



POLAR ADVENTURER CODE OF INTEGRITY

PECS is a self-management tool that gives clear and concise guidance on how to label, promote and immortalise, accurately categorise and communicate your journey. Although PECS is managed by a committee of polar expedition specialists it does not monitor expeditions, instead relying on the integrity of expeditioners to follow PECS guidelines.

While polar journeys that do not engage with the public or media and do not use language that compares theirs to others are not obliged to abide by the Code of Integrity, they are encouraged to conduct their journey with similar ethics in mind if they choose to.

1. Don't off-load illicitly

If expeditioners off-load rubbish along the way in order to minimise weight they not only lose Unsupported status but have breached a code of integrity. Dumping of rubbish or unneeded equipment breaches the principles of self-sufficiency and environmental respect that underpin the best expeditions.

Burial of human waste is largely accepted except south of 89°S.

2. Use of outside help to make operational decisions

Journeys that do not utilise kites or sails should minimise their use of a communication device as a decision-making tool (eg. receiving navigation data and excessive weather reports en route).

Doing so does not alter Unsupported status but shows a high level of dependence.

Kiting and sailing journeys often plan routes and make tactical decisions with the help of specialist weather forecasters and meteorologists, much like mountaineering expeditions and sailing ventures. Such use of outside help is considered an essential part of such journeys. Self-reliance, including restrained use of communications devices, is a fundamental trait of successful polar expeditioners.

3. Minimise contact with friends and family

Persistent calls to family and friends is not regarded as Support but shows a high level of psychological dependence.

While some communication with family or support teams at home may be necessary, thought should be given to the degree to which this psychologically removes you from the place you have worked so hard to be in. Remoteness and isolation are key factors in making polar expeditions a significant achievement.

In addition, a high degree of communication with people at home cultivates dependence on that contact and if such frequency is disrupted by equipment failure, minor delays or other non-critical interruptions, it may cause unnecessary distress or unwarranted intervention to your expedition.

PECS recommends following the scheduled call protocol dictated by your official logistics support (one call with an included weather report per day) and a rational amount of calls and electronic contact to satisfy family and media obligations (one per day).

4. Treat each team member with care and respect

If an expeditioner is injured and requires evacuation the team will lose its Unsupported status. It is unethical for the team to delay medical attention for fear of losing its status and may have legal and financial ramifications.

Accidents happen, accept the consequences and make honourable decisions.

5. Inform your followers promptly of any changes to your PECS status

It is your responsibility to make clear to media that changes in the logistics or style of your expedition might change how it is portrayed and that any proposed claims may now become impossible to meet. Omitting such notification is the same as making a false claim. If an Unsupported journey is blogging daily up until a forced resupply renders it Supported, then it should inform followers of this change in a timely manner.

6. Share the lead or offset your route

If two teams share the same route the slower team should where possible avoid following in the tracks of the first. If the lead can't be shared then the slower team should consider offsetting their route to maintain a sense of wilderness and self-sufficiency.

7. Solo is solo

A soloist may not tack onto another team or soloist and still claim to be solo, he/she should be breaking trail for the majority of the route. Solo means being alone for the full length of the journey. Fleeting encounters are acceptable however they should be no more than swift greetings with no exchange of route information. If a soloist is forced to camp next to another team due to a confined campsite (narrow valley or crevassed area) this should be no longer than one night unless forced to remain due to a blizzard.

8. Don't follow a road if you are Unsupported.

If an Unsupported team follows the SPoT route for a few kilometres to get some relief from sastrugi, or a disoriented Unsupported team uses the route as a handrail, it will lose Unsupported status. Any use of an established route except when following explicit instructions from a station/base, is regarded as Support. So too is entering buildings, aircraft and vehicles, or tents other than your own/own team.

The use of GPS way-pointed routes is common but is considered a greater form of dependence than travelling without the use of one.

9. Know your history

Avoid having claims questioned by thoroughly researching who has gone before you. If attempting a new route or striving to set or break a record be certain that your claim is valid.

10. No place for fiction

Any unmechanised polar journey is difficult and needs no embellishment. Exaggerating the scope and difficulty of your journey or altering distances, durations, speed and temperatures during or after completion are not acceptable.

Professional expeditioners and guides report still-air temperatures and not wind-chill adjusted figures. Temperature and wind should be reported separately and if circumstances dictate the reporting of wind-chill temperature then this should be qualified in the report eg. *wind-chill of -64C*.

Portraying your journey accurately online, to media and to sponsors - before, during and after - is a sign of integrity.

11. Guided journeys

A guided journey is not considered Supported because the term does not apply to the guide. However the apportioning of planning, skill and risk is often vastly different between client and guide and this must be acknowledged when promoting and immortalising a journey. Clients are beholden to the same code of integrity as adventurers, explorers and guides.