



TITLE: Piedmont Technical College Student Field Trip or Group Travel Procedures

PROCEDURE NUMBER: 3-2-3020.2

RELATED POLICY AND PROCEDURES: 3-2-3020 Student Activities and Organizations

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY: Student Affairs and Academic Affairs

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Off-campus student/group travel in conjunction with academic, co-curricular, and college-sponsored programs is beneficial to learning. PTC acknowledges the need for certain regulations and procedures to promote safety, maximize educational value, manage risk, minimize liability, and enable appropriate response in times of crisis.

As such, this procedure outlines travel guidelines for individual students and recognized student organization travel related to field trips and group travel.

It is the responsibility of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Vice President for Academic Affairs to maintain this procedure.

I. Definitions

1. **Recognized student organization** - an organization formally recognized by the college and whose members are enrolled students.

2. **Field trip** - an off-campus education-related experience requiring student travel by state or commercial vehicle that occurs on a specific date, time, and plan. An overnight stay is not required. A field trip may or may not include participant expense.
3. **Group Travel** - student travel by a class, college recognized club, or student group with at least one full-time PTC employee for education-related workshops, conferences, or study abroad opportunities. Group travel may include day or overnight stays of various length and may require travel via governmental, public, or commercial vehicle(s).
4. **Field trip or group travel sponsor** – a full time faculty, staff or administrator who requested and received approval to travel with the student(s) or group(s). Field trip and group travel sponsors are usually course or program instructors or club or organization sponsors.

II. Field Trip Sponsor Responsibilities

Field Trip or group travel must be initiated by full-time employees of Piedmont Technical College who accept the responsibilities of trip or group sponsor. Additional college employees may serve as trip chaperones.

The Field Trip or group travel sponsor must advise students of rules and regulations, verbally and in writing, regarding conduct during the trip including, but not limited to, hotel curfew and responsibility for obligations, purchases or damages incurred by the students/group prior to travel. The planned itinerary and transportation details should also be shared with the participants prior to the trip.

In the case of Travel Involving Minors, the Field Trip or group travel sponsor is responsible for ensuring that the written consent of parents/guardians have been obtained prior to travel.

Further, it is the responsibility of the field trip or group travel sponsor to assure compliance with College policy and procedures at all times.

III. Student Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the student participants in field trips or group travel opportunities to advise the field trip or group travel sponsor of any known limitations, disabilities, certified medical conditions, or needs that may require an accommodation.

At all times, students will be subject to enforcement of the PTC Student Code of Conduct and local, state, and federal laws while traveling on an authorized trip. The college shall not be liable for any injury, cost, damage or other loss resulting from a participant's failure to comply with College rules and regulations.

The Field Trip Sponsor must immediately report any disciplinary issue to the Dean of Students and submit written documentation of the incident using the college's misconduct reporting form upon return from the approved field trip or group travel.

It is the responsibility of participants and/or parents/guardians to inform the College of any existing certified medical condition that requires medication or accommodation. Further, all participants with said condition(s) must be able to keep, monitor, and administer all required medications without assistance; however, if assistance is required, the College reserves the right to determine what level of assistance is reasonable and does not negatively affect the rights or participation of other students.

IV. Required Documentation

A. Field trip or Group Travel Sponsor Documentation

All requests for student/group travel must be initiated by a full time employee of the college. The following documentation, found on PTC Pathway under "Documents and Forms," is required:

- A **Field Trip or Group Travel Request Form** must be submitted and approved no less than (ten) 10 working days prior to the date of departure for field trips and no less than 60 days for group travel. For those departments with PTC Foundation Accounts, the trip must have all required college approvals before requesting Foundation assistance with trip payments.
- A **Field Trip or Group Travel Information Form** must be completed and provided to the Sponsor's supervisor. A roster of all participating students and faculty/staff must be provided one (1) week prior to departure for field trips and 60 days for group travel. This form must also be filed with the Campus Police department.

B. Student Documentation

In addition to the approved field trip or group travel request and information forms, the following are the minimally required documents that must be obtained *from each student participant* prior to trip departure. Participants unwilling or unable to provide required documentation will not be permitted to participate in the field trip or group travel opportunity.

- **Travel and Trip Liability Waiver:** In order that students, parents, and/or legal guardians may fully appreciate and assess the risks associated with the off-campus activity and make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in the activity, or limit participation in certain aspects of the field trip, all student/group travelers and/or their parent/guardian must complete a Travel and Trip Liability Waiver form.

- **Medical Release (Required for Minors):** In the case of an emergency, a medical release is required for any participating minors. This release is included on the Travel and Trip Liability Form

One week before the trip occurs, field trip and group travel sponsors must submit original signed copies of the Travel and Trip Liability Waiver to the Office of Student Affairs, where the document will be imaged and will become a part of each participating student's record. Sponsors must retain copies of these forms during the trip.

V. Modes of Travel/Transportation

Travel distance, length of stay, budget and safety are the primary considerations when selecting mode(s) of transportation for an approved field trip or group travel. Transportation requirements must be included on the travel request form and approved prior to making travel arrangements.

Absent extraordinary circumstances (specifically approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs or the Vice President for Student Affairs), no personal vehicles shall be used by any college personnel for transporting students on field trips. This does not preclude adult students from providing their own transportation to and/or from events or sanctioned travel opportunities, provided the student notifies faculty/staff in advance of departure and provides all required documentation as outlined in Section III of this procedure. In such instances, the student assumes all liability as a driver and waives college liability for their actions as a driver. Field trip and group travel transportation offered by Piedmont Technical College shall be conducted by:

- Fully insured, properly licensed professional drivers using either licensed commercial/charter vehicles or vehicles owned and maintained by the State of South Carolina. All vehicles must meet all appropriate safety standards, including but not limited to, use of passenger restraints and occupant protection requirements.
- Faculty members, staff, and/or club sponsors driving college vehicles or vehicles rented by the College must meet the licensure and safety requirements to operate the assigned vehicle.

Each mode of transportation always requires that applicable state laws and mode specific safety precautions be followed.

- **Vehicles Owned, Leased, Rented or Borrowed by the College:** All drivers operating college-owned, rented, leased, or borrowed vehicles as part of approved student/group travel must be a fulltime faculty or staff members, and possess valid South Carolina or other state driver's license.
- **Commercial Travel:** Faculty, staff, and students traveling by commercial transportation must comply with all laws regulating travel and the rules of the specific carrier.

Safety Requirements:

Drivers and passengers must act responsibly and use sound judgment when traveling during field trips or group travel. Further, drivers must

- Obey all traffic laws and regulations including posted speed limits.
- Not drive impaired or under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or transport or possess alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, unauthorized firearms or other types of weapons as indicated in the Code of Conduct.
- Wear seat belts at all times. The number of occupants in the vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts.
- The vehicle manufacturer's recommended load capacity must not be exceeded. (See owner manuals for specific instructions.)

VI. Unapproved Expenses

Any unapproved travel-related expense incurred by the student, faculty or staff traveler is the responsibility of the respective traveler. Students must be informed that the College assumes no responsibility for providing student/groups with funds in case of unanticipated delays or other incidents that may require additional expenditures. Reimbursement for emergency circumstances may be considered.

VII. Trip Contingencies and Emergencies**Trip Contingencies:**

Field trip and group travel sponsors should develop contingency plans in advance of the approved travel. Examples of unplanned circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following: student needs to return early because of a personal or family emergency; student violates established conduct rules; weather, transportation delays, cancellations that require overnight housing. Field Trip or group travel sponsors should seek to understand contract limitations and restrictions, whether they arise from rental vehicle, lodging, or other agreements associated with student travel.

Emergencies:

In the event of an emergency (e.g., car accidents, injuries, hospitalizations or death), field trip or group travel sponsors will immediately seek professional assistance as required and then immediately notify:

1. the listed emergency contact(s) for the student(s) involved,
2. the Vice President for Student Affairs
3. the Vice President for Human Resources
4. their immediate supervisor.

If the participant having the emergency is a college employee, the Human Resource Office should be notified.

VIII. Special Requirements for Travel Involving Minors

The following requirements are specific to travel involving minors. These requirements are in addition to other procedures outlined herein.

- All participants in overnight travel and events must be rising seventh-grade students or older. Only activities directly related to scheduled events shall be allowed, with absolutely no participation in unscheduled, unauthorized, or unnecessarily risky activities. Activities will be outlined, in detail, on the travel itinerary and strictly adhered.
- For minors to participate, the student-to-chaperone ratio should not exceed 10:1. Field trip or group travel chaperones must be full or part time employees of the college. Exceptions may be evaluated on a case-by- case basis and must be pre-approved.