





ON THE ROAD WITH SHOW CHOIR



A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL TRAVEL PLANNING

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For show choir directors, assistant directors, booster club officers, and school officials, planning a trip for a show choir is a monumental task. From organizing travel logistics and accommodations to coordinating meals and ensuring student safety, every detail must be meticulously planned.



The good news is we've created a guide to help with every step! Read on for tips on everything that needs to be addressed when traveling with a show choir, the importance of communication with parents, and the pros and cons of managing the trip independently versus hiring a travel company.

Logistics: The Backbone of a Successful Show Choir Trip

The foundation of any successful choir trip lies in thorough logistical planning. Consider the following aspects:

Transportation

- **Bus rentals:** Most choirs travel by charter buses due to the convenience of keeping the group together. Be sure to check bus

availability, driver regulations, and onboard amenities.

- **Flights:** If traveling long distances, booking flights requires securing group rates, baggage allowances, and arranging transportation from the airport to the destination.
- **Rental vehicles:** Directors or chaperones may need to rent vans or cars for additional transport, equipment, or emergency needs.

Accommodations

- **Hotel selection:** Choose accommodations close to performance venues with appropriate room configurations to keep students organized.

- **Chaperone-to-student ratio:** Assigning rooms with a proper balance of students and chaperones ensures both supervision and cost efficiency.
- **Meal arrangements:** Hotels offering complimentary breakfast can reduce expenses, while proximity to restaurants should also be considered.

Performance and Rehearsal Planning

- **Venue coordination:** Ensure performance locations are reserved well in advance and provide necessary staging, lighting, and sound equipment.

- **Rehearsal spaces:** Secure spaces at the hotel or nearby facilities for warm-ups and practice before performances.
- **Backup plans:** Always have an alternative venue in case of unexpected cancellations or weather issues.

Packing and Equipment Transportation

- **Costumes and props:** Ensure all attire and props are packed efficiently, labeled, and accounted for before departure.
- **Sound equipment:** If bringing microphones, speakers, or other technical gear, coordinate how to transport them safely.
- **First aid and medications:** Keep a dedicated kit with first aid supplies and a system for managing student medications.

Parent Communication: Keeping Families Informed

Clear and continuous communication with parents is vital for a smooth travel experience. Consider implementing the following practices:

Pre-Trip Meetings and Documentation

- **Information packets:** Provide detailed itineraries, hotel details, emergency contacts, and expected student behavior guidelines.
- **Medical and liability forms:** Collect and organize all necessary medical information and permissions for each student.
- **Chaperone assignments:** Ensure parents know which chaperones will be responsible for their children.





Real-Time Updates During Travel

- **Group messaging apps:** Platforms such as Remind or GroupMe allow real-time updates on travel status, itinerary changes, and student needs.
- **Social media and live tracking:** Consider a private Facebook group or GPS tracking for parents to monitor group progress.
- **Emergency contact plan:** Establish a clear protocol for emergency situations and ensure parents have direct contact options.

Post-Trip Follow-Up

- **Debriefing meeting:** Provide parents with an overview of the trip, share highlights, and address any concerns that arose.

- **Feedback collection:** Ask parents and students for input on what worked well and what could be improved for future trips.

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) vs. Hiring a Travel Company

When planning a show choir trip, organizers must decide whether to handle arrangements independently or hire a professional travel company. Both options have advantages and challenges:

DIY Travel Planning

Pros:

- **Cost savings:** Eliminates service fees from travel agencies, allowing funds to be allocated elsewhere.

- **Full control:** Directors and organizers make decisions tailored to their choir's needs.
- **Customized itinerary:** Flexibility to design a schedule that best suits performance times and group preferences.

Cons:

- **Time commitment:** Organizing transportation, lodging, meals, and scheduling rehearsals takes significant effort.
- **Increased stress:** Directors and boosters must handle unexpected travel disruptions, cancellations, or emergencies.
- **Financial risk:** Managing deposits, refunds, and budget constraints can be complex and unpredictable.

Hiring a Travel Company

Pros:

- **Professional expertise:** Travel companies have established relationships with hotels, bus companies, and venues.
- **Less stress:** Directors can focus on the choir rather than travel logistics.
- **Insurance and emergency support:** Many agencies provide travel insurance and have protocols in place for emergencies.

Cons:

- **Higher cost:** Service fees increase the overall expense of the trip.
- **Less control:** Pre-set itineraries may limit customization.

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- **Dependence on a third party:** If issues arise with the travel agency, resolving them may not be within the director's control.

Choosing the Right Travel Company

If opting for a travel agency, selecting the right provider is essential. Consider:

- **Reputation and experience:** Look for companies with a track record of handling student group travel.
- **Customization options:** Ensure they can tailor itineraries to meet your choir's specific needs.
- **Insurance and safety measures:** Confirm they offer adequate coverage for emergencies.
- **Customer reviews and references:** Ask other choir directors or schools about their experiences with the agency.

Final Thoughts

Planning a show choir trip requires immense coordination, but with the right strategy, it can be a rewarding experience for students, staff, and families. Whether managing the logistics independently or hiring a professional travel agency, the key is to stay organized, maintain clear communication, and prioritize safety. By doing so, your choir will not only have a smooth journey but also create unforgettable memories on and off the stage.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ed Bauer has been in publishing for over twenty years. He was introduced to Show Choir by his daughter and he is forever grateful to her for this wonderful gift.