

## *Safety Instructions for Field Courses and Field Trips*

### *University of Saint Francis*

#### A. **Proper Dress** (any exceptions must be cleared with the instructor)

1. Foot wear
  - a. For strenuous hiking such as is done in Appalachia and the Southwest good sturdy hiking boots are recommended. Whether hiking boots are purchased or not, boots that come up above the ankle are required. Low cut shoes and boots are more likely to in result twisted ankles and don't give as much protection from snake bite.
  - b. Woolen socks (smart wool) are good to wear in hiking boots. Some hikers recommend two pair to avoid blisters. All hikers need to pack moleskin to treat blisters. For light hiking in trips close to campus (courses such as Ecology, Geology, etc.), light shoes may be worn.
2. Head covering
  - a. Hats are required for all field trips and hikes They give protection from insects and other arthropods and in the southwest help prevent sunburn.
  - b. In areas where insects are a particular problem insect netting which can be worn over the head is recommended.
3. Long sleeved shirts that make it difficult for biting and stinging insects to penetrate are required in areas where insects are a problem.
4. Long pants are required in areas where disease carrying insects, poisonous and disease carrying arachnids and poisonous reptiles are a risk.

Proper dress is important to safety in at least two ways: It can help prevent injuries (proper shoes and socks prevent blisters, long pants and shirts protect the skin during falls and proper hats help prevent sunburn). It also helps avoid the bites of disease-carrying arachnids, insects, and snakes (long pants and shoes above ankles make it more difficult for poisonous snakes to deliver venom).

B. **Medical Conditions** – **any specific medical condition that could put you at risk in the field must be communicated to the instructor (s).** It is important that instructors and group leaders know about these when in the field so it is not enough to inform one instructor only if you are not hiking with him/her. Included in this category are such things as allergies to bee sting or to any other phenomenon that might be encountered in the field, exercise induced asthma and phobias or anxiety disorders. Insulin dependent diabetics also need to inform instructors of their condition. All participants need to know the particulars of their insurance plans so that in the event that they require treatment in a clinic or hospital they will not be denied.

C. **Physical Conditioning** – the activities that we will be engaging in require physical conditioning beyond normal classroom levels. It is important that each participant recognizes the need to train for these activities and also be aware of their individual limits. Training should include time spent hiking with pack for a minimum of 50 miles prior to the trip and several miles of continuous walking prior to pack training.

D. **The activities we are engaging in can be dangerous and people have died or been seriously hurt pursuing them.** We are determined to take every reasonable precaution to insure all of our safety. Problems that may be encountered on trips: Risk of accident, injury,

or illness is probably no greater than when at home for the same period of time but some risks are less and other are greater because of the environment in which we will be moving. Incidents that have occurred on previous trips have included broken bones, abrasions and cuts that have required emergency room treatment, insect and other arthropod stings (which can be life-threatening to individuals who are allergic) and close encounters with poisonous snakes. It is important that each participant take the steps necessary to minimize risks. Thus, we will avoid situations that increase the likelihood of injury such as approaching any wild animals. They are all potentially dangerous. This implies that we be able to recognize the animals, know how to behave in order to avoid an encounter, and know what kind of threat the animals could pose.

In mountainous country participants will avoid placing themselves at risk by getting so near the edges of steep cliffs that it could result in a fall. In desert country, participants will follow safety instructions with respect to drinking enough water to stay hydrated and replacing electrolytes that are lost in perspiration. All participants will know the symptoms of hypothermia and hyperthermia and how to treat individuals who maybe suffering from these conditions. Participants will use insecticides with DEET in any area which is likely to be infested with deer ticks and/or mosquitoes that carry West Nile or other diseases.

- E. ***Ad Hoc Instructions:*** Not all risks can be anticipated ahead of time, thus it is important to listen to the instructors and follow their directions when they describe unanticipated, additional risks to safety.
- F. ***The instructors reserve the right to send home, at their own expense, any participant who ignores or disregards safety instructions and puts him/herself, or others in danger or compromising positions. The decisions of the director and instructors are final. If this is a problem, please remove yourself from the course/trip roster.***