

FIELD TRIPS: A Guide for Faculty and Staff

What is a BGSU Field Trip?

A field trip is an off-campus educational/instructional experience provided by BGSU faculty/staff to their students that normally involves travel for the group. A trip to an art museum for art students could be considered a BGSU field trip, but a social gathering or trip without educational purpose would not normally be considered a field trip.

Planning the Trip

There are a number of items you need to consider in planning your trip:

- Identify any special requirements for participation on the trip -- special skills, fitness certification, as well as any hazards or dangers on the trip or at the site that might affect the health and safety of the participants.
- Obtain departmental approval where appropriate.
- Ask students to advise you of any accommodations that may need to be made on the basis of a disability.
- Ask students to have their health care insurance card or information with them.
- Obtain signed parental permission forms for any minor students (under 18 years of age) participating.
- Consider any special clothing or equipment that may be needed because of weather or other conditions.
- Determine transportation needs -- reservation of vehicles, drivers, need for site supervision.
- Plan for emergencies -- theft, illness, vehicle emergency, weather delays, student misconduct or threats to the safety of others, telephone numbers of supervisors.
- Bring along a first aid kit if available. It's a good idea to have someone in the group familiar with first aid and/or CPR.
- If the trip is outside the continental U.S., consult Education Abroad regarding important forms and travel resources.

Transportation by Car or Van

- For field trips, University owned or rented vehicles are recommended.
- Rentals shall be coordinated using one of BGSU's Contracted Suppliers by following the [Vehicle Rental Process](#) outlined on BGSU's Purchasing Department Website. Transportation shall be arranged by the faculty/staff person in charge of the field trip and not the students.
- Renters should waive the purchase of additional insurance as this coverage is often duplicative with insurance the University already carries and the University Travel Expense Policy does not consider this a reimbursable expense unless travel is outside of the United States or Canada.

- For vehicles rented from other than BGSU's Contracted Suppliers a deductible of up to \$1,000 may be charged to the department in the event of loss or damage.
- The use of personal vehicles is strongly discouraged since the university is unable to reimburse for any accident related repairs. If personal vehicles are used, owners of the vehicles shall have automobile liability insurance in an amount sufficient to cover any property damage or liability loss and be responsible for their own personal deductible. Use of personal staff or faculty vehicles will make those employees primarily responsible if any accident should occur.
- Drivers of university owned or rented vehicles are required to complete a [Motor Vehicle Record Statement](#) to verify the driver meets the accepted criteria in order to drive. This form is to be completed 3 days in advance of the trip and sent to the Risk Management Department. Approvals once granted are valid for a one-year period.
- If operating a 15-passenger van, all requirements of the [Van Driver Safety Policy](#) shall be followed. 15-passenger vans are limited to a ten person occupancy limit.
- The university endorses all applicable motor vehicle regulations related to driver responsibility including seat belt use.
- Determine the route, stops, timetables, and assign drivers. You will need a system for communicating and performing student counts.
- Make certain there are a sufficient number of approved drivers. At least 2-4 people should be designated per vehicle as drivers especially if the trip is of considerable distance. This provides a sufficient number of approved drivers in the event the primary driver becomes ill, is injured or needs to rest.
- A Board resolution is in place which prohibits smoking inside vehicles owned or leased by Bowling Green State University.

Transportation by Bus or Plane

- Charter Bus Rentals shall be coordinated using one of BGSU's Contracted Suppliers to ensure conformity with the institution's policies regarding risk transfer (indemnity provisions) and insurance coverage.
- The use of private or charter aircraft is permissible when written authorization is obtained by the President or a Vice President. Additional information on chartering aircraft is found in the institution's Business Policy and Procedure Manual.

Liability Release Form

- The Liability Release, Waiver, Discharge and Agreement Not to Sue form must be completed by every participant prior to leaving on the trip. This form is to be maintained by the department of the academic department for a period of five years.

Health, Safety and Security

- It is recommended that all field trips begin and end on campus.
- Students shall be accompanied to the site by faculty/staff.
- Communicate information to students in advance about schedules, departure locations, route, rest and meal stops, lodging, emergency procedures, and conduct.
- A list of all persons participating in the field trip including emergency contact information shall be retained in the academic department office in the event of an accident or emergency.
- All participants shall be covered by health insurance and carry appropriate verification with them.
- Familiarize students with the site and their surroundings. Faculty/staff should inform students of any known hazards at the field trip site.
- Field trips involving outdoor adventure activities need to be evaluated by organizers for safety risks and to protect students from unnecessary danger.
- University employees must exercise a standard of reasonable care in the supervision of students while they are participating in a University field trip experience.
- Faculty, staff and students must abide by the codes of standards and responsibilities set forth in Staff and Student Handbooks.

Personal Liability and Responsibility

- 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.
- Faculty and staff can be held personally liable for their actions especially when acting outside of the scope of their employment or when such actions are deemed reckless or could cause foreseeable harm.
- Faculty and staff have no special duty to protect adult students from their own voluntary actions while on their own personal time.

Liability Insurance

- Actions of a faculty or staff member associated with conducting a University field trip, or acts within that individual's normal job responsibility are protected by the Ohio Court of Claims provision (ORC Sections 9.86, 9.87 and 109.361) and will be deemed covered by University insurance. The Ohio Court of Claims Act will defend and indemnify University faculty or staff for claims arising from a negligent act or omission while acting within the scope of employment however; deliberately harmful acts or acts that are considered outside the scope of employment are not covered.

Contracts

- A contract is any agreement between the University and another party which is intended to have legal effect, whether or not it is titled "contract." The Office of General Counsel reviews contracts for legal form including appropriate designation of parties, legal consideration (i.e., mutual obligations), jurisdiction, term and liability. All proposed University contracts require review by the Office of General Counsel prior to execution by an authorized signatory.

Injuries and Accidents

- Any employee or participant injured on a field trip experience that is in need of medical attention should go to the nearest hospital.
- Immediately notify Risk Management in the event of any automobile accident or incident involving bodily injury or property damage. Also report incidents to your academic dean or director.
- Employees who are injured must complete a [BGSU Injury and Illness Report Form](#).
- Thefts or criminal activity should be reported to the local police authority for investigation.

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