every five years for inclusion in the Arctic Research Plan.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 (ARPA), Public Law 98-373, July 31, 1984, as amended by Public Law 101-609, November 16, 1990; National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD 66, Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD 25: Arctic Region Policy, The White House, Washington DC, 2009; National Strategy for the Arctic Region, The White House, Washington DC, 2013

^{iv} The U.S. National Strategy for the Arctic Region (2013) describes “responsible stewardship of the Arctic environment” as “active conservation of resources, balanced management, and the application of scientific and traditional knowledge of physical and living environments.”

^v The US Federal Policy for protection of persons involved in Human Subjects Research is codified in the Department of Health and Human Services regulations [45 CFR part 46](#). This has been adopted in the regulations of 15 Federal departments and agencies that conduct or support human subjects research. Reference: <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/common-rule/index.html>