Field Trip Safety Plan  
Anthropology/Geography/Geology Department,  
East Los Angeles College

Rationale:

In all of the disciplines taught in our department, first-hand experience “in the field” is essential for students to really grasp the subject matter. Field experience makes the material more real, more accessible, and more exciting.

Field activities provide our students with the opportunity to experience first hand the natural processes and investigative techniques taught in the classroom. Such experiences are particularly valuable for our students as many come from nearby lower income neighborhoods and communities of color. Many if not most have had very limited interactions with the natural world.

The principle objectives of these field experiences include:

• to introduce students to field study and field observation techniques;
• to acquaint students with natural features and natural environments, especially those in the Los Angeles area.
• to introduce natural processes to students in situ and to show first hand how their interactions produce different natural features and landscapes;
• to help students appreciate how human activity has modified, endangered and now preserves these natural environments;
• and to familiarize students majoring in our disciplines with basic hiking, camping and other outdoor skills they will need as they continue their education at four-year universities.

This safety plan attempts to address issues not just of physical safety, but also mental and emotional safety, because all three are inexorably linked. For students to be successful in the field (and in our classrooms), they must feel not just physically safe, but also emotionally safe.

This safety plan applies to all off campus instruction, whether in the wilderness or in the city. It applies to trips of all duration. It also applies to required trips, extra credit trips, and student club trips.

Planning for Equity

1. Effort should be made to make the field experience available to all students, regardless of ability. When that is not possible, substantive alternatives must be offered if the field activity is class related.
2. Bathroom breaks, where there is a pit toilet (or better) for students to use, should be scheduled as part of the field trip. The teacher should bring emergency toilet paper, too.

3. Whenever possible, field trips should visit parks, tourist areas, and other destinations where visitors are expected and welcome. Avoid areas where students might be subjected to stares, rude comments, etc.

4. Trip leaders should identify the skill levels of participants ahead of time. The trip plan should adjusted to match the comfort level of participants.

5. Materials needed or packing checklists should be provided, even for day trips. Students might not realize that “comfortable shoes” are necessary, or that they can’t just drive through the nearest fast-food place for lunch.

6. Effort should be made to avoid planning trips that will overlap with Holy days, or times of religious or cultural significance. If this is not possible, faculty should try to find a way to accommodate the student’s needs (e.g. with time set aside for prayer).

7. If food is prepared during the trip, the menu should accommodate dietary needs and preferences. A common request is for vegetarian options.

Harassment
1. All forms of harassment, hazing, and bullying are forbidden.

2. Pre-trip planning should include a discussion by all participants of what constitutes harassment, including "micro-aggressions" and how to avoid them.

3. Faculty should be on the lookout for subtle forms of harassment, such as the formation of "cliques" ("You can’t sit at our table!").

4. Club Initiation rituals are not allowed.

5. Students may have fears, worries, and difficulties that others see as irrational or overblown. To disparage or deny these issues is a form of harassment. So for example, if a student is afraid of heights, don’t tell them to “Get over it and come lean over the edge of this cliff!”

Health and safety
1. Faculty and student trip leaders should have current first aid training whenever possible, and a first aid kit should always be available on all trips.

2. For trips far away from cities, planning should include locating the hospitals nearest to proposed campsites.

3. Alcohol and other recreational drugs are not allowed on any field trip.

4. The buddy system should always be used, and students should never wander off without a buddy except when going to the bathroom.
5. For trips involving driving, breaks should be built in to the schedule, to avoid driver fatigue (and uncomfortable bladders!).

6. All drivers should be given maps and directions, and told to follow those, not the leader — following can lead to unsafe driving.

7. Drivers should drive defensively, obeying all traffic laws.

**Leave no trace**

1. Trip leaders should follow “Leave No Trace” guidelines [<https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>], and teach students to do so as well.

2. The number one principle of “Leave No Trace” is: “Plan Ahead and Prepare”.

3. When leaving a camp site or picnic area, all trash and litter should be properly disposed of, and the site should be “policed” to find and remove litter from the ground.