



## SCOTT BASE – TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

One of the first questions you will ask is, “What does Scott Base have and what do I need to provide?”

This document should answer some of your questions.

On the flight south you have a baggage allowance of 34 kg (75 lbs). This does not include the one small bag that you can hand carry on board the aircraft. The Antarctic clothing that we provide will take up approximately 8kgs (20 lbs) of this allowance and the balance is all yours. Baggage limits are enforced so don't turn up with too much gear.

### CLOTHING

Antarctica New Zealand will provide all the clothing that is required for you to live, work and survive in Antarctica. Please refer to the clothing section (and download) on our website for detailed information on what will be issued to you.

Inside Scott Base the temperature is kept at about 18°C and generally people wear jeans, t-shirts and sweatshirts – that kind of thing.

Most people find their weight fluctuates quite a bit on the ice, so make sure your clothing can accommodate a few kilos up or down!

Include a set of good clothes for any functions that may occur during your stay such as Christmas, or VIP dinners. If you want to use the gym then bring your gym gear. Joggers might consider a lightweight parka and track pants.

Boots are not permitted in the base. If you are coming and going a lot during the day a pair of scuffs or slippers that can be left by the exit doors are very handy – you get sick of doing up laces and they give your feet a chance to air. Lightweight tramping boots are great for outside later in the summer months. The socks issued are heavyweight for outside use, so take plenty of lighter weight ones for wearing inside.

There is a climbing wall at McMurdo Station so rock climbers should take their rock shoes.

The standard issue sunglasses meet basic requirements, however you may wish to take your own ski sunglasses and carry ours as a spare if needed.

On the Scott Base social calendar there are normally a few parties where some form of fancy dress is appropriate, such as Halloween, skirt parties or beach parties. There is a large collection of dress-up items upstairs in Q-hut, but if you have something of your own, bring it along by all means.

Other clothing items you might consider are:

- sunhat
- bathrobe
- a swimsuit for the sauna

The laundry facilities at Scott Base can be in heavy use so make sure to take extra socks, undergarments etc.

## **MONEY**

Scott Base uses NZD currency. Take some cash and an EFTPOS card to make purchases and get money from the Scott Base shop and bar.

You will need USD currency to make purchases at McMurdo Station. You can change NZ to US currency at the Scott Base shop. However, the exchange rate in New Zealand is usually better than at Scott Base so you may consider getting some USD currency before leaving.

There are two cash machines at McMurdo Station but using these incur the same bank fees as withdrawing money overseas. The Scott Base shop accepts all forms of credit cards for purchases. If possible, take a spare ATM or credit card in case one gets damaged.

## **INSURANCE**

Make sure to check that any insurance policies that you have provide coverage and are valid for loss of life or loss/damage of personal effects while in Antarctica.

## **PHONING HOME**

The easiest way to phone home is to get a Telecom calling card before your departure from New Zealand (just phone 123 to arrange). This charges all your calls back to a New Zealand phone account or your credit card and allows you to make use of the \$3 weekend/weeknight and other special call deals.

Another easy option is to buy a Telecom Yabba or Easycall card before you leave New Zealand, and top it up by credit card while you are on the ice.

You can make calls from any telephone at Scott Base using these options.

NB: Telecom NZ is the only service provider at Scott Base.

Access to other service providers such as Clear through the Telecom network is available, but **NO CALL SPECIALS APPLY**. If you use a Clear account all calls will be charged at the **FULL RATE** at **ALL TIMES**, i.e. \$1.40 + GST per minute to New Zealand.

International Home Direct cards can also be used at Scott Base. Just dial the appropriate access code and the call is charged back to your home country account.

0800 and 0900 numbers don't work from Scott Base, so if you intend to use phone-banking services get an alternative phone number from your bank before departure.

**You can receive calls at Scott Base from New Zealand on 02 409 6700. Callers not in New Zealand can call IDD +64 2 4096700.**

## **TOOLS**

All necessary tools and equipment are provided at Scott Base. If you wish to take your own that's fine. You should, however leave a list of personal tools taken with our Christchurch office to save any ownership problems upon return to New Zealand.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO**

There are facilities for downloading flashcards from digital cameras at Scott Base. There is also a CD writer available. It is recommended you take a supply of blank CDs (CD-R) for downloading and storing your photos.

In order to keep cameras functioning, keep them warm as long as you can. This means keeping them inside jackets or an insulated/waterproof case.

Batteries will expire quicker in the cold so take spares (lithium batteries are best).

There is no film for sale at Scott Base, so anyone with a film camera will need to bring their own. If it gets very cold, film may become brittle and snap inside the camera when winding on. If you are considering taking a tripod the cheaper variety with plastic components and pivot points break very easily in the cold and are not suitable.

## **RECREATION**

### **Skiing**

Skis (downhill and cross-country), boots, poles and snowboards are provided but limited in numbers. You can take your own if you wish. If you have never skied there are plenty of people who have so now is your chance for free instruction and no tow fees!

### **Fitness**

Scott Base now has a small gym (weights, exercycle, treadmill), so you may wish to bring some workout gear. Jogging outside is possible in the warmer months, though you will still need to wear clothing suitable for cold temperatures.

It's a good idea to bring a small daypack to carry additional clothing and a water bottle for local walks.

Sports facilities at McMurdo Station include volleyball and basketball, ten pin bowling, and dodgeball.

There are four mountain bikes at Scott Base for public use; once again take your own if you prefer. Cyclists in previous seasons have also brought their own road bikes and wind trainers (the roads can be very rough).

There is a pool table and darts in the bar at Scott Base.

Kites have become popular and there is usually plenty of wind.

### **Music**

Bands are usually formed and live gigs held from time to time. If you play an instrument and are keen to take it, do so. Be warned that the extremely dry atmosphere can affect them (warping, twisting etc) especially acoustic guitars.

There is a piano in the bar (but it could do with tuning).

There are stereo units in both the bar and the dining area. You can bring CDs to play or an mp3 player, which can also be used on the flight there and back, and for long Hagglands rides (headphones under earmuffs do the trick).

### **Movies**

There is a good selection of DVDs in the movie room, and you are welcome to bring some of your own. There is a large screen projector and surround sound system. Please treat this expensive equipment with

care. If you have a laptop or DVD player you can borrow movies from the base collection to watch in your room (as long as you return them!).

## **Computers**

Taking a laptop computer is an option but you cannot connect it to the Scott Base network. No unauthorised software (games etc) is permitted on the official computers. All base staff have a Scott Base email address and there are five public computers connected to the internet in the Hatherton Lab. Due to the cost of the satellite data links, there are email size restrictions and limits on what you can access via the internet.

## **STATIC ELECTRICITY**

Due to the dry environment and lack of humidity controls, people experience some quite impressive demonstrations of static electricity at Scott Base. While this can provide hours of fun for the first week the static discharges can cause serious damage to all types of electronic equipment and may cause gradual or immediate failure of components. This includes the phones, faxes, video recorders, computers etc. For those with manual cameras or high-speed re-winders on automatic cameras static can also cause horizontal streaks to appear across your photos (tip: discharge yourself and your camera then rewind the film slowly).

Picking up a phone without discharging yourself against something metal can cause the phone to die as well as lock up the telephone exchange in some severe circumstances. This is not a good way to introduce yourself to the Telecom Technician!

In workplaces metal discharge strips run along the front of desks. The fax, video and DVD players sit on antistatic mats which you should touch first before using the electronic equipment. Yes it can hurt when a one inch spark leaps from your hand to the mat but it is minimal compared to the wrath of a technician when you blow up a phone or computer.

The more you discharge yourself the less static you build up. This is why you will see people touching the corners of walls, fire extinguishers or metal building supports as they travel along the corridors. They can also touch you and pass the shocking experience on!

Wearing wool and natural fibres rather than manmade fabrics will help to reduce static. Using clothes dryers increases static. This is an excellent reason to use the drying room rather than the dryers.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

Scott Base has a small library of Antarctic-themed and general books, and a selection of other books, mainly fiction, in the lounge. Rather than take too many of your own it may be wise to check out what's available first and get some of your own sent down later if required.

Some magazines are regularly delivered to Scott Base, including the Listener, Time, New Scientist and assorted women's magazines.

There is a Playstation 2 and a Nintendo Wii at Scott Base.

Writing materials, post cards and Ross Dependency stamps can all be purchased from the shop at Scott Base.

Exams (University, Polytechnic etc) can be sat at Scott Base. See the Scott Base Coordinator for details.

## PERSONAL

Cheerful, tasteful duvets, pillows and sheets are provided. **Towels and facecloths are not, so don't forget them.**

You will be sharing a room with at least one other person, and there will be some space for pictures, personal photos and mementoes, though you'll need to be realistic! A small, battery alarm clock is useful, as power outages will make electric one unreliable.

Candles and incense are not permitted!

Toiletries are sold at Scott Base, though you may wish to bring some of your preferred moisturisers, hair products, shaving equipment, sanitary items and deodorants.

Whatever you bring, please remember that all waste water generated at Scott Base is biologically treated and discharged into the sea. It is therefore good for both the health of the treatment plant and the environment to minimise the use of cleaning products and avoid non-biodegradable and toxic ingredients where possible. You may wish to select products with some form of environmental accreditation (see links below), or contact the environmental team at Antarctica New Zealand for more details of chemicals to avoid.

- <http://www.enviro-choice.org.nz>
- <http://www.enviro-mark.co.nz/>
- <http://www.iso.org>
- <http://www.globalecolabelling.net/>
- <http://www.greentick.com>

**If you are on any medication, ensure you have sufficient for your length of stay.**

There is a hairdresser at McMurdo Station with whom Scott Base staff can make an appointment. Clippers are available at Scott Base if you wish to do your own.

If you wear glasses take a spare set in case of loss or damage. Contact lens wearers should also take a pair of glasses (because of the dry atmosphere contacts can irritate some people's eyes).

It is important to remind friends and family that liquids and fragile items should not be sent in the mail. If they must be sent get them couriered to our Christchurch office and we will pack them appropriately and put them in the cargo system. The Scott Base postal address is Private Bag 4745, Christchurch 8140.

NB: Polystyrene chips and beads are banned in Antarctica and are not to be used as a packing agent.

Cigarettes and tobacco can be purchased from the Scott Base shop. Smoking is restricted to one area – a smokers' hut outside and adjacent to the bar.

The dry atmosphere may make you prone to bleeding noses until your body gradually acclimatises, so take plenty of handkerchiefs.

Bring your driver's licence. You need to have a licence before you are trained to drive the base vehicles, and it can be used as identification when departing and returning to NZ.

Make sure anything that you bring is clean and free from any soil, seeds or plant material. Particular focus should be on boot/shoe treads, velcro fastenings, pockets and bags.

**DON'T FORGET YOUR SENSE OF HUMOUR!**