

CHECKLIST FOR A TRIP OFF CHURCH PROPERTY

Here is a list of questions that will help you plan for a trip with youth or children by creating a specific SOP for the trip. The resulting SOP supplements the general Religious Education or Youth Ministry SOP and should be the text for pre-trip training for all chaperones.

Remember that the pastor should also review and approve the SOP for each trip.

Refer to the *Guidelines Concerning Supervision of Minors on Parish and School Trips and Other Outings* for more specific guidelines as you answer each question and write the SOP. Any inconsistencies should be resolved according to the information contained in the *Guidelines*.

General

What is the purpose of this trip?

(The value of the trip should outweigh any risks in the eyes of any reviewer.)

What time, where and by whom do teens or children get dropped off for the trip? How and where is this recorded?

What time, where and by whom do teens or children get picked up after the trip? How and where is this recorded?

Chaperones

What is the desired ratio of adults to teens or children?

List the chaperones.

Are all chaperones cleared for criminal history?

Are all chaperones educated with respect to the Code, Guidelines and mandatory reporting of child abuse, and with respect to the specific SOP for this trip?

Consider assigning one adult to rotate across all groups on the trip.

Do you have parent permission forms from all teens or children who are attending? Each parent should have a phone number to call should an emergency arise at home during the trip.

Do you know all medical conditions, medications, allergies, and diet restrictions of all teens or children who are attending? Make a list of all conditions and the response needed if an episode arises.

Develop a written protocol for all other emergencies. Include what should be done and who should be notified in the case of accident, injury or lost teen or child.

Completed copies of all forms for teens or children and other items related to the trip arrangements should be on file with the parish office; originals should be taken with the group. List those who will carry all the signed permission forms and condition/response forms.

Transportation

Develop a map and directions of the route the group will take. Make a copy to be carried in each vehicle. Be sure that a chaperone in each vehicle has the phone number for the trip leader.

If you are going further than 50 miles one way, charter a bus. Get recommendations before making a choice. Seek evidence of insurance from the company. All chaperones should carry the contact number for the driver(s) and company's 24-hour emergency telephone number.

If you intend to rent vehicles, remember that only vehicles designed for eight or fewer passengers are permitted. Larger vehicles will be not covered by insurance obtained through the Diocese.

If you intend to use private vehicles, each vehicle must be designed for eight or fewer passengers. Develop a procedure to inspect vehicles prior to the trip to insure road-worthiness. Check tire pressures and fluid levels.

Drivers, if using rented or private vehicles

Make a list of all drivers for this trip.

All drivers must be at least 25 years of age, possess a valid driver's license, and carry adequate insurance as specified in the Guidelines Concerning Supervision of Minors on Parish and School Trips and Other Outings.

Copies of the driver's licenses and insurance cards should be kept on file at the parish and taken with you on the trip.

All drivers should have completed an application, been cleared for criminal history, and undergone a reference check.

The reference check should be complemented by a review of the Driver Information Form.

Given the critical nature of the role of driver, please consider establishing a pool of eligible drivers at the beginning of each year.

There should be two adults in each vehicle. If this is not possible, at least always avoid a situation in which one adult is driving with one minor that is not his or her own child.

If driving longer than eight hours, plan for relief drivers that meet the same criteria as the first drivers. List the relief drivers and do not allow exceptions.

Consider purchasing additional insurance for the trip. Keep the policy on file at the parish.

Sleeping Arrangements

Hotel/retreat center:

Are all rooms on same floor and near each other?

Assign chaperones to check for adjoining doors before assigning rooms.

Do not allow co-ed rooms.

Make a duty roster (names and times) for night chaperones (in pairs) who are assigned to monitor the hallway.

List the chaperone teams (at least in pairs) assigned to do random room checks.

Chaperones on night duty must hold keys to teens' or children's rooms.

Chaperones should have their own rooms, without minors. Minors are not allowed in those rooms.

Dorm/Large Room Situations:

If all are sleeping in one big room, plan how you will maintain separation of males and females, adults and minors?

Make a duty roster (names and times) of chaperones (in pairs) who are assigned to remain awake to monitor the room.

Outdoor Camping:

Use large tents which accommodate three or more persons.

Maintain separate tents for males and females, adults and minors.

Make a duty roster (names and times) of chaperones (in pairs) who are assigned to remain awake to monitor the campsite.

Present the final SOP to the pastor for approval of this trip.