# School of Science

**Academic Field Trips/Group Travel with Students (Domestic Trips) Guidelines**

*Please note that this document is an internal policy statement for the School of Science. The Office of Risk Management should be consulted if you have any questions concerning safety and/or liability issues when planning a student field trip or if contracts/documents need to be signed. The Risk Management* *website* (<http://www.controller.psu.edu/Divisions/RiskManagement/indexRM.html>)

*contains information related to insurances, contracts, and a listing of charter bus operators who have met the University’s minimum auto liability insurance requirements.*

# Overview

Academic field trips are a frequent occurrence at Penn State Erie. The School of Science has developed these guidelines to assist departments, faculty, and staff with procedures to ensure the safety of field trip participants.

# Guidelines

The following guidelines apply when planning an academic field trip within the United States:

* A School of Science field trip is any travel with students that is organized by a university School of Science employee acting within an academic capacity.
* All field trips must be approved by the department head (program coordinator) or the School of Science Director.
* If a field trip is academic in nature, it isconsidered to be a University sponsored activity, and a University employee is required to accompany the group on the trip. The employee accompanying the group is “in-charge” of the field trip.
* Any external field trip agreements, applications, releases, or similar documents, all of which are considered “contracts”, must be reviewed by and signed by Risk Management in advance of the field trip (in accordance with policy FN-11: Contract and Leases).
* Personal vehicles should not be used to transport students to the field trip location. The University must provide transportation if the event is sponsored by the University (fleet vehicle or bus transportation). The use of a fleet vehicle or a bus for transportation must be requested and approved by the School of Science prior to the trip.
* If additional transportation occurs at the field trip site through another carrier then these arrangements will most likely require an agreement. These “agreements” are considered contracts and must be reviewed by Risk Management and approved by the School of Science administrative assistant in charge of budgets in advance of the field trip.
* The School of Science has developed a “CHECKLIST” to help facilitate the required information for Academic Field Trips. The checklist must be completed before leaving campus.
* If student participants will be charged a fee, the School of Science administrative assistant in charge of budgets must approve the fee in advance.
* The in-charge of the field trip must provide a copy of a roster of the faculty, staff and students traveling on the field trip prior to travel. The roster must include emergency contact information for each participant.
* The in-charge of the field trip must provide contact their information (cell phone) to all individuals participating on the field trip.
* An itinerary must be provided to the School of Science prior to the field trip.
* In the event of an emergency, Penn State Safety Policy SY03 Emergencies Involving Students, provides specific instructions for notification of emergency contacts.
* Emergency communications should be available at all times. A working cell phone is sufficient for this purpose. If the field trip is in a remote location, emergency transportation should be available at all times during the field trip.
* For lengthy field trips to distant locations within the United States or its territories, the University Policy TR13 International Group Travel Approval Policy and the related *International Group Travel Risk Management Checklist* should be consulted and reviewed. The international checklist provides a good format to follow for lengthy out-of-state trips.

To help protect both the University and its employees, the following should occur:

* Each department or program should have a procedure for faculty to notify their respective Department Head (program coordinator) of field trips in advance. The Academic Field Trip CHECKLIST and all supporting documentation must be approved by the department head and submitted to the School of Science prior to the date of the trip.
* The purpose of the trip must be relevant to the University’s academic mission and any University employee in-charge of or helping to supervise the field trip must be acting within the scope of their employment.
* If an injury occurs on a field trip, the appropriate University injury report forms (different forms for employee vs. non-employee) must be completed. The accident should be reported immediately to the Chief of Police and Safety. The form for employee injuries is on-line at: [http://guru.psu.edu/gfug/instruct/8-05ex.pdf.](http://guru.psu.edu/gfug/instruct/8-05ex.pdf) The form for injuries to non-employees (this includes students) is a paper form “32696 Incident Form” available from Chief of Police and Safety. Questions regarding procedures when an injury occurs should be directed to Chief of Police and Safety or to Risk Management.

A department may implement additional field trip and safety guidelines, but these are the necessary minimum requirements for the School of Science.