

TRAVEL POLICIES & GUIDELINES

College guidelines for student travel should be followed. A **Student/Group Travel Liability Form** must be completed and returned to the Office of Student Activities.

Many issues must be considered prior to travel. Proper planning and implementation can help reduce risks. Try to anticipate the risks involved in each aspect of the trip and how they can be avoided.

Perspective: The Campus Legal Monthly (July 1996) notes several basic areas of concern.

They include:

1. Transportation – Any type of travel places participants at risk of injury. This is particularly important when using student drivers and/or university vehicles.
2. Supervision – A college organization can be held liable for improper supervision at an event or activity. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault, harassment, and other criminal activities.
3. Emergencies – Advisors and participants in an activity should be prepared to respond quickly and appropriately to emergencies that might occur. Horseplay” and substance abuse can contribute significantly to incidents and injuries.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU TRAVEL:

- **Private Automobiles** – While private automobiles provide a very cost effective means of transportation, there are disadvantages to this means of transportation. Liability issues must be considered. Be sure that each vehicle has appropriate insurance and that individuals traveling in private vehicles understand that it is at their own risk. Map out a complete route before your trip and stick to it. Identify hospitals and hotel along with phone numbers along the way in case of an emergency. Determine prior to the trip who is responsible for gas expenses and any necessary car repairs. Make sure that each car is serviced before beginning the trip.
- **College Vehicle** – To reserve MCC vans for an organization trip, your advisor must contact the maintenance department in order to reserve the vehicle. Your organization will be billed for gasoline and maintenance following the trip. You must provide your organizational account number at the time of the reservation. MCC requires pre-approval and training for all drivers.
- **Finances** – Carefully plan your budget well in advance. Make sure to anticipate or prepare for emergency expenses. Organizations leaders are often surprised when members who have committed to attend a trip do not show up or back out at the last minute. This often results in a financial loss if non-refundable transportation, lodging or other fees have been paid by the organization. This can be avoided by charging a deposit to members planning to participate. If they are unable to participate and do not notify the coordinator of the trip well in advance, the deposit would be forfeited. If the person fulfills their obligations, the deposit can be refunded. Determine what expenses will be reimbursed to members, and how they will be required to document (i.e. receipts, bills, etc.) these expenses.
- **Contracts** – A contract is a legal document which is binding upon the parties involved. Entering into a contractual agreement is an important matter and should be taken seriously. To avoid any confusion, please forward all contracts to the Office of Student Activities who will have it reviewed by the appropriate administrator.

- **Safety Education** – If your organization is planning an outdoor recreation trip such as rock climbing, hiking, kayaking, etc., it is recommended that the organization sponsor a safety instruction workshop. Although, this is not a foolproof way to prevent accidents or injuries, it can educate members and help avoid mishaps due to individuals who are not knowledgeable regarding proper safety procedures.
- **Supplies** – It is advisable to create a list of supplies needed for the trip. Some items to include in the checklist are:
 - ❖ First Aid Kit
 - ❖ Gas Cards
 - ❖ Flash Light
 - ❖ Maps
 - ❖ Emergency Phone Numbers: These should include emergency numbers for the cities to which you are traveling. When preparing to leave for a trip, separate the release forms for those members actually on the trip. All travel forms should be completed and approved prior to the trip.
- **Pre-Trip Orientation Meeting** – It is recommended that organizations hold a meeting of all participants before the trip occurs. This is a good time to familiarize participants with the itinerary, costs, expectations, and any other details associated with the trip. If the organization is paying for students to attend a convention or workshop, the organization may have certain expectations of which programs the member will attend, how they will dress, how they will report their experiences back to the organization, etc. In addition, the regulations regarding the consumption of alcohol, etc. need to be discussed. Remind students that while they are traveling, they will be representing not only their organization, but MCC as well, thus they should behave accordingly. Suggestions of topics to be covered at the meeting.
 - ❖ Safety
 - ❖ Expected Behavior (including alcohol use)
 - ❖ Departure times
 - ❖ Release forms