



PRINCIPLES FOR THE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH IN THE ARCTIC

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INTRODUCTION

All researchers working in the North have an ethical responsibility toward the people of the North, their cultures, and the environment. The following principles have been formulated to provide guidance for researchers in the physical, biological, behavioral, health, economic, political, and social sciences and in the humanities. These principles are to be observed when carrying out or sponsoring research in Arctic and northern regions or when applying the results of this research.

This statement addresses the need to promote mutual respect and communication between scientists and northern residents. Cooperation is needed at all stages of research planning and implementation in projects that directly affect northern people. Cooperation will contribute to a better understanding of the potential benefits of Arctic research for northern residents and will contribute to the development of northern science through traditional knowledge and experience.

These "Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic" were prepared by the Interagency Social Science Task Force in response to a recommendation by the Polar Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences and at the direction of the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee. This statement is not intended to replace other existing Federal, State, or professional guidelines, but rather to emphasize their relevance for the whole scientific community. Examples of similar guidelines used by professional organizations and agencies in the United States and in other countries are listed in the publications.

IMPLEMENTATION

All scientific investigations in the Arctic should be assessed in terms of potential human impact and interest. Social science research, particularly studies of human subjects, requires special consideration, as do studies of resources of economic, and social value to Native people. In all instances It is the responsibility of the principal investigator on each project to implement the following recommendations.

1. The researcher should inform appropriate community authorities of planned research on lands, waters, or territories used by or occupied by them. Research directly involving northern people should not proceed without their clear and informed consent. When informing the community and/or obtaining informed consent, the researchers should identify:
 - a. all sponsors and sources of financial support;
 - b. the person in charge and all investigators involved in the research, as well as any anticipated need for consultants, guides, or interpreters;
 - c. the purposes, goals, and time-frame of the research;

- d. data-gathering techniques (tape and video recordings, photographs, physiological measurements etc.) and the uses to which they will be put;
 - e. foreseeable positive and negative implications and impacts of the research
2. The duty of researchers to inform communities continues after informed consent has been obtained. Ongoing projects should be explained in terms understandable to the local community.
3. Researchers should consult with and, where applicable, include communities in project planning and implementation. Reasonable opportunities should be provided for the communities to express interests and to participate in the research.
4. Research results should be explained in non-technical terms and, where feasible, should be communicated by means of study materials that can be used by local teachers or in displays that can be shown at local community centers or museums.
5. Copies of research reports, data descriptions, and other relevant materials should be provided to the local community. Special efforts must be made to communicate results that are responsive to local concerns.
6. Subject to the requirements for anonymity, publications should always refer to the informed consent of participants and give credit to those contributing to the research project.
7. The researcher must respect local cultural traditions, languages, and values. The researcher should, where practicable, incorporate the following elements into the research design:
 - a. use of local and traditional knowledge and experience;
 - b. use of the languages of the local people;
 - c. translation of research results, particularly those of local concern, into the languages of the people affected by the research;
8. When possible, research projects should anticipate and provide meaningful experience and training for young people.
9. In cases where individuals or groups provide information of a confidential nature, their anonymity must be guaranteed in both the original use of data and in its deposition for future use.
10. Research on humans should only be undertaken in a manner that respects their privacy and dignity:
 - a. Research subjects must remain anonymous unless they have agreed to be identified. If anonymity cannot be guaranteed, the subjects must be informed of the possible consequences of becoming involved in the research.
 - b. In cases where individuals or groups provide information of a confidential or personal nature, this confidentiality must be guaranteed in both the original use of data and its deposition for future use.
 - c. The rights of children must be respected. All research involving children must be fully justified in terms of goals and objectives and never undertaken without the consent of the children and their parents or legal guardians.
 - d. Participation of subjects, including the use of photography in research, should always be based on informed consent.
 - e. The use and deposition of human tissue samples should always be based on the informed consent of the subjects or next of kin.
11. The researcher is accountable for all project decisions that affect the community, including decisions made by subordinates.
12. All relevant federal, state and local regulations and policies pertaining to cultural, environmental, and health protection must be strictly observed.
13. Sacred sites, cultural materials, and cultural property cannot be disturbed or removed without community and/or individual consent and in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

In implementing these principles, researchers may find additional guidance in the publications listed below. In addition, a number of Alaska Native and municipal organizations can be contacted for general information, obtaining informed consent, and matters relating to research proposals and coordination with Native and local interests. A separate list is available from NSF's Office of Polar Programs.



Drumming and dancing during "Nalukataq" whaling Festival, Barrow, Alaska. (*Photo courtesy of Henry Huntington.*)



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