

Code of Conduct for the Deception Island ASMA 4 Facilities Zone, including Decepción Station (Argentina) and Gabriel de Castilla Station (Spain)

1. Introduction

The Deception Island ASMA includes a Facilities Zone within which is located Decepción Station (Argentina) and Gabriel de Castilla Station (Spain). Figure 1 shows the extent of the Facilities Zone, which includes the two stations, the surrounding beach area, and a small unnamed lake to the west of Crater Lake from which freshwater is extracted. Activities within this zone are to be undertaken in line with this Code of Conduct, the aims of which are to:

- encourage the pursuit of scientific investigation on Deception Island, including the establishment and maintenance of appropriate supporting infrastructure;
- preserve the natural, scientific and cultural values of the Facilities Zone;
- safeguard the health and safety of station personnel.

This Code of Conduct summarises existing station procedures, a copy of which is available (Spanish language version only) at Decepción and Gabriel de Castilla stations.

Staff and visitors will be made aware of the contents of this Code of Conduct during pre-deployment training programmes and briefing sessions on board ship prior to arrival at the station.

A copy of the complete Deception Island ASMA Management Package will be kept at Decepción Station and Gabriel de Castilla Station, where relevant maps and information posters about the ASMA will also be displayed.

2. Buildings and services

2.1 Buildings

- An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) must be undertaken for the construction of any new permanent station buildings in line with Annex I to the Environmental Protocol.
- An EIA must also be undertaken for the quarrying of rock to maintain existing buildings, in line with Annex I to the Environmental Protocol, as well as with the prior approval of the national authorities of Argentina (Decepción Station) or Spain (Gabriel de Castilla Station).
- Consideration will be given to reusing existing sites when practicable, in order to minimise disturbance.
- Buildings are to be maintained in good condition. Buildings not currently in use are to be routinely checked, and assessed for likely removal.
- Work-sites are to be kept as neat as possible.

2.2 Power Generation

- Maintain generators in good condition, and undertake routine inspections, so as to minimise emissions and possible fuel leaks.
- Ensure economy in power consumption and hence fuel usage and emissions.
- The use of renewable energy sources will be encouraged, where appropriate.

2.3 Water Supply

- Handling or disposing of wastes, fuel or other chemicals within the stations' water catchment area is prohibited.
- Use of vehicles within the water catchment area will only be for essential purposes.
- Ensure that regular tests of water quality, as well as routine cleaning of water holding tanks, are conducted.
- Regulate water consumption, so as to avoid unnecessary extraction.

3. Fuel handling

- The integrity of bulk fuel storage facilities, supply lines, pumps, reels and other fuel handling equipment will be regularly inspected.
- At both stations, fuel storage includes secondary containment. Drummed fuel should be stored inside. Storage areas should, as far as practicable, be properly ventilated, and sited away from electrical services. Storage facilities should also be sited away from accommodation facilities for safety reasons.
- All practicable measures will be undertaken to avoid fuel spills, in particular during fuel transfer (e.g. ship to shore transfer by pipeline or zodiac, refuelling day tanks).
- Any fuel, oil or lubricant spills will be reported immediately to the Station Leader, and subsequently to the National Authority.
- Ensure that adequate and sufficient spill response equipment (e.g. absorbents) is kept in a known location and available to deal with any spills.
- Station personnel will be trained in how to use spill response equipment. Training exercises will be undertaken at the beginning of each season.
- In case of fuel spills, response actions will be undertaken in line with the Oil Spill Contingency Plan held at each station.
- Oily wastes will be packaged in appropriate containers and disposed of according to station procedures.

4. Fire prevention and fire-fighting

- Signs indicating no-smoking areas, and flammable substances, will be displayed as appropriate.
- Fire fighting equipment will be available at fuel storage sites and elsewhere. Such equipment will be clearly marked.

5. Waste Management

- Waste management, including waste reduction and the provision of equipment and appropriate packaging material, will be considered in the planning and conducting of all activities at Decepción and Gabriel de Castilla stations.
- All station personnel will be instructed on the provisions of Annex III to the Environmental Protocol.
- A waste management co-ordinator will be appointed at each station.
- Wastes will be segregated at source and stored safely on site prior to removal. After each summer season, wastes generated at Decepción and Gabriel de Castilla stations will be removed from the Antarctic Treaty Area.
- Regular tests of water effluents discharged into Port Foster will be undertaken.
- Any substances that may adversely affect the working of effluent treatment plants will not be disposed of through the drainage system (including toilets and wash basins).
- Cleaning up past waste disposal sites on land and abandoned work sites will be considered a priority, except where removal would result in more adverse environmental impacts than leaving the structure or waste material *in situ*.
- Personnel from both stations should periodically participate in clean-up activities within the facilities area, so as to minimise any scattered wastes around the stations.
- At the end of each summer season, activities connected to clean-up and removal of wastes will be reported to the appropriate national authority.

6. Other Operational Issues

6.1 Communications

- The installation of permanent or temporary aerials is to be carefully considered through the environmental evaluation procedures in place.
- VHF Marine Channel 16 will be monitored.
- All station personnel leaving the Facilities Zone must be equipped with a VHF radio.

6.2 Use of vehicles and small boats

- Vehicles should only be used around and between the stations when necessary.
- Keep to established tracks within the station area where practicable.
- Refuelling and servicing of vehicles will be carried out at the facilities provided for these purposes. Every effort should be made to avoid spills during refuelling and servicing.
- Do not use vehicles close to sensitive scientific equipment, across flora or near concentrations of fauna, or unnecessarily within the water-catchment area.
- Small boats operating out of Decepción or Gabriel de Castilla Station are only to be used within Port Foster, when weather conditions allow, and principally for scientific and logistic reasons. No small boats will be used outside Port Foster. Avoid the use of small boats close to cliffs and/or glaciers, to avoid rock or ice falls.

- When operating one boat, a second boat will be on stand-by, at the Station, for immediate support in an emergency.
- Small boats will be operated by at least two people. Essential equipment will include boating immersion suits, life jackets and VHF radios.

6.3 Aircraft Operations

- Helicopters will generally take off from and land at the helipad at Decepción Station. Occasionally, operational reasons may require them to take off from, or land at, other appropriate locations within the Facilities Zone.

6.4 Field travel

- All wastes from field parties, except for human wastes (faeces, urine and grey water) will be returned to the stations for safe disposal.
- The Station Leader and/or the Station Environment Officer will brief field parties on environmental management in the field, the location of protected areas, and the provisions of the ASMA Management Plan.
- No uncooked poultry products will be used by field parties.
- All field parties will be equipped with VHF radios.

7. Protected Areas

- Three terrestrial sub-sites of ASPA No. 140 (Site B - Crater Lake, Site C - Unnamed hill, southern end of Fumarole Bay, and Site D - Fumarole Bay), are located close to the Facilities Zone. Station personnel will be made aware of the location of, and restrictions on access to, all protected areas on Deception Island. Information about these protected areas, including a map showing their location, will be prominently displayed at both stations.

8. Flora and fauna

- Any activity involving the taking of, or harmful interference with, native flora or fauna (as defined in Annex II to the Protocol) is prohibited unless authorised by a permit issued by the appropriate authority.
- An appropriate distance is to be maintained from birds or seals which is safe and avoids causing them disturbance.
- Staff and visitors are to walk slowly and carefully when near wildlife, in particular avoiding birds which are nesting, moulting, crèching or returning from foraging trips. Give 'right of way' to wildlife at all times.
- Birds are not to be fed on waste food scraps from the stations. Food wastes will be secured to prevent scavenging by birds.
- All reasonable precautions will be taken to avoid the introduction of micro-organisms and any other non-native species, or species from other Antarctic sites.
- The introduction of herbicides, pesticides or other harmful substances is prohibited.

- At the end of each summer season, a report on activities involving the taking of, or harmful interference with, native flora and fauna will be forwarded to the appropriate national authorities.

9. Tourist visits to the Facilities Zone

- Any visits to Decepción Station (Argentina) or Gabriel de Castilla Station (Spain) may only be undertaken at the discretion of the respective Station Leader. Contact can be made via VHF Marine Channel 16. Visits will only be allowed if they do not interfere with scientific or logistical work.
- Visits are to be undertaken in line with Recommendation XVIII-1.
- Station Leaders will co-ordinate visits to stations with Expedition Leaders.
- Visitors will be informed about the principles of this Code of Conduct, as well as the ASMA Management Plan.
- The station leader will appoint a guide (English speaking, when appropriate and possible), to escort visitors around the station, in order to ensure compliance with the measures included in this Code of Conduct.
- The national authorities operating Decepción or Gabriel de Castilla Stations will inform IAATO of any increase in the risk of volcanic eruption. The stations shall notify any ships in the area of any immediate danger.

10. Co-operation and sharing of resources

- Both stations will co-ordinate and periodically conduct joint emergency evacuation, oil spill response and fire-fighting exercises.

