The North Pole does not officially belong to any one country. Svalbard, however, legally belongs to Norway according to the terms of the 1920 Spitsbergen treaty.

area
63,000 sq kms. 60% covered by glacier

population
- Longyearbyen (Norwegian administrative centre) 2 080 inhabitants
- Barentsburg (Russian mining community) 500 inhabitants
- Ny-Ålesund (Norway international research centre) 40 inhabitants
- Sveagruva (Norwegian mining community) 210 commuters
- Hornsund (Polish research station) 8 inhabitants

capital
Svalbard consists of a group of islands between 74°-81°N and 10°-35°E, including Spitsbergen, Nordaustlandet, Barentsøya, Edgeøya and Prins Karls Forland. The de-facto capital of Spitsbergen is Longyearbyen, the largest populated area on the territory of Svalbard, located in the high Norwegian Arctic. The settlement is popular as it is the most easily accessed frontier in the Arctic and is an ideal base for the greater exploration of Svalbard. The settlement is named after American entrepreneur John Munro Longyearbyen (1860-1922), who as head of the Arctic Coal Company founded the town and the neighbouring coal mine, the first large mine on Svalbard. Mining is still a big business here, with the roadsides and mountainsides littered with mines and their equipment, but tourism is catching up fast.

With 2,000 inhabitants, the town is the de-facto capital of the islands, featuring an airport, a school, a shopping centre, hotels, restaurants, and more.

language
Norwegian while in Svalbard. Russian is the dominant language at Ice Camp Barneo, but other languages, including English, are spoken.

tipping
Whilst not obligatory it is usual practice to tip 10%

bank opening hours
Norwegian kroner may be used all over Svalbard, and also at the Russian settlement. All major credit cards can be used for payment at most accommodation facilities, activity providers and shops. Many also have payment terminals. There is a cash machine (ATM) in Longyearbyen.

Sparebank1, P.O. Box 518 / NO-9171 Longyearbyen
Phone 915 02244 / Fax 79 02 29 11

post office hours
Located in the Post and Bank building, town centre. Offers a full range of bank services, including cash point, foreign currency, insurance, cash withdrawals, cheques and foreign exchange service to and from accounts abroad. Open 10.00 - 15.30 (cash desk 10.00-13.00)

shops opening hours
Opening hours may vary from shop to shop and from season to season. We therefore recommend that you obtain a guide to opening hours when you arrive in Longyearbyen. However, the shop at Ice Camp Barneo will remain open as long as you are in the Ice Camp.

time (+/- GMT)
Longyearbyen GMT + 2

electricity
European round pin adapter

public holidays
Norwegian and Russian public holidays apply in their respective settlements, and there are a few local festivals of interest:

telephone
Country Code + 47. GSM/3G phones work in the main towns of Svalbard. The Internet connection in Svalbard is top class. The town has several public Internet terminals and all the hotels and Guesthouses have free Wifi.

postal
P.O. Box 518 / NO-9171 Longyearbyen
Phone 915 02244 / Fax 79 02 29 11

Located in the Post and Bank building, town centre. Offers a full range of bank services, including cash point, foreign currency, insurance, cash withdrawals, cheques and foreign exchange service to and from accounts abroad. Open 10.00 - 15.30 (cash desk 10.00-13.00)
currency
Norwegian Kroner in Svalbard, and US Dollars or Euros in Ice Camp Barneo. For up-to-date currency exchange, go to: http://www.xe.com/

credit cards
Full spectrum of Credit Cards are welcome in Svalbard

travellers cheque
Can be exchanged in the major Hotels

passport/visa
No Visa needed. Normal Passport regulations apply

gifts and souvenirs
There are plenty of souvenir shops downtown in Spitsbergen. Most of the hotels sell traditional gifts.

duty free
The following items can be imported into Norway without incurring customs duty:
• 200 cigarettes or 250g of tobacco products and 200 leaves of cigarettes paper (travellers over 18 years of age).
• Either 1l of spirits over 22% volume and 1.5l wine, or 3l of wine; and 2l of beer up to 4.75% alcohol (for people over 20 years of age).
• Other goods to the value of Kr 3,000-6,000.
• A small amount of perfume and eau de cologne.
• Up to a total of 10kg of meat and meat products, cheese and foodstuffs (except dog and cat food).

vaccination & health
Tetanus is required.

hospitals/pharmacies
There are no pharmacies on Svalbard, although you can buy some non-prescription drugs in Longyearbyen which also has a hospital for treating emergencies

water
Tap water on Svalbard is drinkable, but surface water may contain tapeworm eggs from fox faeces and should be boiled before consumption.

climate
The Arctic ocean is contained in a polar climate characterised by persistent cold and relatively narrow annual temperature ranges. Winters are characterised by continuous darkness (polar night), cold and stable weather conditions, and clear skies; summers are characterised by continuous daylight (midnight sun), damp and foggy weather and weak cyclones with rain or snow.

temperature
Outside temperatures near the North Pole range from −43°C to −26°C in January and February, through −35°C to −10°C to Summer temperatures (June, July and August) around the freezing point (0°C, 32°F).

The temperature of the surface of the Arctic Ocean is fairly constant, near the freezing point of seawater. Because the Arctic Ocean consists of saltwater the temperature must reach -1.8°C before freezing occurs.

gEOGRAPHY
The Geographical North Pole is the northernmost point on Earth. At the North Pole all directions point south. While the South Pole lies on a continental land mass, the North Pole is located in the middle of the Arctic Ocean amidst waters that are almost permanently covered with constantly shifting sea ice.

risks and their management
Climate
• Frostbite
  ▪ Training, awareness, diet, fitness and specialist guides in place
• Extreme Temperature
  ▪ Polar clothing, teamwork, discipline and efficient tent routines
• Whiteout Blizzards
  ▪ Experienced leadership, experienced Polar navigators, communications & safety routines
• Cold weather induced fatigue
  ▪ Correct diet, correct fluids, honesty & teamwork
• Snow Blindness
  ▪ Fur for hoods, snow goggles, snow glasses, team medic

Sea Ice
• Open Water
  ▪ Experienced sea ice guides, satellite imagery, no heroes
• Thin Ice
  ▪ Extra walking around danger areas, strong mindset
- Full & New moons
  ▪ Planning awareness, ice selection, communications

**Polar Bears**
- Bear flares, firearm last resort

**Substantial Ice group management**
- Ice walk control
  ▪ Disciplined guides, passage of information, guides awareness
- Differences with fitness and stamina levels
  ▪ Enough guides to accommodate stragglers, safety & VHF radios
- Potential Group Split
  ▪ Breakdown of team safety stores amongst group
- Cooking Times and camp management
  ▪ Polar guides second role of Ice life leadership
- Logistical challenges for insertion & extraction
  ▪ Size of ice team, group stores & minimum weight