

RULES AND REGULATIONS REGARDING THE USE OF FIREARMS AT THE POLISH POLAR STATION HORNSUND IN SPITSBERGEN

§ 1

This document lays out rules and regulations on using, allowing the use of, keeping record of and storing firearms and ammunition at the Polish Polar Station Hornsund in Spitsbergen (hereinafter referred to as “the Station”).

§ 2

1. According to a directive issued the Governor of Svalbard, due to the potential polar bear danger, any person travelling outside settlement areas shall be equipped with appropriate means of personal protection, including firearms, which might be used to frighten off polar bears.
2. For the purposes specified in Point 1, the Station is equipped with the following types of firearms:
 - 1) Rifles;
 - 2) Flare guns;
 - 3) Ammunition for the above-mentioned firearms.

§ 3

1. The person responsible for managing firearms listed in § 2 is an expedition member designated to serve the function of the Firearms Keeper. The function is usually served by the Expedition Leader.
2. Firearms available at the Station must be officially handed over by the current Firearms Keeper to his/her successor during the process by which the Station is handed over to the following Expedition.

§ 4

1. Firearms available at the Station are stored in the firearms storeroom.
2. The Firearms Keeper keeps a record of firearms by completing the following documents:
 - 1) record cards for particular firearms and types of ammunition available at the Station;
 - 2) combined handover cards for firearms and ammunition.
3. Templates of firearms record cards and firearms and ammunition handover cards constitute an appendix to this document.
4. Firearms record cards are kept up to date by the expedition member serving the function of the Firearms Keeper during a given Expedition.
5. Firearms and ammunition handover cards are kept up to date by the Firearms Keeper throughout the duration of a given Expedition.
6. Once the Expedition has finished, the Firearms Keeper must hand over the copies of all record cards and handover cards for firearms and ammunitions to the Expedition Leader.
7. Record cards and handover cards for firearms and ammunition must be numbered and stamped, on each page, with the stamp of the Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences (IG PAS).
8. The person authorized to enter information in record cards and handover cards for firearms and ammunition is the Firearms Keeper.
9. Information entered in record cards and handover cards for firearms and ammunition must not be rubbed out or otherwise erased. All changes must be made legibly, in red, and must include the date and the name of the person making the change. Each change must be signed by a person authorized to make such a change.
10. Record cards and handover cards for firearms and ammunition, and the information they include, must be kept out of reach of unauthorized persons and prevented from being accidentally or deliberately damaged or destroyed.

11. Record cards and handover cards for firearms and ammunition must be kept in the safe found in the firearms storeroom.
12. Record cards and handover cards for firearms and ammunition are kept at the Station for the period of 5 years, counted from when the last entry was made.

§ 5

1. Firearms available at the Station are handed over to individual users by the Firearms Keeper on the basis of applications for accommodation at the Station, submitted and approved by the Institute of Geophysics PAS prior to arrival at the Station. Application forms are available on the Station's website (<https://hornsund.igf.edu.pl/news2/>).
2. The means of personal protection are handed over by the Firearms Keeper only upon presentation on of:
 - a permit to rent firearms issued by the Governor of Svalbard,

or

 - a firearm permit for a given type of firearm, accepted by the Governor of Svalbard.
3. Documents mentioned in Point 2 (or scanned copies of these documents) must be sent to polar@igf.edu.pl in time for them to be verified, not later than 7 days prior to arrival at the Station.
4. Provisions of point 2 do not apply in circumstances when the firearms being handed over or lent out are flare guns.
5. Firearms are lent out only after it has been verified that the user knows how to handle them. Verification is carried out by the Firearms Keeper. The Institute of Geophysics reserves the right to refuse to give out a firearm should the Firearms Keeper decide that the person receiving it does not have the skills which would guarantee safe use of the firearm.

6. The amount of ammunition given out for personal protection must not exceed the full magazine capacity of a given type of firearm. For flare guns, the maximum number of cartridges is 5. More cartridges may be given out once the circumstances in which the previous cartridges were used have been clarified.
7. Except for circumstances in which a direct threat to life exist, firearms must not be handed over to other persons.
8. Should a firearm or ammunition be lost, the user must immediately report the loss to the Firearms Keeper.
9. Firearms must not be used to hunt any species of animal.
10. Firearms must not be used by anyone under the influence of alcohol or other psychoactive substances.

§ 6

1. Every user of firearms must know and observe the rules relating to the circumstances in which firearms may be used for personal protection in Svalbard.
2. Firearms may only be used in order to eliminate a direct threat to life or health, or to prevent substantial material losses.
3. Every use of a firearm must be immediately reported to the Expedition Leader. Should a person be shot as a result, it is also necessary to immediately notify Svalbard rescue services (emergency telephone number: 112 or +48 79 02 12 22).
4. If a polar bear is shot or if an attempt is made to shoot a polar bear, the Expedition Leader must immediately report the fact to the Governor of Svalbard.

§ 7

1. Every user of a firearm lent out at the Station is obliged to check its technical condition at least once a week and, additionally, after it has been used or exposed to moisture. The user is also responsible for appropriate firearm maintenance.
2. Firearm maintenance must be carried out at least once a month and, additionally, after the firearm has been used or exposed to moisture. During the process, the following elements must be cleaned:
 - the inside of the barrel;
 - receiver;
 - bolt;
 - magazine;
 - other metal elements of the firearm.
3. Tools and materials for firearm maintenance and cleaning are given out by the Firearms Keeper.
4. Firearms and cartridges which are technically faulty must be immediately returned to the Firearms Keeper and withdrawn from use.
5. Firearms must not be in any way altered and it is forbidden to exchange elements between firearms.
6. Damage resulting from inappropriate maintenance or handling of a firearm will lead to appropriate financial measures being taken against the user of the damaged firearm.

§ 8

1. Firearms which are not being used are stored in the locked firearms storeroom, the key to which is kept by the Firearms Keeper.
2. Firearms must be stored unloaded, with their magazines removed. All firearms must be clean and in good working order.

3. Ammunition must be stored in the security cabinet found in the firearms storeroom, in boxes or containers, in a way which makes it impossible to accidentally strike the primer.
4. Damaged, expired and unexploded ammunition must be clearly marked and stored in the security cabinet until it can be utilized by an authorized person.

§ 9

According to legal regulations applicable in Svalbard and as a result of the fact that no person is allowed to leave the premises of the Station unaccompanied, every group leaving the premises of the Station must carry at least two firearms and a flare gun.

§ 10

1. From the moment when the firearm is given out, the responsibility for the firearm lies with the user, who must strictly observe these fundamental rules:
 - 1) Firearms must be handled with utmost care. An unloaded firearm must be handled as if it was loaded.**
 - 2) The muzzle of a firearm must never be pointed at the user or any other person.**
 - 3) Firearms must be loaded and unloaded by the user**
 - 4) The loading and unloading must take place in the presence of another person. This person shall monitor and, if necessary, correct the activity of loading or unloading the firearms.**
 - 5) Firearms must be loaded/unloaded only in designated places.**
 - 6) Loaded firearms must not be brought into the residential area of the Station.**
 - 7) Firearms must be stored unloaded, with the magazines removed. Ammunition must be stored separately, away from sources of heat.**

§ 11

1. Before arriving at the Station, every person must familiarize himself/herself with this document as the rules and regulations it lays out must be strictly observed throughout the stay at the Station. Familiarity with the rules and regulations must be confirmed by signing an appropriate declaration and sending it to polar@igf.edu.pl not later than 7 days prior to one's arrival at the Station.
2. A failure to observe the rules and regulations laid out in this document by a person to whom a firearm has been given out during his/her stay at the Station may result in an immediate confiscation of the firearm and ammunition by the Firearms Keeper or in the person's being expelled from the Station at his/her own expense, regardless of the institution the person represents.