
University of Missouri System

Field Trips: A Guide for Faculty and Staff

What is a University Field Trip?

A field trip is an off-campus educational/instructional experience provided by University faculty/staff to their students which normally involve travel. University field trips expand student's learning, knowledge and understanding of a subject and add realism to the topic of study through active hands-on experience with the rich resources of the local community.

Good planning must precede field trips. Careful attention should be given to trip selection, pre-visit preparation, the trip itself, appropriate follow up, and evaluation. When considering a field trip, faculty/staff are advised to first review existing policies and follow those recommended procedures. Before the activity, you should have:

1. Have documented itinerary and description of activities
2. Review and plan for inherent risks associated with activities
3. Review and plan for liabilities
4. Emergency Plan

Planning the Trip

Here are some steps to consider in planning your trip:

1. Identify any special requirements for participation on the trip, hazards or dangers during travel or on-site that might affect the health and safety of the participants. Consider the need for special clothing or equipment that may be needed because of weather or other conditions.
2. Obtain departmental approval where appropriate.
3. Ask students to advise you of any special disabilities, problems or needs that may need to be accommodated.
4. Obtain signed parental permission forms for any minor students participating.
5. Determine transportation needs such as reservation of vehicles, valid licensed and experienced drivers, and time required for travel.
6. Plan for emergencies such as theft, illness, vehicle emergency, weather delays, student misconduct or threats to the safety of others.

Risk Assessment & Emergency Planning

Review and plan for inherent risks associated with activities.

The University community is involved in a very diverse range of activities from going into a school with minors, being in the remote back country, use of dangerous chemicals, to performing medical procedures on patients and everything in between. Using the itinerary and description of activities, the organizer can plan and seek remedies for dangers and risks involved with the activity. This portion of risk planning is to identify all risks for all parties involved.

Identification should include, if applicable to activity:

- Potential weather difficulties
- Road and terrain hazards
- Wildlife encounters
- Back up locations
- Food-borne illnesses or reactions
- Transportation of the injured
- Accommodations for the disabled
- Presence or absence of participants with specialized training (i.e. CPR, First Aid)
- What if someone misses the transportation
- What are behavioral expectations, including use of alcohol (Student Code of Conduct applies)
- What will happen if behavioral expectations aren't respected
- Minors involved with program

Once the risks and potential issues have been identified, the organizer will need to brainstorm what to do or plan for the risk. Remedies can include specific training for participants (safe handling of chemicals or machinery, survival in a remote location, etc.) or having individuals who have specialized training (CPR, First Aid, White Water Rescue, equipment use certification, etc.) attend the activity.

After assessing and mitigating identified risks, you should also formulate a plan for handling emergencies. Brainstorm what you need to do about the risks that were identified. Ideas for discussion and planning include but are not limited to:

- First aid kits
- Location of nearby hospitals, clinics, or first aid stations
- Location of a nearby emergency gathering point
- A list of all participants and include their emergency contact information
- Emergency contact information for your University advisor
- Contact information for emergency contact on Campus
- Security issues
- Safety issues
- Cell phone coverage in that area
- Use of GPS

The organizer will need to choose a contact person that is away from the group that will be available during the time that the activity is taking place who can assist in cases of emergency. The organizer's emergency contact would be able to make phone calls so the organizer can be attending to the emergency at hand. The emergency contact should inform the Risk Office of the emergency or if the group doesn't arrive back on time and if applicable could call the emergency contacts of any given participant. The contact information for emergency contact on campus should be shared with the entire group. The organizer should plan who will take care of continuing program and who will take care of injured.

It is recommended that some blank Accident/Incident Reports are with the group. When it is hard to think in the aftermath of an incident, the form can guide the organizer through the information-gathering process.

Compliance with University Policies

Faculty, staff, and students must comply with University policies while on field trips just as they would on campus including those concerning alcohol and drug use, vehicle use, student misconduct, smoking, principles of academic freedom, policy on sexual harassment, and consensual relationships.

Transportation

Arrange for vehicles or charter bus transportation well in advance. University employees must accompany the students during the travel time of such trips. Determine the route, stops, timetables, and assign drivers. You'll need a system for communicating and performing student counts so that no one is left behind. Make sure you have an adequate number of drivers for longer trips to allow sufficient rest for drivers. If you intend to use vehicles from rental agencies, be sure follow the insurance guidelines as posted on the [Risk & Insurance Management](#) website. Other recommendations include:

- **Vehicle operators should assure that all their passengers are wearing their seat belts.** The NHTSA indicates that you can reduce your chance of being killed in a rollover by about 75% just by wearing a seat belt.
- **For long distance trips, drivers should rotate every two hours.** We recommend a maximum driving shift of two hours, with no driver taking more than three shifts. The maximum driving day with three drivers should not exceed 18 hours.
- **Driving through the night is not permitted.** Do not drive past midnight. Front passengers should remain awake to help keep the driver alert during all shifts.

Duty to Warn, Protect & Supervise

Communicate information to students in advance about schedules, departure locations, route, rest and meal stops, lodging, emergency procedures, protocol for problems, and rules of conduct. University faculty/staff have a duty to warn their students of any known hazards at the field trip site. University

employees must exercise reasonable care to protect and supervise students while they are participating in a field trip conducted by the University.

Liability Insurance

Any liability of a faculty or staff member associated with conducting a University-sponsored field trip, for acts that fall within that individual's normal job responsibility, is addressed in the [Collected Rules & Regulations Chapter 490.010 Defense and Protection](#) of Employees.

Personal Liability & Responsibility

Faculty and staff have no special duty to protect adult students from their own voluntary actions while on their own personal time. However, prudence may dictate setting limits on students' off-time activities while on a field trip.

Similarly, faculty and staff are personally liable for their own personal activities, and, for any intentionally harmful, willful acts or omissions while conducting the field trip.

University faculty and staff should consider the proximity of personal, social, and instructional activities in a field trip situation. Be aware of how the situation, setting, and your personal conduct may be perceived by your students, and act accordingly.

Contracts

If the activity includes services or the use of equipment or facilities of another business, chances are they will have a form/agreement for the University to sign. This type of form could have many different titles but essentially it is a contract. The organizer should not sign the contract unless they have the delegation to do so. All contracts must be sent to the delegated authorized signer for processing as they have the authority to sign on behalf of the University. Contracts processed outside of Business Services could bring personal responsibility of the signer.

Miscellaneous Forms and Records

Please contact Risk & Insurance Management to discuss activities and assist in determining which forms may be needed. Some suggested forms:

- **Request for Travel** – If your campus requires one, please complete and submit as indicated.
- **Student Sign-up List** - University faculty/staff should have an official list of participants.
- **Medical Insurance** - For extended trips (over 3 days), out of state trips, or trips requiring any special physical skills or fitness level, the University strongly recommends requiring students to have health insurance or a medical care plan.
- **Assumption of Risk/Permission Forms** - Activities may require a form to notify participants of the nature and specified risks that may occur. Minors will need parental permission to participate.

Contact Risk & Insurance Management (573.882.8100) for information on the development and use of such forms.

- **Site Sponsor Contracts – Certificate of University insurance-** The University generally does not agree to hold harmless or indemnify other parties, but will agree to be responsible for all claims arising from negligence of the University or its employees, pursuant to 490.010 Defense and Protection of Employees of the Collected Rules & Regulations. Contact Risk & Insurance Management for Certificate of Self-Insurance to be provided to other parties or for more information.

Reporting Accidents/Incidents

Report incidents to your department head and your [campus contact](#) within 48 hours of the incident. Report injuries immediately. If the incident is an employee injury Contact your [campus workers' compensation contact](#) for information and [claim forms](#). For vehicle accidents report vehicle accidents involving injury to your [campus contact](#) and local police or campus police department (if it occurred on campus). Vehicle accident forms should be completed and returned to them within 48 hours. Please provide a written description of the incident, the names and phone numbers of any witnesses, and forward the information to your campus claims contact if an incident occurs which you believe could lead to a liability claim against the University. Your campus contact will communicate these incidents with Risk & Insurance Management as needed.

Bring It All Together

The organizer can now include in one document the itinerary, the description of activities, the inherent risks associated with the activity, how each liability has been addressed and the emergency plan. The organizer can now provide to the unit a complete look at that activity.

The unit should ask the organizer to review the information with Risk, the club advisor, and if applicable, Environmental Health and Safety, to help with solidifying the plan, reviewing training needed or obtaining risk transfer.

The complete information can be used as an educational tool for participants before the activity, shared with the campus emergency contact and retained with the group for use throughout the activity, as well as making sure the entire group and its gear is headed back to campus. To schedule a Risk review, email risk@umsystem.edu.