

Field Trips, Sporting Trips & School Activities Guide

Risk Management & Insurance



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A Guide to Planning Field Trips, Sporting Trips and School Activities

Field trips can be very educational, enjoyable and memorable events for students with proper planning. The Area Superintendents' Offices and the Risk Management & Insurance (RM & I) department have worked jointly to provide this more comprehensive guide to planning field, sporting or other school-related trips and activities involving Pinellas County Schools' students.

As you plan field trips and out-of-school activities for Pinellas County Schools' students, please use this guidebook to help answer questions and plan the safest activity possible.

This guide, along with the “**Approved Field Trip List**” and the “**Approved Commercial Carriers List**,” will provide you with safety guidelines, information about transportation, car seats, insurance, references to all related PCS forms and more.

Please refer to current Board Policy [2340](#) governing field trips.

We hope you find this guide helpful as you plan educational trips for Pinellas County Schools' students.

Field Trip Forms

The following are PCS forms you may need to plan field trips. They are hyperlinked for your convenience.

<u><i>Document Description</i></u>	<u><i>Form</i></u>
Approved Field Trip List (created and maintained by the Area 4 Office)	Field Trip List
Application for Field Trip Not On Approved List (complete if necessary and send to your Area Office for approval)	1-294
Boat/Marine Activity Informed Consent	3-3023
Commercial Carrier Letter of Agreement (A helpful document schools can use to coordinate a trip with Authorized Carriers)	See page 24
Field Trip Information for Overnight Stay (Complete and send to your Area Office for approval)	1-2949
Field Trip/Activities Permission Form	3-2718
Field Trip/Activities Vehicle Information Form	3-2719
Optional Multi-Day School Sponsored Field Trip Parental Permission for OTC Medication Administration to Student by Designee	2-3084
Pre-Departure Boating Checklist	See page 28
Pre-Trip Checklist for Field Trips (for school/event personnel to help plan field trips)	See page 27

Frequently Asked Questions

Who compiles the Approved Field Trip List?

The Area 4 Office. Please contact them with any questions you may have about this list.

Who should I call to coordinate a field trip not already on the Approved Field Trip list?

For field trips not on the **Approved Field Trip List**, you will need to fill out an *Application for Field Trip not on Approved List* (PCS form 1-294) and submit to your Area Office.

Should I use a school bus or can I use private vehicles?

The preferred method of transportation is always by school bus – their safety record is unsurpassed. However, since school buses are not always available, we maintain an Authorized Commercial Carrier List which may be used to select a carrier to transport students.

Only as a last resort should private passenger vehicles be considered and, if they are to be used, please be sure to review the requirements governing their use in another section of this guide titled: [Private Vehicle Guidelines](#).

Who do I contact for reserving a school bus for a field trip?

Contact the Transportation department, or click [here](#) for their website.

If we do use private passenger vehicles for our trip, must the vehicle and driver be Florida registered and licensed?

Yes! Both the vehicle and the driver must have a valid Florida registration and a valid Florida driver's license.

Do I need to copy the driver's license and insurance card of the operator of a private passenger vehicle being used on a trip?

Yes! This shows due diligence and ensures that the operators are properly licensed and insured.

Are SUV's allowed to transport students on field trips?

Yes, as long as the wheelbase is greater than 110 inches. For assistance please call Armand (Skip) Paquette in RM & I at 588-6078.

Are trucks allowed to transport students on field trips?

Yes as long as they have not been modified (lift kit, oversized mud tires, etc.)

What is the Authorized Commercial Carrier List and why do I have to use it?

In the event a commercial carrier is the method of transportation you have selected, it is required that you use only those listed on the [Authorized Commercial Carriers List](#). The carriers on this list have been selected through a formal bid process and meet our insurance and safety requirements. Their prices are fixed and may be found by clicking [here](#).

How does a company get on the Authorized Commercial Carrier List?

Risk Management and Purchasing issued a bid to develop the Commercial Carriers List. Only those carriers on this list may transport students. This list is in effect until further notice.

If you have any questions please contact RM & I at 588-6078.

Do I need to check with any person or organization before I decide to take students on a field trip to a foreign country?

Yes! Besides obtaining proper authorization from school officials, the United States State Department “**Traveler Warning List**” must be consulted. Any country on this list is not eligible for any Pinellas County Schools field trip or tour. The web link to this site is:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.

Are kayaking and snorkeling allowed on field trips?

For the safety of the students, no. Seining is allowed.

Is there an approved list for boats?

Yes. RM & I has developed an Authorized Water Vessel Commercial Carrier List. Please click [here](#) for the list.

Is Student Accident Insurance required for field trips?

No.

Can we use a Tour Company?

Yes. There is no approved Tour Company List. You can use any tour company you choose. However, the bus company they book with must be on our Authorized Commercial Carrier List.

A Few Basic Rules to Remember about Field Trips

- ✓ No student is to be denied participation due to lack of money.
- ✓ All money must go through proper school bookkeeping procedures.
- ✓ Both male and female chaperones are required on overnight trips if both male and female students are involved.
- ✓ The student to chaperone ratio is 10:1.

To ensure the safety and security of the students and staff during the field trip, please make sure that:

- ✓ The trip is well planned and organized.
- ✓ Parents are advised and have submitted the appropriate signed permission slips for their child.
- ✓ The students and the chaperones know the schedule, their roles and what to do in case of an emergency.
- ✓ The school has a copy of the trip itinerary and emergency contact information

Tips

- ✓ Give everyone on the trip a copy of the itinerary with important information such as:
 - The name, address & phone number of the lodging accommodations
 - Cell phone numbers of trip organizers and chaperones
 - Name of the bus company
 - Emergency contact information
- ✓ Before departure, be sure the school has a copy of the trip itinerary with all contact information for the chaperones, parents, tour agency, bus carrier, lodging location, etc.

School Buses are the Safest Way to Transport Students

Why?



1. School buses are designed and built with many special safety features to minimize potential injuries to passengers.
2. School buses are rigorously inspected, maintained and driven only by qualified school district employees.
3. School bus drivers complete a comprehensive training course, which heavily emphasizes safety and defensive driving techniques. Drivers must pass an annual physical, an initial employee background screening, Florida CDL licensing requirements and must maintain a favorable driving record.
4. PCS has school buses with special anchor points and safety harnesses for pre-K aged children.

Whenever possible, school buses should be used to transport students of all ages for sporting events, field trips and school activities. The Transportation Department has special buses with anchor points and harnesses available so that Pre-K aged children can safely travel in school buses. Please call the Transportation Department to learn more.

School buses should be used for all *Regular* school transportation. *Regular Transportation* is defined by F.S.1006.22 as transportation that is part of a scheduled series or sequence of events to the same location (e.g. to school each day).

PCS Guidelines for student loading capacity of a standard school bus
65 Elementary School-age students (maximum)
60 Middle School-age students (maximum)
55 High School-age students (maximum)

While school buses are the recommended mode of transportation for field trips, sporting events and other school-related activities, they may not always be available or practical. In those cases schools, at the discretion of the Principal, may use:

1. Approved Commercial Carriers
2. Public Transportation via PSTA if the trip is part of curriculum or aligned to the students learning process.
3. Private Passenger Vehicles
4. Rental Vehicles

Safety Policies for Out-of-State Travel, Drive-time limits and 10/15-Passenger Vans

Pinellas County Schools has implemented the following field trips/activities vehicle guidelines to comply with safety recommendations provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Florida Department of Education and sound safety and risk management practices.

- ❑ A commercial carrier selected from the Pinellas County Schools **Authorized Commercial Carrier List** must provide all travel outside of the state of Florida. State law provides limited protection through sovereign immunity against liability claims in case of accidents and injury; however, after crossing the state line, sovereign immunity protection is gone and liability levels are unlimited.

- ❑ If the drive time to or from an in-state location is reasonably anticipated to be more than 9 hours, a commercial carrier selected from the Pinellas County Schools **Authorized Commercial Carrier List** will be used instead of rental vehicles.

- ❑ The use of passenger vans designed to transport more than 9 students is prohibited due to safety recommendations of the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration and the Florida Department of Education.

Other Prohibited Vehicles

- Department of Education Technical Assistance Note No: T-07-03 (TAN) dated August 30, 2006 recommends the prohibition of student transport in the SUV category of multipurpose passenger vehicles with a wheelbase of 110 inches or less that are required by federal motor vehicle standards to display a rollover warning label. Since vehicles change over time, please check the manufacturer's web site or a reliable site, such as edmunds.com, to determine the vehicle's wheel base. Any SUV category of multipurpose passenger vehicle with a wheel base of 110 inches or less that is required by federal motor vehicle standards to display a rollover warning label is prohibited from transporting students.
- Convertibles or any soft or open top vehicle.
- Jeep-type vehicles (e.g., Wrangler type models, Suzuki Samurai, etc.).
- Motorcycles.
- Motor homes (defined as any vehicle having living facilities).
- Any vehicle that has had its suspension, tires, body, seating, bumpers, etc., altered from its original design specifications.
- Any vehicle that has had any safety device removed, disabled or altered (e.g., airbags, seatbelts/harnesses).
- Any vehicle in an obvious state of disrepair or shows signs of neglect, lack of maintenance, etc.

Student Safety Guidelines

According to Florida Law:

School students **may only be transported in designated vehicle seating positions** (e.g., on a seat). Makeshift seats and doubling up to squeeze more students per vehicle is not permitted.

Students **must use the manufacturer's installed occupant crash protection devices at all times** and in all seating positions (e.g., an auto with four seatbelts can transport a maximum of four persons). This includes mandatory use of seatbelts on school buses equipped with seatbelts.

Children ages three (3) years old and younger **must be secured in an approved child safety seat** at all times.



Please remember

- **Children 12 and under must ride in the rear seat** if the vehicle has a front passenger air bag. The forces from the inflation of the air bag in an accident **CAN KILL** small children/adults.
- Never put a child's car seat in the front seat of an auto. The back seat is the safest place for children.
- Older students in the front seat should sit as far back as possible to minimize injury potential from air bag inflation.
- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children 5 to 15 years of age.
- The most important life-saving device in the history of the automobile is the three-point self-adjusting seat belt.
- Air bags are only intended to supplement seat belts.
- Students should be well-behaved to avoid distracting the driver
- Chaperones may need to assist the driver in maintaining order.

Private Vehicle Guidelines

The **Field Trip/Activities Permission Form** (PCS Form [3-2718](#)) informs parents/guardians of transportation arrangements and should be used by all field trip participants.

Please do not alter the front of the document.

Additional information about a field trip may be attached or copied onto the back of the form. A sample Field Trip Permission Form is located in the last section of this guide for your use. You can also find it via the Pinellas County Schools intranet website in the Central Printing Area.

School Board Policy for the use of private vehicles on field trips states:

1. No motor homes*, motorcycles or vehicles having a soft or open-top (e.g. convertibles or jeep-types).
2. All vehicles must be registered, insured, and in good working order as determined by school personnel.
3. The principal has the authority to prohibit any vehicle from use for transportation of students at any time.
4. No drivers under eighteen (18) years of age are permitted when transportation is provided or arranged by the school district with the following exception: *Students who have a valid Florida license and are at least seventeen (17) years of age may transport other students to school activities on a case by case basis with the prior approval of the school administrator.* The parents or guardians of students being transported in this manner must be notified that a student will be driving and must give written permission.

Important Information about the Use of Private Vehicles:

Parents and other responsible adults who provide student transportation for District sponsored field trips, events and activities in privately owned vehicles, at the request of a Principal or District administrator, have the same exposure to, and protections from risks of personal liability as do employees and registered volunteers when acting within the scope of their employment, or when performing their assigned volunteer duties.

Employees, volunteers, parents and other responsible adults who transport students in their own vehicle should be aware, that, in the event of a motor vehicle accident when transporting students, the vehicle owner's auto liability insurance policy will always be primary with regard to paying liability claims.

The mandatory seat belt use guidelines should be emphasized.

*Motor Homes are defined as any vehicle having integrated living facilities.

Child Seat Restraint Guidelines

Private vehicle owners are required by the Florida Child Seat Restraint Law to properly buckle children. The child's age and size dictates the location and proper restraint method.

Legal "MUSTS" according to FS Title XXIII Chapter [316.613](#) and [316.614](#)

- If the child is 5 years of age or younger, provide for protection of the child by properly using a crash-tested, federally approved child restraint device.
- For children aged through 3 years, such restraint device must be a separate carrier or a vehicle manufacturer's integrated child seat.
- For children aged 4 through 5 years, a separate carrier, an integrated child seat, or a child booster seat may be used.
- Everyone else must use a seat belt.

Make it safer...

- * Infant car seats should be in a rear-facing position in the back seat.
- * Select a car seat based on your child's age and size, choose a seat that fits in your vehicle, and use it every time.
- * Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions (check height and weight limits) and read the vehicle owners' manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or lower anchors and a tether, if available.
- * To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.
- * All children under 12 should sit in the back seat.

For more detailed information on car seats for children by age and size please click [here](#) for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's car seat recommendations.

Field Trip Vehicle Insurance Information

All field trip drivers must complete the Field Trip Vehicle Information Form (PCS 3-2719). The information provided in that document should be **verified by a school representative** and maintained in the school file. In order to complete that form, field trip drivers need to present their vehicle insurance card.



The *minimum* insurance coverage required for private passenger automobiles used for school-related transportation is:

- Bodily Injury Insurance (BI) \$10,000/\$20,000
- Property Damage Insurance (PD) \$10,000
- Personal Injury Protection (PIP) \$10,000

Loaned or Borrowed Vehicle Guidelines

Commercial, private and business partnerships sometimes offer to *loan* vehicles (with or without their own driver) to schools for use in student transportation. In these instances, insurance and driver license requirements are much the same as for any other field trip.

A school staff member must verify and photocopy the driver's license and insurance information.

Special Insurance Requirements



The *minimum* insurance coverage required for vehicles with a seating capacity of 16 or more persons (including the driver):

- Bodily Injury Insurance (BI) \$100,000/\$300,000
- Property Damage Insurance (PD) \$50,000
- Personal Injury Protection (PIP) \$10,000
- Comprehensive To cover the value of the vehicle

Special Driver License Requirements



If a vehicle has seating capacity of 16 persons or more (including the driver):

- Commercial Driver License (CDL) Class “C” is required with a “P” passenger endorsement
- If the vehicle is equipped with air brakes, the air brake restriction code “1” must not appear on the CDL license



When transporting students in very large vehicles, (i.e., seating capacity approximately 30 persons or more) a class “B” CDL license or higher insurance requirements may be necessary.

Please contact Risk Management & Insurance at (727) 588-6078 for guidance.

Rental Vehicle Guidelines

When automobiles or mini-vans are needed to provide student transportation for District sponsored field trips, events or activities, the vehicles should be rented from the company holding the current State Contract for auto rentals. Contact the Accounting Department for the name of the current State Contract auto rental company and for further details on renting vehicles.

IMPORTANT INSURANCE INFORMATION

When renting an approved vehicle from the current State Contract for school sponsored field trips, events or activities, primary third party liability insurance coverage (nominal) is provided in the rental cost.

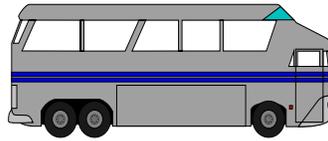
In addition, purchase of the daily Collision Damage Waiver, (CDW) or Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) fee is not required. The auto rental company assumes all loss damage to the vehicle due to fire, accident or collision.

NOTE

Supplemental Liability Coverage of \$1,000,000 minimum is required to be purchased and included in all rental contracts. In addition, when renting vehicles from a company other than the current State Contract, the daily Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) protection must be added to the rental contract.

Rental Insurance Terminology:

- *Collision Damage Waiver* (CDW) - Pays the full replacement cost of loss or damage to the rented vehicle if there is theft, crash, vandalism, etc.
- *Supplemental Liability Coverage* (SLI) - Pays for bodily injury or property damage caused to the other parties involved in an auto accident if you are found to be at fault.
- Note on *Personal Injury Protection* (PIP) – As per Florida Law, the driver and occupants of a rental vehicle are covered by their own family’s automobile policy if injured in a motor vehicle crash.



Commercial Carrier Guidelines

Schools sometimes use commercial carriers (e.g., charter buses, limousines or other vehicles for hire) to transport students for field trips, sports events, and other activities.

A listing of the properly licensed and insured carriers authorized to transport students, called the **Authorized Commercial Carrier List**, is generated by RM & I and is posted on the district web page. Please click [here](#) to get to the web page.

There are various levels and types of insurance requirements based on the carrier's size, vehicle capacity, etc. Drivers of large vehicles must meet certain CDL licensing requirements and are subject to strict DOT regulations for on-duty/off-duty hour limits.

Carriers have been advised that 10/15-passenger vans are prohibited for use transporting PCS students. RM & I **does not** guarantee the quality of customer service provided by commercial carriers on the *Authorized Carrier List*.

Under extenuating circumstances the *Authorized Commercial Carrier List* may not be adequate to fill a unique transportation need. If you have a special circumstance, contact RMI at 588-6078.

Additional Commercial Carrier Considerations

- The best way to decide which firm to use is by asking PCS staff members from other schools about their experiences. Word of mouth can weed out carriers providing poor service. *Please inform Risk Management of any negative experiences to possibly eliminate the carrier from future use.*
- The driver, based on legal requirements and company policy, will make decisions pertaining to the operation of a motorcoach.
- Allowing food and drinks inside a charter vehicle is a privilege granted by the Charter Company and may be rescinded at the discretion of the driver.
- Chaperones are responsible to see that the vehicle is left clean and tidy at the end of the trip.
- Deviations from the itinerary may result in extra charges or may be determined to be impossible if they conflict with the legal requirements for the driver or for the Charter Company.
- Student behavior is the responsibility of the chaperones. The charter driver is entirely within his/her rights to pull over and park any time student behavior causes a safety concern.

Per safety guidelines, students may not double up on motor coach seats designed for one passenger.



Boat Ride/Marine Science Field Trip Guidelines

Schools sometimes request approval to incorporate boat rides as a part of a field trip. As with other forms of student transportation, boat owners/operators must comply with certain safety and insurance criteria.

The use of personal boats for field trips is not permitted.

Only agencies or organizations meeting the minimum criteria of the Risk Management Department may transport people on behalf of Pinellas County Schools.

ALL PCS STUDENTS MUST WEAR LIFE JACKETS (PFDs) WHILE ON DECK DURING BOATING FIELD TRIPS WHEN THE BOAT IS NOT TIED TO THE DOCK.
Life jackets are not considered as "emergency only" devices, but important safety precautions for the entire duration of any boating activity.



Choose a vendor from the [Authorized Water Vessel Commercial Carrier List](#)
There are various levels and types of insurance requirements based on the boat's size and capacity as well as U.S. Coast Guard certification, training and equipment requirements. Please contact RM&I to arrange for a boat field trip. Vendors should contact RM&I for detailed information on becoming authorized.



Both a *Boat/Marine Activity Informed Consent Form* (click [here](#)) and a *Field Trip/Activities Permission Form* (PCS form [3-2718](#)) must be signed by each student's parent or guardian prior to participation!

Please do not alter the front of either document. Additional information about the field trip may be attached or copied onto the back of the form.



Before Boat Departure:

1. Assure that vessel has the appropriate safety equipment and is in satisfactory working order by visual inspection at the time of departure.

Complete a PRE-DEPARTURE BOATING CHECKLIST.

A copy of an inspection checklist is available on page 28 of this guide for your use. Items that should be present prior to setting foot on the boat include, but are not limited to the following:

Appropriately-sized Personal Flotation Devices (PFD-life jackets)	
whistle or horn	lights
first aid kit	fire extinguisher
flares/distress signals	rope
life ring or other water-retrieval equipment	Back-fire flame arrestor
communications equipment for emergency use	
GPS equipment	tools
spare parts	
a minimum of two ventilation ducts in the engine compartment when it is enclosed	

2. Monitor the weather; cancel/modify the trip if student safety is compromised.
3. Take final responsibility for student safety in all cases except vessel operational issues.
4. Remind students that *swimming, kayaking and snorkeling are not allowed* as part of the boating/marine science excursion and enforce the rule during the trip.



The **vendor should file a “Float Plan”** to determine approximate location of the boat if necessary in an emergency. The school should acquire a copy prior to the trip and leave a copy of the Float Plan at the school for emergency use.

Field Trips to Foreign Countries

Field trips or tours to foreign countries pose some unique issues for planners. Besides all of the safety tips mentioned in previous sections, the foreign country field trip/tour planner needs to understand the following:

- ✓ Authorized tours are those activities sponsored by the schools, which have both educational and recreational value to the students. Students' participation in tours must be during a time when school is not in regular session.
- ✓ The building principal and the Superintendent, or designee, shall approve all school-sponsored tours, at least two (2) months in advance of the tour. The request shall include objectives, itinerary, plans, budget, and method of financing.
- ✓ A faculty sponsor shall accompany a school tour group and assume responsibility for the proper conduct of all students on tour. The appropriate number of adult supervisors shall be determined by the Superintendent or (designee). Tours shall be conducted according to Board policies.
- ✓ The faculty sponsor shall file a complete evaluation report with the building principal within one week following a tour, and this report shall indicate how the educational objectives of the tour were accomplished as well as any unusual occurrences.
- ✓ School-sponsored tours shall not be financed with school system funds. The principal, in accordance with School Board policies and procedures, shall approve the method of soliciting funds for tours.
- ✓ Each student shall obtain a written consent form duly executed by the parent or guardian, which shall be submitted to the principal prior to participating in the tour.
- ✓ School Board employees shall not receive compensation from travel agencies or private organizations involved with the tour, with the exception that free passage and other related expenses may be granted for supervisory duties.
- ✓ Travel study programs are those class and student organization activities planned cooperatively by students and faculty and shall be viewed as school-sponsored activities. Student participation shall be voluntary. Students who do not participate shall not be adversely affected in terms of their course requirements, grades, or eligibility to participate in other activities of the class or group.

Additionally, no foreign country on the U.S. Department of State "Travel Warning List" is eligible for any Pinellas County Schools' field trip or tour. The State Department's Travel Warning page may be accessed at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.

Additionally, the State Department has these following safety tips:

BEFORE YOU GO

What to Bring

Safety begins when you pack. To avoid being a target, dress conservatively. Don't wear expensive looking jewelry. A flashy wardrobe or one that is too casual can mark you as a tourist. As much as possible, avoid the appearance of affluence.

Always try to travel light. You can move more quickly and will be more likely to have a free hand. You will also be less tired and less likely to set your luggage down, leaving it unattended.

Carry the minimum amount of valuables necessary for your trip and plan a place or places to conceal them. Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked in a hotel safe. When you have to carry them on your person, you may wish to conceal them in several places rather than putting them all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid handbags, fanny packs and outside pockets that are easy targets for thieves. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

If you wear glasses, pack an extra pair. Bring them and any medicines you need in your carry-on luggage.

To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a certain drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country first.

Bring travelers checks and one or two major credit cards instead of cash.

Pack an extra set of passport photos along with a photocopy of your passport information page to make replacement of your passport easier in the event it is lost or stolen.

Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality. If possible, lock your luggage.

Consider getting a telephone calling card. It is a convenient way of keeping in touch. If you have one, verify that you can use it from your overseas location(s). Access numbers to U.S. operators are published in many international newspapers. Find out your access number before you go.

What to Leave Behind

Don't bring anything you would hate to lose. Leave at home:

- Valuable or expensive-looking jewelry,

- Irreplaceable family objects,
- All unnecessary credit cards,
- Social Security card, library cards, and similar items you may routinely carry in your wallet.

Leave a copy of your itinerary with family or friends at home in case they need to contact you in an emergency.

A Few Things to Bring AND Leave Behind

Make two photocopies of your passport identification page, airline tickets, driver's license and the credit cards that you plan to bring with you. Leave one photocopy of this data with family or friends at home; pack the other in a place separate from where you carry your valuables.

Leave a copy of the serial numbers of your travelers' checks with a friend or relative at home. Carry your copy with you in a separate place and, as you cash the checks, cross them off the list.

What to Learn About Before You Go

Security. The Department of State's **Consular Information Sheets** are available for every country of the world. They describe entry requirements, currency regulations, unusual health conditions, the crime and security situation, political disturbances, areas of instability, and special information about driving and road conditions. They also provide addresses and emergency telephone numbers for U.S. embassies and consulates. In general, the Sheets do not give advice. Instead, they describe conditions so travelers can make informed decisions about their trips.

In some dangerous situations, however, the Department of State recommends that Americans defer travel to a country. In such a case, a **Travel Warning** is issued for the country in addition to its Consular Information Sheet.

Public Announcements are a means to disseminate information about relatively short-term and/or trans-national conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers. They are issued when there is a perceived threat, even if it does not involve Americans as a particular target group. In the past, Public Announcements have been issued to deal with short-term coups, pre-election disturbances, and violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.

You can access Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements 24-hours a day in several ways.

Internet

The most convenient source of information about travel and consular services is [the Consular Affairs home page](http://travel.state.gov). The web site address is <http://travel.state.gov>. If you do not have access to the Internet at home, work or school, your local library may provide access to the Internet.

Telephone

The Overseas Citizens Services at 1-888-407-4747 can answer general inquiries on safety and security overseas. Callers who are unable to use toll-free numbers, such as those calling from overseas, may obtain information and assistance during these hours by calling 1-202-501-4444.

Letter of Agreement for Motor Coach Services

School Checklist to help you make arrangements with an Authorized Carrier (3 pages)

For this form to be regarded as a formal letter of agreement between the school and the motor coach company, it must be completed and signed by a school representative and then signed by a representative of the motor coach company. A copy should be returned to the school for file purposes.

Select a motor coach company from the Authorized Carrier's List

- Name of Company contracted: _____
- Name of Company Contact person: _____
- Phone number: (_____) _____ - _____
- Fax number: (_____) _____ - _____
- E-mail address: _____
- Mailing address: _____

Be ready to provide the motor coach company the following information

- Name of school and group sponsoring trip _____
- Trip departure date ____/____/____ Time ____ AM PM
- Pick-up location _____
- Trip itinerary--describe in detail where the bus(es) must transport students
- Trip return date ____/____/____ Time ____ AM PM
- Drop-off location _____
- Total number of passengers going on trip (students, teachers, chaperones, etc.) _____
- If any unusual equipment/luggage (e.g. band equipment) is to be transported, specify what type and how much?

- List any special requirements for the bus(es) (e.g. handicapped accessible, large equipment storage)

Confirm with the Motor Coach Company

- Name of emergency contact person _____
- All-hours phone number (_____) _____ - _____
- Number of drivers required _____
- Total trip mileage _____
- If two or more drivers are required, how and when should the school expect the drivers to rotate driving duties? _____

Specify seating capacity and special requirements for each bus/vehicle required

Bus/vehicle Number	Seating Capacity	Special Requirements	ID Number
Vehicle 1			
Vehicle 2			
Vehicle 3			
Vehicle 4			

Identify Trip Costs and Payment method

What is the motor coach company's fee for transportation services and how is it computed?

Daily rate per bus \$ _____

Mileage fee \$ _____ per mile

Other fees and costs \$ _____

The school may be responsible for other charges. Itemize such charges in detail

Total charges for all transportation services estimated \$ _____

Who will pay for the services (i.e. who should be invoiced if not the school representative who made the arrangements?)

Name, address and phone number of person coordinating activity for billing purposes

Contact person at company to address billing related questions _____

Confirmation by School of Arrangements for Carrier Services

To be completed by the school who made the arrangements.

Date arrangements with motor coach carrier were finalized: ____/____/____

Your name: _____
(Type or print)

School Name: _____

Address: _____

phone (____)____-____ fax number (____)____-____

Your School/district position: _____

Your signature: _____ Date signed: ____/____/____

A copy of this completed form must be mailed or faxed to the contracted company for confirmation of agreement

Confirmation by Authorized Carrier of Agreement for Services

To be complete by a representative of the motor coach company

Name of company representative:

(Type or print)

Position:

(Type or print)

Signature: _____

Date signed: ____/____/____

A copy of this signed document must be mailed or faxed back to the school at the above listed address.

Pre-Trip Checklist -- Completed by School/Event Personnel

School or group sponsoring trip: _____
Trip departure date: ____/____/____ Pick-up location: _____
Trip return date: ____/____/____ Drop-off location: _____
Contracted Authorized Carrier: _____
Number of buses/vehicles contracted: _____
Emergency Contact person: _____
All-hours phone number :(____) _____ - _____

PRIOR TO THE DAY OF THE TRIP

- Review the terms of the Letter of Agreement _____ (Printed name & initials)
- File a copy of the itinerary and travel route with your school administration.

VEHICLE ARRIVAL

- Operational _____ (Printed name & initials)
- Check to make sure that the company whose vehicle(s) arrive is the company that was contracted for this trip. If the vehicle(s) is not from that company, ensure that the vehicle(s) is from a valid subcontractor of that company and that they are on the district's Authorized Carrier's List.
- Make sure that the proper number of buses and drivers are present, as stipulated in the contract for the trip.

VEHICLE SAFETY CHECK

- Windows/windshield not severely cracked _____ (Printed name & initials)
- Windshield wipers work
- Heating/air conditioning and windshield defogging systems work
- Interior lights work
- Headlights (high beam/low beam) work
- Tail lights/brake lights work
- Horn works
- Tires in good shape (no damaged or treadless tires and all appear to be properly inflated)
- No unusual oil/grease leaks (at wheel seals or under the vehicle)
- Fire extinguisher present and in working order
- No air leaks (walk around vehicle and listen for air leaks while driver applies the brakes)
- Copy of the annual safety inspection (either sticker or form) available

DRIVER/VEHICLE INFORMATION

- Valid commercial drivers license with a P (passenger) endorsement
- Valid medical certificate (pocket card)
- Driver's record of duty status (log book)
- Copies of the previous seven days' record of duty status for each driver
- Vehicle registration card to ensure that vehicle is authorized to operate in the states of the trip. Make sure that the license plate and vehicle identification number matches the number on the registration card.
- Vehicle's USDOT annual inspection document, either a sticker or on paper (Note: these documents indicate the date of inspection, not the date of expiration and are usually valid for only one year.)

ON THE TRIP

- _____ (Printed name & initials)
- Take a copy of the letter of agreement on the Trip. The emergency contact's name and phone number should be on that form.

Pre-Departure Boating Checklist

Personal Floatation Devices (PDFs-lifejackets)

- Is there at least one Coast Guard approved device of proper size per passenger on board?
- Assure each student is properly wearing a lifejacket during the boat trip.
- An additional throwable device is required if the vessel is more than 16 feet long.

Sound Producing Devices (Whistle)

- Is there a horn capable of producing a four-second blast audible for at least ½ mile?
- If it is a portable air horn, is there a spare can of air or an alternate device?

Lights and Space

- All navigation lights required?
- Instrumental lights working?
- If you intend to engage in an activity that requires a day shape, have the required shapes.
- Flashlights?

Distress Signals

- Accessible flares, day signals, etc., stored in a dry location?
- Signals (even if not required by the Coast Guard)?
- Inform the passengers and crew of their location and use.

Tools and Spares

- Basic tool box?
- Box of spares? (e.g., fuel filter, light bulbs, head parts, through hull plugs, etc.)

Ventilation

- On any powered vessel, are all interior spaces well ventilated?
- If fuel smells are detected, check after running the blowers for several minutes.
- If odor persists, stop and look for the source of the leak.

Fire Extinguishers

- Accessible fire extinguisher. Do you have at least those required by the U.S.C.G.?
- Are the mounts secure?
- Are the units functional?
- Point out locations to passenger and crew.

Fuel and Oil

- Are your tanks topped off?
- If not, have enough to provide a reasonable margin of safety for your return.
- Check the engine oil and coolant level.

Bilges

- Bilges are reasonably dry and that pumps are not running excessively?
- Clean up any spilled oil or waste in bilges to prevent overboard discharge.

Battery Care

- If the system is a dual charging system, is the selector switch in the proper position?
- Is the power on to the entire vessel?
- Spare batteries for accessories such as a handheld radio, flashlight, portable navigational aid, etc.?
- If they are rechargeable, are they charged?

Weather Forecast

- Did you check the weather forecast?
- Radio on board to receive weather updates?

Docking and Setting Anchor

- At least one anchor set up and bent-on to your anchor line?
- Two or three extra dock lines in case of unusual conditions dockside.
- Visually inspect the lines you use for chafe or wear. Are they excessively worn?
- At least two fenders on-board for docking or towing if required?

Documentation

- Ship's papers, radio license, fishing permit, etc.?
- Charts for the area you intend to cruise in?
- Copy of the filed "Float Plan" on board and left with on shore personnel?