

Mount Laguna Observatory (MLO) Field Trip Potential Risks and Dangers

No off-campus field trip is without risks or dangers. Below is a discussion of those related to the MLO field trip. In general, participants should exercise the use of common sense and good judgment. Participants are required to be registered students or appointed faculty or staff. Students should note that as with all university functions, the Standards for Student Conduct apply (see <http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/SRR/conduct1.html>).

Driving: The most dangerous part of the field trip involves transportation to and from the observatory. Obey traffic laws and be a courteous driver. Most of the route is on Interstate-8. As a rule, you should drive in the right-hand lane except to pass slow moving vehicles. Approximately two miles east of Pine Valley take Exit 47 and turn left onto Sunrise Highway (SD County S1) at the end of the exit ramp. Be aware of possible fast-moving vehicles on S1 coming from the blind turn to your right.

The speed limit on S1 is 55 MPH, with yellow advisory signs as low as 30 MPH. The road is marked with a no-passing double yellow line the entire way to MLO. *Turnouts* are placed off the right side of the road at judicious places. If someone is following you closely, pull over at the next available turnout to let them and other pass you. Be careful to stay on your side of the double yellow line at all times to reduce the risk of head-on collisions at blind curves.

Animals on, or crossing the road are an every present danger. Excessive speed combined with last-second maneuvers to avoid collision frequently lead to accidents. Be aware that in California's open-range lands, *the driver of a vehicle is at fault for hitting cattle*, and must pay the rancher for damages and loss of income.

Observatory Grounds: You are to bring a small flashlight to illuminate your path when walking on or to observatory grounds. Furthermore, you are to remain on designated paths and roads for you personal safety. Personal injury from falls, or scrapes and cuts from tree limbs and brush can easily result from shortcutting paths. In addition, wildlife dangers do exist including scorpions, tarantulas, and rattlesnakes. Most rattlesnake bites result from people unknowingly stepping on a snake. Mountain lions, although rarely seen and usually not aggressive, are present in the surrounding forest. **If challenged by a mountain lion, do not run!** Stop, hold your ground, open your jacket to "appear" larger, and slowly back away.

I certify that I have read the above description of potential risks and dangers.

Print Name

Participant Signature

Date