

FACILITIES

The present Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station opened on January 9, 1975. It is a research station. As such, its facilities for short-term visitors are limited--in particular, the kitchen is small and extra beds are few.

Visitors are welcome to tour the station. A site plan is included here to assist in station orientation and to help locate areas that may be of specific interest. Points of interest and suggested areas for photographs are:

True Geographic South Pole marker (resurveyed annually by U.S. Geological Survey)
Ceremonial South Pole (with flags of Antarctic Treaty nations)
Station Library (postal cachets are available for use here)
Dining Hall

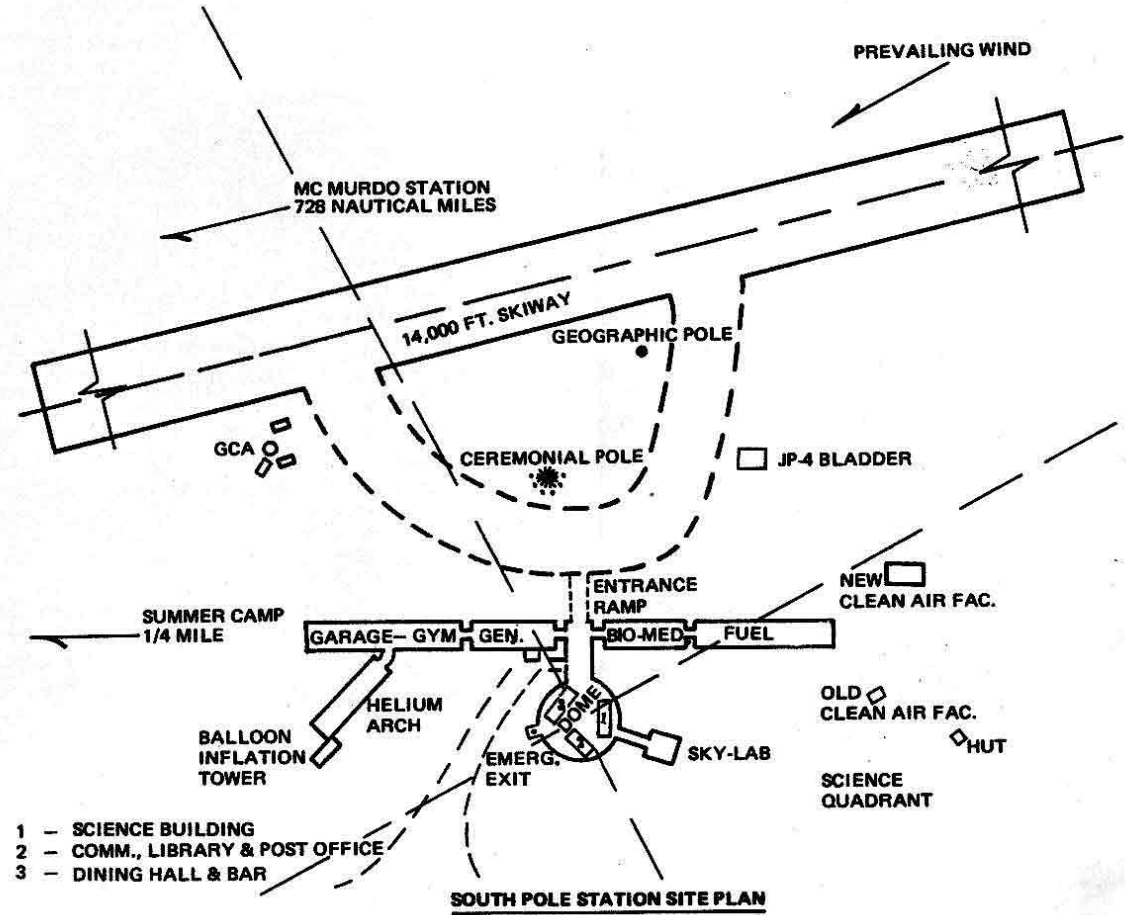
Please visit other station areas only in the company of knowledgeable station personnel. Also, do not leave the immediate station area unless you are accompanied by another person.

The original South Pole Station is about 900 meters (3,000 feet) from the present station and is buried under 11 meters (40 feet) of snow and ice. The old station has been abandoned and sealed and its extremely hazardous surface areas are "off limits" to all. Ask a station resident to point out the old station's location to you from Skylab observation deck.

Station personnel are usually very busy when airplanes are on the ground at the South Pole. Please refrain from disturbing or interfering with the station staff while airplane operations are in progress.

Scientific research is in progress in many areas in and around the new station. Please keep alert for instruments on the station grounds (see "Science quadrant" marked on site plan), and do not touch them for your own safety's sake.

Toilet facilities are in the Dining Hall area of the main station and in "Waterhole 6" (adjacent to the kitchen) at the Summer Camp. Please conserve water and keep the facilities clean.



MAIL

Outgoing mail for cancellation at the South Pole may be left in the mail bag provided outside the station post office. The actual cancellation may not always be made while you are at the station and your mail may go on a later flight than the one you are on. Postal regulations prescribe that the cancellation mark for the South Pole reads: "Month, Day, Year, So. Pole Br. New York, NY 10090".

Visitors are asked to exercise discretion in the amount of mail they leave for cancellation at the South Pole. Cancellation marks must be applied manually during the spare time of volunteer station residents.

DEPARTURE

You will be notified over the station public-address system concerning your departure time from South Pole Station. Please report to the airplane on time to avoid creating costly delays.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The following points should be observed in taking photographs at the South Pole:

Be aware that your shutter may freeze. Keep your camera warm when it is not actually in use by carrying it under your parka (note: not in the pocket!).

Cold, dry air makes camera film brittle, hard to wind, and easy to break. Wind it slowly! Dry air also encourages static electricity, which leaves streaks on film if film is wound too fast. Change film indoors when both camera and film are warm and the light is less intense.

Allow ample time for your camera to warm before taking photographs indoors. Check the lens to make sure it is free of condensation, which evaporates quickly after you get indoors.

Summer light at the South Pole is extremely bright. Photographs of people should be taken as close as possible. Stop the camera's aperture setting down to avoid silhouetting.

This pamphlet is designed to help make your visit to the United States Antarctic Program's Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station as enjoyable and memorable as possible.

HISTORY

On December 14, 1911, the Norwegian Roald Amundsen and four others became the first humans ever to set foot at the geographic South Pole (90°S.). A month later, four Britishers led by Royal Navy Captain Robert Falcon Scott also reached the Pole only to find the Norwegian flag as sure evidence that they were not the first. The Scott party perished on its way back to McMurdo Sound, some 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) distant. The South Pole was not seen again until November 29, 1929, when U.S. Navy Admiral Richard E. Byrd became the first to fly an airplane over it. On October 31, 1956, U.S. Navy Admiral George J. Dufek landed a Navy LC-47 named Que Sera Sera at the South Pole and became the first to stand there since Amundsen and Scott. Soon thereafter the United States established a year-round station at the South Pole that operated continuously from 1957 to 1975, when the present station was opened.

THE SOUTH POLE

The altitude at the South Pole is about 2,830 meters (9,280 feet), but the physiological effects are considered roughly equivalent to those felt at 3,500 meters (11,000 feet). You may find yourself breathing heavily and suffering from headaches and excessive thirst. These side effects are caused by thin, dry, cold air. Summer temperatures range from about -25°C (-20°F) to -45°C (-50°F). The average annual temperature at the South Pole is -45°C (-50°F); the record low temperature is -80.6°C (-113.1°F), logged on July 22, 1965.

The following suggestions will minimize any discomfort you may experience at the South Pole:

Do not overeat
Do not overexercise (walk slowly)
Avoid alcoholic beverages and tobacco
People usually become acclimated to the South Pole environment after about 72 hours.

AMUNDSEN-SCOTT

SOUTH POLE

STATION

VISITOR GUIDE



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