



churchillnorthernstudiescentre

Volunteer Information

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churchill**n**orthern**s**tudies**c**entre

Hello

Welcome! We are so glad you'll be joining the Churchill Northern Studies Centre (CNSC) on an upcoming Volunteer Expedition. We can't wait to share our love and understanding of the north with you!

As you know, the CNSC is an active field station in Canada's remote subarctic. We play a vital role in subarctic research, and volunteers – like you – have a huge impact on our success.

We want to make sure you are well-prepared for the challenges associated with living in Northern Canada. It can take time to adjust to our remote location, as well as to the climate – especially during the colder winter months (it regularly gets down to -40!).

This guide should provide you with the information you need to prepare for your trip to Churchill. For your own safety and enjoyment, it is essential that you read this guide well in advance of your departure. If you have any questions, please contact our Field Station Coordinator by phone (1-204-675-2327 ext. 102) or by email (fsc@churchillscience.ca).

We will be sending you more information before your arrival about our organization and our community, and we'll be asking for information from you, too, like a vulnerable sector check, proof of COVID vaccination, and an attestation that you have read this document.

Getting to Churchill



Churchill

As a volunteer, you are responsible for checking travel requirements as well as the booking and financing for all travel to and from Churchill. We strongly encourage all guests to purchase travel disruption insurance to protect against expensive travel delays and flight cancellations.

There are no permanent roads connecting Churchill to the rest of Canada. Virtually all visitors to Churchill arrive by train ([VIA Rail](#)) or plane ([Calm Air](#)) from Winnipeg, and both options offer regular service. We highly recommend you book your transportation as early as possible and be aware that the train typically takes about 48 hours to reach Churchill from Winnipeg. Alternatively, you could drive to Thompson (8 hours north of Winnipeg) and take the train from there (16-hour trip).

We will greet you at the airport or train station when you arrive and drive you to the Centre, which is about 23km (14mi) outside of town.

International Volunteers

Your passport must be valid and not expire within six months of your expected departure from Canada. You must also check and meet the visa requirements of your home country.

All entrants to Canada must have a valid entry visa or eTA. Find out more on the [Government of Canada](#) website.

Volunteers from the United States

We strongly recommend that any volunteer in need of an ESTA to apply on the [US official website](#). ESTA applications can be submitted to the National Immigration website no later than 72 hours before departure.

Amenities in Churchill

We provide a weekly trip into town for volunteers to pick up supplies and groceries.

Medical Services

There is a small, fully staffed hospital and pharmacy at the Churchill Regional Health Centre. We recommend that you bring any medications that you may need, as the pharmacy's hours of operation are limited.

Money

There is a Royal Bank branch in Churchill, which has an automated teller machine (ATM).

Most stores in Churchill accept cash (CDN), Visa, and Mastercard. Many locations also accept US dollars 'at par' without an exchange, so you will get the best exchange rate by using your credit card or changing cash beforehand. Cash, major credit cards, traveller's cheques, and debit cards are accepted at our CNSC gift shop.

Once in Canada, foreign currency can be exchanged at any bank, or at your arrival airport.

Other Amenities

Churchill is also home to a post office, two grocery stores, a general store, a liquor store, souvenir shops, dog sledding, the Itsanitaq Museum, Polar Bears International Interpretive House, Parks Canada Interpretive Centre, and several restaurants and hotels that are open seasonally.





Life on Expedition

Accommodations

You will be assigned a room within the CNSC with another volunteer of the same gender for the duration of your stay.

Each room accommodates four guests in bunk beds, with individual closet space, a small writing desk, bedside shelves, and individual reading lamps. We provide all linens, including bed sheets, comforters, and towels.

Separate female and male washrooms have toilets, sinks, and private showers. Washing machines are available daily.

The building is equipped with wireless internet. Local calls can be made from the Weston Family Welcome Lounge. Cellular coverage is unreliable at the CNSC.

The Centre has a small gift shop which carries postcards, stamps, books, CNSC brand clothing, locally made jams and jellies, and other souvenirs.

Orientation

Once at the CNSC, our Field Station Coordinator (or designate) – your main point of contact – will introduce you to our staff and give you a tour of our facilities, including the kitchen, cafeteria, and your room in our accommodation area. Then, you'll spend some time taking care of paperwork and doing mandatory safety training. Our Field Station Coordinator will also outline the orientation and other training activities to be provided over the next few days.

You will also be attending lectures on safety, housekeeping, and some of the features of our building. The basics of your training will be covered during the orientation, and you will shadow our staff members and gain hands-on experience as you are assigned work.

Daily Work

You will be expected to work six hours of work per day, six days a week. Your schedule will vary day-to-day based on time of year, current research projects, and CNSC operations. Each day, you will be briefed on your schedule for the next day, and provided a list of tasks.

Expedition life can be busy. You can expect to help with data collection, meal preparation, dish washing, grounds-keeping, cleaning, guest interactions, community outreach, and night duty.

Whether it's through sample collection, maintenance of our on-site sustainability activities, or assistance in the field, your participation will not only be a source of fascinating experiences, but it will also provide tangible benefits to the CNSC.

Time Off

You will have one day off per week. With your free time, feel free to explore our on-site gym, billiard room, A/V room, library, aurora dome, observation deck, and any on-site programming. Be sure to keep an eye out for northern lights and local wildlife!

You will also be granted a vehicle and gas for one trip a week, if you'd like to head into town.

Food

We provide three nutritious meals daily. During our busy times of the year, a cook is on-site. During off-season volunteers are responsible for preparing their own meals.

We will do our best to accommodate dietary restrictions, provided we have adequate notice.

After Your Expedition

Stay Connected

At the end of your expedition, we will ask you to fill out a survey about your experience. Your valuable feedback will help us improve the program for future volunteers.

As a volunteer, you will receive an annual membership, which will provide you with exclusive updates via our official CNSC magazine (The BirdFish). We also invite you to keep track of our research projects and follow our latest updates on our website or social media feeds.

Of course, you can also return for another expedition and even watch for paid positions at the CNSC.

Be an Ambassador

Our main goal is to understand and sustain the north, and since you will have been an active participant in both research and sustainability efforts, you will feel empowered to share your experience with your community once you return home.

Your Legacy

Your financial contribution as a volunteer has a major impact. Not only does it cover the costs of running the Volunteer Expedition – including staff expenses, incentives, accommodations, and food – but it also allows us to provide researchers an affordable, accessible location to continue their valuable work.

Being a registered non-profit research station, the CNSC invests all revenue into its mission to understand and sustain the north.



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