

Health, Safety and Environment Policy – 7

Biosecurity and Non-native Species

1. APPLICATION

Antarctica and Christchurch.

2. CONTEXT

Biological invasions are among the most significant threats to biodiversity worldwide. It is clear that the barriers of cold and distance are not sufficient to prevent the transfer of species between temperate areas and Antarctica. In addition, the high level of regional endemism in Antarctica means that the risk of transfer of native organisms within Antarctica is also needs careful management.

Non-native species (sometimes called alien species) are species that have been introduced to an ecosystem either intentionally or unintentionally. Introduction means the movement, as a direct or indirect result of human activity, of species into an area where they are not native. This includes the introduction to the Antarctic region of species not native to that region, and the movement of species within Antarctica to a biogeographic zone where such species are not naturally present.

Non-native insects and plants have become established at some Antarctic stations and there are signs that diseases have also arrived in Antarctica as a result of human activity. For example antibodies to a range of poultry viruses have been found in the blood of penguins, suggesting that they had been exposed to introduced diseases.

Antarctica New Zealand is committed to the biosecurity of both Antarctica and New Zealand, and aims to minimise human transfer of species to areas where they are not naturally present.

3. PURPOSE

- Provide guiding principles for Antarctica New Zealand's operations (within which more detailed procedures can be developed) so as to prevent human transfer of species to areas where they are not naturally present
- To ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Article 4 of Annex II to the Protocol requires that:

- No species not native to the Antarctic Treaty area shall be introduced onto land or ice shelves or water except in accordance with a permit
- Precautions be taken to prevent accidental introduction of microorganisms not present in the native flora and fauna
- Poultry be inspected for diseases before it gets to the treaty area and all poultry products removed from treaty area
- Importation of non-sterile soil be avoided to the maximum extent practicable
- Regular and effective monitoring take place to allow the assessment of the impacts of ongoing activities

- Protection of the Antarctic Environment...including its wilderness, aesthetic and scientific value shall be fundamental considerations in the planning and conduct of activities

These provisions are implemented in to New Zealand law by means of the Antarctica (Environmental Protection) Act 1994.

In addition, all passengers and cargo returning to New Zealand from Antarctica are subject to the Biosecurity Act 1993 and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. This means that the introduction of any plants, animals or risk products requires a Biosecurity New Zealand permit or clearance and/or Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) approval.

5. POLICY

i. Christchurch Staff will ensure that:

- We work with MAFBNZ to ensure our policies and procedures are in line with international best practice
- We actively develop and implement procedures to continue to minimise Biosecurity risks,
- We are (at least) compliant with all relevant legislation
- Research needs are identified and communicated to the science community
- No animal, plant, micro-organism or soil will be knowingly transported to Antarctica without a specific permit under the Antarctica (Environmental Protection) Act 1994
- Shipping containers, pallets and boxes are free of soil, insects and other risk products
- Antarctica New Zealand clothing and equipment is free from soil or other risk products at the time of issue
- Principal Investigators understand their permitting requirements and the process for bringing science samples into or through NZ
- Staff inspect cargo and goods bound for Scott Base
- Staff and PIs understand their responsibilities to ensure their clothing and equipment is clean, that they do not import (or have posted to them) any high risk items and that they declare all food stuffs before transport to Antarctica
- Suppliers are familiar with this policy
- Fruit and vegetables bound for Scott Base are free from soil, mould and will not deteriorate during transport
- Poultry products bound for Scott Base are free from disease

ii. Scott Base staff will ensure that:

- No poultry products are taken to any field sites near penguin colonies
- All footwear, clothing and equipment taken into the field or between field sites is cleaned
- as thoroughly as possible,
- No poultry products are disposed of into the Antarctic environment (all poultry wastes are to be put into the food waste stream for disposal in New Zealand)
- Care is taken to prevent poultry wastes from being washed down sinks
- Monitoring and control systems (e.g. traps) at Scott Base are maintained as required
- No soil, water, plant or animal material will be transported to New Zealand without a valid MAF and / or ERMA permit (and / or relevant import health standard), including material transhipped through New Zealand to other countries

- h. As far as possible, shipping containers, pallets and boxes will be kept free of contamination by soil and other biological risk products
- i. Christchurch staff are advised of any risk products to be returned to New Zealand with waste

Reviewed by: Lou Sanson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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