

# Chapter 4: Safety-Wise

(Revised July 2016)

In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is always a top priority. Here's what you need to know.

## Knowing Your Responsibilities

You (the Volunteer), the parents/caregivers of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. The next three sections provide more details on everyone's responsibilities.

### Responsibilities of the Volunteer: Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

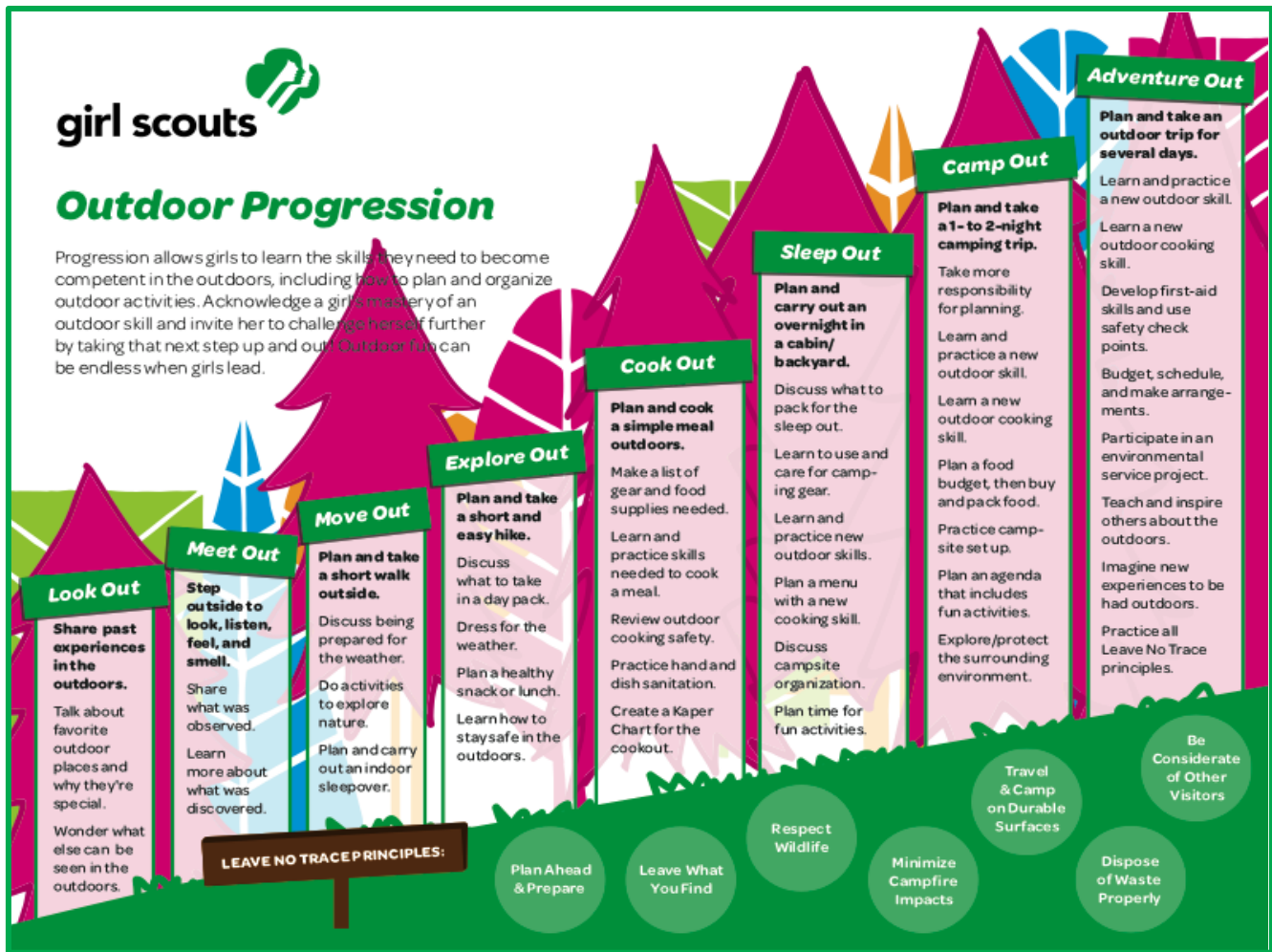
Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in *Safety Activity Checkpoints* ([http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/All\\_Safety\\_Activity\\_Checkpoints.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/All_Safety_Activity_Checkpoints.pdf)) available from GSGLA. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Points common to all Safety Activity Checkpoints include:**
  - **Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.
  - **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved\* adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and must be screened by GSGLA before volunteering.
  - **Get parent/caregiver permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place of the troop meeting, advise each parent/caregiver of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate by using the Parent Permission Form ([http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSGLA\\_Parent\\_Permission\\_Form\\_Fillable\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSGLA_Parent_Permission_Form_Fillable_PDF.pdf)).
  - **Communicate with GSGLA staff and parents/caregivers.** Follow GSGLA procedures for activity approval, requests for council documents, and GSGLA guidelines about girls' general health examinations. Make arrangements in advance for all transportation and confirm plans before departure.
  - **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults and site security. Give an itinerary to a contact person at home; call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls' parents/caregivers contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and GSGLA contacts—keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location. Always keep handy a well-stocked first aid kit, girl health histories, girl over-the-counter medications form, and contact information for girls' families. Check Safety Activity Checkpoints ([http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/All\\_Safety\\_Activity\\_Checkpoints.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/All_Safety_Activity_Checkpoints.pdf)) to determine the type of first-aider needed.
  - **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, and/or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
  - **Use the buddy system.** Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help. For additional details, see the Buddy System section of this document.
3. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow GSGLA's guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting (see chapter 8, Procedures and Standards).

4. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats. \*Refer to “Transporting Girls” further in this chapter for more requirement details.
5. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
6. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don’t consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by GSGLA for group marksmanship activities.
7. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
8. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
9. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, or engage in virtual conversation with strangers. On group websites, publish girls’ first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge (<http://www.girlscouts.org/en/help/help/internet-safety-pledge.html>) and have them commit to it.
10. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other GSGLA-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout–approved product sales and efforts.

**\*Being an approved volunteer means that you are a registered member, have a volunteer application and a cleared background screening on file (within the last three years), and have completed position related training**





## Responsibilities of Parents and Caregivers

You want to engage each parent or caregiver to help you work toward ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of girls. Clearly communicate to parents and caregivers that they are expected to:

- Provide permission for their daughters to participate in Girl Scouting, whether the parent attends or not, as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place, involve overnight travel, involve the use of special equipment, and/or cover sensitive issues.  
[http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSGLA\\_Parent\\_Permission\\_Form\\_Fillable\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSGLA_Parent_Permission_Form_Fillable_PDF.pdf)
- Make provisions for their daughters to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner and inform you if someone other than the parent or caregiver will drop off or pick up the child.
- Provide their daughters with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or contact you before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and equipment.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their children to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/caregiver meetings.
- Be aware of appropriate behavior expected of their daughters, as determined by GSGLA and you.
- Assist volunteers if their daughters have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.

## Responsibilities of Girls

Girls who learn about and practice safe and healthy behaviors are likely to establish lifelong habits of safety consciousness. For that reason, each Girl Scout is expected to:

- Assist you and other volunteers in safety planning.
- Listen to and follow your instructions and suggestions.
- Learn and practice safety skills.

- Learn to “think safety” at all times and to be prepared.
- Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation.
- Know how, when, and where to get help when needed.
- Practice the Buddy system and always have a friend to partner with.

## Responsibilities of all Members to Wear Proper Apparel

When on Girl Scouts activities, outing and campouts girls and adults are encouraged to wear clothing appropriate for the activities as outlined in the Safety Activity Checkpoint. For example wearing closed toe shoes, activity or weather appropriate clothing, or wearing a hat and sunscreen while in the sun.

## Computer/Online Safety

### Understand the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge

In order to make sure that girls are aware of how to safely use the Internet, you should discuss online safety issues with the girls and distribute copies of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge (the pledge is available at the end of this document and at [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org)). The girls should also take a copy of the pledge home and go over it with their parents. Both the girl and her parent should sign the pledge.

#### Safeguard Information

Girls must understand that the Internet is an open means of communication that anyone can access. As such, websites will often attract people other than their intended users. It is therefore imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and adults not be disclosed on a website. The following measures will help to ensure girls’ online safety:

- Girl Scouts should only use their first names
- A Girl Scout’s last name, address, phone number, or e-mail address should never be posted.
- Always have a parent’s or caregiver’s permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old
- Do not post addresses of group meeting places, dates and times of meetings, events or trips on a website. Instead, an adult who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an e-mail to the families
- Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a website. All postings to message boards, social media, and guest books should have adult oversight and be screened prior to posting live.
- Ensure that websites do not show personal e-mail addresses of girls, but use a troop, group or adult’s e-mail.

#### Safety in Technology Based Sales

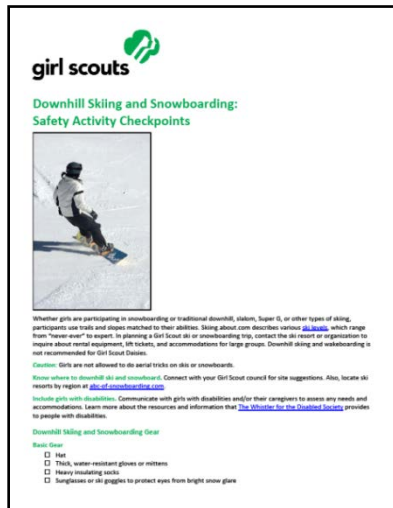
Girl Scouts use the Internet for a variety of reasons including the online marketing and sale of approved Girl Scout related products. Below are some key points to keep in mind for all online sales and marketing:

- Girls must read, understand and accept the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, prior to conducting any online sales or marketing activities, which is available at the end of the Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Girls may send e-mail messages to alert friends and relatives about product sales and accept customer commitments via email
- Social media sites may be used to market product, however, all applicable GSUSA and GSGLA guidelines must be followed
- Girls writing product e-mails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name and their council name.
- Personal e-mails or street addresses of girls should never be used. Instead, use one of the following:
  - A blind return address account where the girls’ name or personal e-mail is not revealed to the customer and is instead hosted on a secure site
  - A group account, monitored by an adult
  - An adult’s e-mail account, which is supervised by that adult
- Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult.

For additional information and guidance please see the “Girl Scout Cookie/GSGLA-Sponsored Product Sale: Safety Activity Checkpoints”, “Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints”, “Terms & Conditions for Parents/Caregivers” and “Terms & Conditions for Volunteers”.



# Approaching Activities



How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What's safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. An incoming storm, for example, might force you to assess or discontinue an activity. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, call our council staff with full details and don't proceed without approval. Err on the side of caution and make the safety of girls your most important consideration. Prior to any activity, read the specific *Safety Activity Checkpoints* (available on our GSGLA's website or from your support team in some other format) related to any activity you plan to do with girls.

When planning activities with girls, note the abilities of each girl and carefully consider the progression of skills from the easiest part to the most difficult. Make sure the complexity of the activity does not exceed girls' individual skills—bear in mind that skill levels decline when people are tired, hungry, or under stress. Also use activities as opportunities for building teamwork, which is one of the outcomes for the Connect key in the GSLE.

## Using *Safety Activity Checkpoints*

When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for that particular activity on Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles' website here:

[http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/All\\_Safety\\_Activity\\_Checkpoints.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/All_Safety_Activity_Checkpoints.pdf).

Each *Safety Activity Checkpoint* offers you information on where to do this activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity, how to prepare yourselves for the activity, what specific steps to follow on the day of the activity, and so on.

In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can email or print them for co-volunteers, parents/caregivers, and the girls themselves. The checkpoints are formatted as checklists, so that you, your co-volunteers, and the girls can check off each step that has been accomplished.

In keeping with the three processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, be sure that:

- **All activities are girl-led.** Take into account the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities, while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.
- **Girls have the chance to learn cooperatively.** Have girls teach each other new skills they may need for the activities, rather than hearing all that from you.
- **Girls learn by doing.** If research or special equipment is needed, they'll learn better by doing that research themselves than by having you do the legwork and report back to them. Even Daisies can do basic research and give reports or do show-and-tell for each other. Ambassadors may need you only for moral support as they research, teach each other, and plan every detail of their excursions.

## Understanding Which Activities Are Not Allowed

In an exciting, learning-by-doing environment like Girl Scouting, it's only natural that girls will sometimes want to take part in activities not covered in *Safety Activity Checkpoints*

([http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/All\\_Safety\\_Activity\\_Checkpoints.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/All_Safety_Activity_Checkpoints.pdf) )

When activities involve unpredictable safety variables, they are not approved as Girl Scout program activities. These include but are not limited to:

- Bungee jumping
- Flying in small private planes, helicopters, or blimps
- Hang gliding
- Hot air ballooning
- Hunting
- Knife throwing
- Motor biking
- Outdoor trampolining
- Parachuting
- Parasailing
- Riding all-terrain vehicles
- Riding motorized personal watercraft like jet-skis
- Simulated skydiving and zero-gravity rooms (see note below on indoor skydiving)
- Stunt skiing
- Tomahawk throwing
- Zorbing

## High Risk Activities

For all High Risk activity, volunteers **must review the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints** and ensure that they receive approval beforehand by submitting the Extended Travel/High Risk Application e-form. The e-form can be found here:

<https://www.gsglavolunteerapps.org/extended-travelhigh-risk-application/>.

Use the guidelines below based on the program level of the youngest girl in the troop when considering troop activities. Read all appropriate Safety Activity Checkpoints for each activity.

## PROGRAM LEVEL KEY:

**DA = Girl Scouts Daisy..... K – 1st grade**

**BR = Girl Scout Brownie..... 2nd – 3rd grade**

**JR = Girl Scout Junior..... 4th – 5th grade**

**CD = Girl Scout Cadette..... 6th – 8th grade**

**SR = Girl Scout Senior..... 9th – 10th grade**

**AM = Girl Scouts Ambassador..... 11th – 12th grade**

## High Risk Activity Guidelines

(This chart is a quick reference only. Please refer to Safety Activity Checkpoints for details.)

PROGRAM ACTIVITY	PROGRAM LEVEL	RESTRICTIONS/EXCEPTIONS
Adventure and Theme Parks - Go-Carting*	<b>Age Restricted</b>	Go-carting only - Age 12 & above – must have prior written approval from GSGLA and parents
Archery	<b>BR*</b> JR CD SR AM	*Only if gear is appropriate for BR
Backpacking	JR CD SR AM	
Canoeing	DA BR JR CD SR AM	
Challenge Courses		Restrictions on age and ability based equipment
Climbing and Rappelling	<b>BR*</b> JR CD SR AM	* Br Climbing only
Cross-Country Skiing	<b>BR</b> JR CD SR AM	
Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding	DA* <b>BR</b> JR CD SR AM	* DA Skiing only, No Snowboarding
Horseback Riding	<b>BR</b> JR CD SR AM	DA-Ponies only when led by person
Indoor Skydiving	JR CD SR AM	
Indoor Trampoline Parks	DA* <b>BR</b> JR CD SR AM	*Not recommended for DA
Kayaks	<b>BR</b> JR CD SR AM	
Orienteering	JR CD SR AM	
Recreational Tree Climbing	DA BR JR CD SR AM	
Row boating	DA BR JR CD SR AM	
Sailing	JR CD SR AM	
Scuba Diving	<b>Age Restricted</b>	Age 12 & above and meet the age and health requirements set by the certifying agency
Segway	CD SR AM	
Shooting Sports	<b>Age Restricted</b>	Age 12 & above – must have prior written approval from GSGLA and parents. Volunteers need to transport weapons separately from girls.
Snorkeling	DA BR JR CD SR AM	
Spelunking/Caving	JR CD SR AM	
Standup Paddleboarding	JR CD SR AM	Surf & whitewater is not recommended for anyone w/o proper instruction from a certified instructor
Surfing	JR CD SR AM	
Vaulting on Horseback	JR CD SR AM	
Waterskiing and Wakeboarding	DA* <b>BR*</b> JR CD SR AM	*DA *BR Waterskiing only, no wakeboarding
White-Water Rafting	<b>BR*</b> JR** CD SR AM	*BR No class III or IV ** JR No class IV
Windsurfing	JR CD SR AM	
Ziplining	<b>BR*</b> JR*CD SR AM	*BR No canopy tours; Always check for age, height, weight restrictions for all ages

## Safety Activity Checkpoint Special Considerations

**If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist** for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with your council before making any definite plans with the girls.

**Caution** - Some activities are allowed only with written council pre-approval. These activities will either be approved only for girls 12 and over or will have grade level restrictions. See the High Risk Activities section of this chapter for more information.

**Warning** - The following activities are never allowed for any girl:

- Potentially uncontrolled free-falling\*
- Extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skies, and wake boards)
- Hunting: shooting a projectile at another person
- Riding all-terrain bicycles and motor bikes
- Taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher

\*Indoor Skydiving is the only activity of this type not prohibited by Girl Scouts. All other potentially uncontrolled free-falling is prohibited. See the Indoor Skydiving Safety Activity Checkpoint for more information.

**Provisional grade level restrictions** – The following activities are not high risk, but have grade level restrictions:

- Geocaching - Because of the challenging nature of GPS operation and the ciphering of numbers and data, geocaching is not permitted for Girl Scout Daisies unless they're working with older girls and adults as part of another outdoor activity.
- Outdoor Cooking - Extensive outdoor cooking is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies, but a less extensive activity, such as roasting marshmallows, is appropriate.
- Skateboarding – Daisies are not permitted.
- Snowshoeing - Girl Scout Daisies may participate in snowshoeing provided the proper sized equipment is provided and they have the physical skills and coordination required for the activity.

**Please note** – In addition, the following are activities in which girls and volunteers may not engage when representing Girl Scouts:

- Endorsement of commercial products or services
- Solicitation of financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting
- Participation in political campaigns or legislative activities, unless the legislative activity has been council-approved

## Transporting Girls

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility. For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities—outside the normal time and place of the troop meeting—in which a group will be transported in any vehicle type:

- Every driver must be a screened, cleared, as well as a registered adult member, over the age of 21, and have a good driving record, and a valid license.
- All vehicles must be registered, insured and have any necessary safety inspections up-to-date.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved\*\* adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios on page 33 must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved\*\* adult volunteers, and the girl-volunteer ratios on page 33 must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.
- The troop leader should have a current Volunteer Driver Log listing every driver.  
[http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Volunteer\\_Driver\\_Log.xls](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Volunteer_Driver_Log.xls)
- When recruiting drivers, leaders should inform all prospective drivers of the conditions listed on this page.



## Choosing Public Transportation

Whenever possible, choose public transportation (trains, commercial airlines, bus lines, and ship lines). These common carriers are preferable to chartered forms of travel, which often do not have set standards for equipment, personnel, and insurance.

## Private transportation and Rented Vehicles

If public transportation is not possible, private passenger vehicles are suitable for Girl Scout travel only if each passenger is in a legal seat, everyone wears seat belts at all times, and drivers adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.

Private passenger vehicles include rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles, campers, chartered buses, chartered boats and chartered flights. Every driver must be an approved\*\* volunteer over the age of 21 and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. State laws must be followed if they are more stringent than the guidelines.

- Anyone who will be driving the vehicle must complete and sign a Health History and Automobile form found on our website at: [http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/2016\\_17\\_GSGLA\\_Health\\_History\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/2016_17_GSGLA_Health_History_Form.pdf) and give to the event organizer, troop leader, or Service Unit Manager.
- **15 passenger vans are not allowed** to be used in the transportation of girls or to be driven by volunteers.
- **Drivers of vehicles designed to carry 10 or more occupants are required to have a Class B license.**

Read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. Note the minimum age of drivers (often 25), as well as the maximum age (often under 70). Vehicles must be rented in your own name. Consult with your personal insurance carrier to be sure the rented vehicle is adequately insured for the intended purpose, and, knowing who is responsible for damage to or the loss of the vehicle itself.

**\*\*Being an approved volunteer means that you are a registered member, have a volunteer application and a cleared background screening on file (within the last three years), and have completed position related training.**

(Troop Driver and Safety-Wise modules <http://gsglaonlinetraining.org/login/index.php>)

## Chartered Vehicles / Contracting with Outside Firms

If chartering a form of transportation is necessary, see the following guidelines to help ensure everyone's safety:

- Chartered bus drivers must be professional drivers who possess a commercial driver's license (CDL).
- When you contract with others to provide transportation for Girl Scout travel, ensure that the owner/operator is properly licensed, registered, and insured for liability, and that the vehicle is well maintained.
- Obtain a certificate of insurance from the owner/operator, with evidence of general liability and automobile liability with limits of liability not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence/\$2,000,000 aggregate and evidence of workers' compensation insurance. Their certificate will also show evidence that our council, GSGLA, has been added as additional insured for the duration of the contract.
- **All vehicles used to transport girls (such as rental cars, private vehicles, charter buses, and so on) must be insured.**

## Checklist for Drivers

When driving a car, RV, or camper, take the following precautions and ask any other drivers to do the same:

- Ensure all drivers are over the age of 21—girls are not to be transporting other girls.
- Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer.
- Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first aid kit and a flashlight.
- Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns, and fluid levels before each trip and check them periodically on long trips.
- Keep all necessary papers up-to-date, such as your driver's license, vehicle registration, any state or local inspections, insurance coverage, and the like.
- Wear your seat belt at all times, and insist that all passengers do the same; keep girls under 12 in the back seats. All vehicles should provide a seat belt for each passenger including RV's and campers.

- Understand that a heavily-packed vehicle may perform differently than what you may be used to driving. Keep your load to a manageable limit.
- Follow all the established rules of the road in the state you're traveling (following the speed limit, keeping a two-car-length between you and the car ahead of you, not talking or texting on a cell phone or other personal electronic device, not using earbuds or headphones, driving with your headlights on, and so on).
- Avoid driving for extended periods at night, when tired, or taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- Plan rest stops every few hours; if driving with others, prearrange stopping places along the way. When planning longer trips, arrange for relief drivers. Check with GSGLA for specific guidelines.

## Safety Seats & Booster Seats

We are frequently asked if troop leaders and parent drivers are required to have booster seats in cars when transporting Girl Scouts. The short answer is yes, drivers are expected to follow state and federal laws regarding booster seats. For more information on seat belt safety please review the California Child Passenger Safety Law document here:

[http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/ca\\_child\\_seat\\_belt\\_law.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/ca_child_seat_belt_law.pdf).

### California Child Passenger Safety Law

**Children under age 8** must be properly buckled into a car seat or booster in the back seat. CA permits some exceptions under specific conditions.

**Children age 8 or older** may use the vehicle safety belt if it fits properly with the lap belt low on the hips, touching the upper thighs, and the shoulder belt crossing the center of the chest. If children are not tall enough for proper belt fit, they must ride in a booster or child safety seat.

**Everyone in the car** must be properly buckled up. For each child under 16 who is not properly secured, parents (if in the car) or drivers can be fined more than \$500 and get a point on their driving records.

Most kids need to ride in a booster seat until age 10 to 12. Using a booster instead of just a belt prevents 45% of crash injuries. If your child isn't using a booster, try the simple test below the next time you ride together in the car. You may find that your child is not yet ready to use a safety belt without a booster. See the current CA Driver's handbook offered by the DMV for details and updates. <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/pubs/hdbk/seatbelts>

### The 5-Step Test

1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, your child needs a booster seat to make both the shoulder belt and the lap belt fit right for the best crash protection. Your child will be more comfortable, too. For best protection, all children should ride in the back seat. It's twice as safe as the front! For a list of programs with low-cost safety seats, call your local health department at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/pages/californialocalhealthdepartments.aspx>.

For assistance with inspecting or installing a safety seat, visit <http://www.seatcheck.org/> or <http://www.safercar.gov/parents/CarSeats.htm> or call 866-SEAT-CHECK or your local CHP office.

## Emergency Equipment/Forms

Every vehicle used to transport campers and staff should be equipped with a first aid kit and emergency accessories such as fire extinguisher and reflectors. For all trips, the troop leader must carry health forms for all passengers, insurance forms, emergency numbers and a cell phone for emergency communication. If the vehicle is a rental, the rental agreement, insurance information and all documents should remain with that vehicle for the duration of the trip. The following pages will provide more information on specific requirements needed when transporting girls.

## Vehicle Type/Capacity

- **Girl Scouts should only be transported in vehicles designed to carry passengers.**
- Passengers are not permitted to ride in the back of trucks except in an extreme emergency and when directed by appropriate staff (e.g., fire evacuation).
- Vehicles should carry only the number of passengers specified by the vehicle manufacturer.
- **GSGLA prohibits use of 15 passenger vans.**
- If vehicle seats are removable, follow the manufacturer's guidelines for weight distribution when packing and arranging seating.
- There must be a seat belt for each passenger. Wear your seat belt at all times, and insist that all passengers do the same; keep girls under 12 in the back seats if possible.
- The driver must be an adult and there must be a troop leader or approved volunteer\* in each vehicle.
- If traveling by bus, appropriate ratios of adults to girls must be observed, without counting the driver.
- Extra adult volunteer or aides must be present for members with disabilities, based on ratios established for persons requiring additional assistance or supervision.

**\*Being an approved volunteer means that you are a registered member, have a volunteer application and a cleared background screening on file (within the last three years), and have completed position related training.**

## Vehicle Safety Checks

Prior to transporting passengers, it is recommended that the following be checked by a competent adult:

- ☐ lights
- ☐ tires
- ☐ horn
- ☐ windshield and wiper condition
- ☐ brakes
- ☐ mirrors
- ☐ fluid levels
- ☐ emergency warning systems
- ☐ vehicle incident form

## Passenger Orientation

Passengers should be instructed in the following safety procedures prior to transporting:

- Passengers should remain seated at all times with hands and arms inside vehicle.
- Seatbelts should be fastened — one person per seatbelt — unless being transported prone for emergency care.
- Noise level should be such as to not distract the driver. There should be no throwing of objects or other disruptive behavior.
- Passengers should enter and leave the vehicle under the direction of an adult volunteer and/or driver. If the vehicle makes an emergency stop, passengers should follow directions of adult troop leader and/or driver and use the buddy system after leaving the vehicle.

## Travel Procedures

- Vehicles should be kept a safe distance apart if traveling together. It is not recommended that vehicles travel by convoy.
- Drivers should pre-establish rest stops to check in with each other.
- All drivers should have maps, complete directions to the destination, and appropriate telephone numbers. One driver should be appointed lead driver.
- On any trip, stops should be made only at acceptable rest stops.
- After three continuous hours, it is recommended that the vehicle stop to rotate drivers and rest the passengers.
- All traffic laws of the state are to be strictly obeyed when transporting girls and staff.
- When traveling to another state, be sure to check for specific traffic laws that may affect the trip.
- Have all drivers read this entire chapter so that they are familiar with GSGLA's procedures.
- Avoid driving for extended periods at night, when tired, or taking medication that makes you drowsy.

## Behind-the-Wheel Training

If you are driving a vehicle that you normally do not drive, be sure to allow time to practice and become comfortable with backing up, turning, parking, and highway driving and stopping. Also be sure to determine where to find the emergency flasher, window wipers and headlight switch etc.

## Passenger Behavior

In larger vehicles, behavior problems should always be the responsibility of adults other than the driver. If the driver is the only adult member available to handle disruptive behavior, she should pull off the road in a safe area and follow established discipline procedures.

## Backing Up

Because you cannot see everything behind your vehicle, backing up is always dangerous. Avoid backing up whenever you can. When you park, try to park so you will be able to pull forward when you leave. When you have to back up, here are a few simple safety rules:

- **Look at your path.**
- **Back slowly using your mirrors.**
- **Back and turn toward the driver's side whenever possible.**
- **Use a helper whenever possible.**
- **Always know where the girls are!**

## Loading and Unloading Passengers

Load and unload in areas that are free from vehicular traffic unless there is an emergency. The vehicle should be in park with the emergency brake on and the motor turned off. Loading and unloading will take place in an orderly fashion following directions from adults in charge. Girls should be directed where to assemble after unloading and kept under supervision of an adult.

## Dealing with Passenger Illness

- Administer first aid as needed and per your training. Keep the person comfortable.
- If you need to stop, try to do so in an authorized or designated area.
- Contact your emergency contact about the illness. Seek professional medical assistance if needed.

## Accident Procedures

- Attend to any ill or injured passengers. If medical care is needed, see that they are taken to nearest medical facility.
- Place reflectors or emergency flashers as appropriate. If vehicle has to be moved, mark the location (from back of tire) with chalk.
- Instruct passengers to exit vehicle, when appropriate, using the buddy system. Group uninjured passengers together in an area safe from oncoming traffic to await instructions and/or new pick-up. Minors must be supervised by an adult at all times.
- Contact designated emergency contacts. Report the accident to GSGLA's 24-hour 1-877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752) emergency line.
- Obtain names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any witnesses and location where any police reports will be filed. If possible, take photos of *all* vehicles and surrounding conditions. Make as many notes as reasonable, including time of day, position of sun, type of road, etc.
- Submit all details and notes along with an Accident/Incident Report form within 72 hours, Fax, email, or mail to GSGLA's Risk Management as described on the form.  
[http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Accident\\_and\\_Incident\\_Report\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Accident_and_Incident_Report_Form.pdf)

## Dealing with Vehicular Breakdown

- Move off the road as far as possible. It's better to drive on a flat tire than park in an unsafe place.
- Place the transmission in park. Turn off ignition and remove key.
- Set the emergency brake.
- Set four way turn (emergency) blinkers.
- If vehicle must stop in non-designated parking area (e.g., the side of the road), place reflective triangles between yourself and the oncoming traffic in the following places:
  - a) On the traffic side of the vehicle, within ten feet of the front or rear corners.
  - b) About 100 feet behind and ahead of the vehicle, upon the shoulder of the lane you are stopped in.
  - c) Back beyond any hill, curve, or other obstruction that prevents other drivers from seeing the vehicle within 500 feet.
  - d) If stopped on or by a one-way or divided highway, place warning devices 20 feet, 100 feet, and 200 feet toward the approaching traffic.
- If safe to do so, unload passengers and move them well off the roadway away from the vehicle. Make sure minors are supervised at all times by an adult. If evacuation from a bus is necessary, follow established procedures and directions of the adult troop leader in charge.
- Contact your emergency contact with information about nature of the breakdown and your exact location. Additional help may be requested if needed. At least two adult members must stay with the vehicle and minors.

## Driver's Packets for Troop Trips

It is recommended that each troop put together a Driver's Packet for each driver when traveling to Girl Scout activities. By having these packets made up in advance, you will have everything you need when traveling with your troop.

### What goes in a Driver's Packet?

These items should remain in packets at all times

- A complete and current troop roster
- A copy of the Girl Health History forms for ALL girls travelling in each car.
- Adults should carry a green Adult Emergency & Authorization for Treatment card.
- Copies of the Over the Counter (OTC) form
- Copies of the Provided Prescription Medication and OTC form (as needed)
- A copy of the GSGLA emergency procedures including phone #'s (pink card)
- Copies of the Accident/Incident Report form  
([http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Accident\\_and\\_Incident\\_Report\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Accident_and_Incident_Report_Form.pdf))
- Change for parking meters

These items should be added for each individual trip

- Parent permission forms signed by parents for each girl in attendance. This must include signature of Troop Leader (and Service Team Member if required)
- Itinerary for the current trip
- Driving directions for the trip

### What do I do with the completed packets?

- Store the packets in manila envelopes, secure folders, etc.
- Give a packet to each approved driver to carry with them when they are driving girls.
- When carpooling make sure that each driver knows how to get to the Destination.
- When you return from your trip, collect the driver's packets to use on your next trip.

## Checklist for Girls

Girls need to adhere to the following checklist when being transported. You may decide to create a contract listing the following items, which girls sign before leaving on any trip. Girls will:

- Follow all rules and instructions for this trip.
- Assist with reading signs and maps, when asked.
- Keep seat belts fastened at all times.
- Refrain from arguing, yelling, and throwing things.
- Play games or listen to music quietly with other passengers, being considerate of the driver and other passengers.
- Stay with the troop during stops.
- Alert the driver and an adult volunteer to a missing buddy, an obstacle, or an open door or trunk.



# Standard Safety & Emergency Procedures

## Guidelines and Procedures for Tag-Alongs

A tagalong is any unregistered adult or child who is present at a troop meeting, activity, or event. A tagalong can also be a registered member of a troop/group, but is not of the proper age for the activity and is not participating as a service project. For example, a registered Daisy tagging along with the parent who is leading a Cadette troop has no coverage for the event. Conversely, a Cadette assisting at a Daisy meeting does have coverage. If tagalongs will be at troop meetings, events, or activities, Additional Activity Insurance is to be purchased.

- No child under the age of 5 years old may attend as a tag-along on a camping trip – children under the age of 5 require a level of care that would not permit the accompanying adult to be able to act in a leadership position with the girls.
- Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles does not allow boys over the age of 10 to participate in troop camping on GSGLA properties.

## Guidelines and Procedures for Males Traveling with Girl Scouts

Dads or other male relatives are often involved in the leadership of a Girl Scout troop. It is not uncommon for a man to be a leader, a troop committee member, a certified first aid adult, or the trained troop camper. There are no rules that preclude a male adult, who is invited by the troop, from troop camping with Girl Scouts. Common sense and prior planning will make camping with a male troop adult a positive experience. Follow these simple guidelines and enjoy your camping trip.

### Sleeping Arrangements

On trips where male volunteers are part of the group, it is not appropriate for them to sleep in the same space as girl members. Men may participate only if separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms are available for their use or specific arrangements have been made. In some circumstances, such as a museum or mall overnight with hundreds of girls, this type of accommodation may not be possible. If this is the case, men do not supervise girls in the sleeping area of the event, and the adult-volunteer-to-girl ratio is adjusted accordingly. Always avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women, but during family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same quarters in program areas. On camping trips where tents will be used, ensure male volunteers have their own tent situated in a logical area separate from the girls so that this adult can still count as part of the ratios. If setting up camp in a horseshoe method, designate an end for male/s, and inform girls so girls do not mistakenly enter that tent. There is no specific distance requirement for male tents.

### Also ensure the following

Each participant has her own bed. Parent/caregiver permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed.

<http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Sleeping-Arrangements-form.docx>

Girls and adults do not share a bed; however, our council makes exceptions for mothers and daughters.

It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area (tent, cabin, or designated area) with the girls, but if an adult female does share the sleeping area, there should always be two unrelated adult females present.

- It is part of Girl Scouts best practices to discuss emergency evacuation procedures with your troop when arriving at a new site. Having a drill may help those unsure of the process.
- All adults, accompanying a troop on an overnight must be registered members with GSUSA, have completed the GSGLA Volunteer Application, a background screening, and have received a clearance email.
- Make sure the facility you reserve has a separate tent or room for your male volunteer to sleep in. It is not appropriate for males to sleep in the same tent or room with Girl Scouts in the troop setting. This does not apply to family camping.
- Males need to have bathroom facilities available that are not used by the girls. If only one bath room is available, coordination of usage is of utmost concern. A sign posted when the bathroom is off limits to girls is a must. Facilities with separate bathrooms for males and females are strongly suggested.
- Use common sense when married couples share sleeping space at troop outings. There are no rules that state a husband and wife cannot sleep in the same tent or room. However, sexual behaviors of any kind are inappropriate at any Girl Scout function where girls are present. Girl Scouts should be sleeping in separate sleeping quarters from couples who are sleeping together while troop camping or on overnight trips.

- Males are required to follow all guidelines and standards regarding troop camping, travel, and the Girl Scout leadership experience.
- GSGLA does not allow adolescent boys over the age of 10 to participate in troop camping activities on GSGLA properties. (They may camp during special family camping activities). Many troop leaders and parents of Girl Scouts expect the Girl Scout camping experience to be a time when girls don't have to worry about opposite sex-related issues.
- On Overnights inside the home or in the backyard, ensure that all adults 18 and older staying the night (family members/spouses male or female in the home), MUST have a clearance on file and be a registered member. Having a clearance means: filling out an application and a criminal background check, and have received a clearance email.

## Persons Lost, Missing, or Runaway

- A) After determining that a person is missing, one adult needs to remain in area where the person was last seen. One or two adults should remain with other participants.
- B) The person in charge should form a search party composed of teams of two adults. Starting from the spot where the person was last seen, adults will begin a thorough search of the area following a pattern of concentric circles. If the site/facility has a security person, caretaker, ranger, etc., notify that person immediately.
- C) After initial search of restrooms and event area, call 911 or local emergency services and the 1-877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752) 24-hour emergency line while adults continue searching.

## Missing Person at Lake/Waterfront

- A) Check buddy system for identity of person. If absolutely positive that the missing person has left the waterfront area, locate the person and have her return to the area immediately.
- B) If there is any chance that the person is still in the water:
  - a) Adults take the participants out of the water and remove them from the area.
  - b) While lifeguards begin search, follow established search and rescue procedures.
  - c) If person is not located within 10 minutes, a responsible adult should elicit assistance from nearest designated Rescue Agency.
  - d) If at a council campsite, notify the camp ranger. Report the incident to GSGLA using the 1-877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752) 24-hour emergency line.

## Unauthorized Person on Site (Intruder)

- A) For day events – after determining that the person is not with a troop/group or event staff member, a pair of responsible adults should ask person to leave the premises. If there is a resident caretaker, security person or camp ranger, notify that person. (Send two adults if there is not a phone or radio.)
- B) For overnight events (lock-ins, sleepovers, troop camping, etc.) – gather participants into common area and account for the presence of all participants. Be calm and reassure participants. If it is determined that the person is not with a troop/group or event staff, call the police immediately. If there is a resident caretaker, security person or camp ranger, notify that person by phone or radio. Report to GSGLA using the 1-877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752) 24-hour emergency line. Do not leave the secure area.

## Fire Safety

- A) Be calm at all times and reassure participants.
- B) Determine the extent and location of the fire.
- C) Evacuate participants in vicinity.
- D) If at a council campsite, notify the camp ranger for assistance.
- E) Ensure that you have an escape route (or exit) before fighting a small controllable fire.
- F) If fire is small, use the following methods of control:
  - a) Grass or woods fire:
    - i) Put out small fires before they grow; smother with dirt or sprinkle water directly on fire.
    - ii) Push a small spreading fire towards its origin with rake or shovel; take care that clothing does not catch fire.
    - iii) Use shovels to dig a trench around fire.
    - iv) Use brooms or some heavy material that can be soaked in water to beat out flames. Work with the wind at your face, not at your back. Beat toward the wind (beating with the wind at your back tends to fan the flames and may cause sparks or flames to jump ahead into unburned areas).

- b) Electrical, chemical, grease, and gasoline fires:
  - i) Do not use water.
  - ii) Use fire extinguishers.
- G) If fire spreads out of control:
  - a) Call 911 or local emergency services.
  - b) Evacuate participants. At council campsites, the continuous blowing of a car horn (or three consecutive horn blasts) is the alarm signifying the need to evacuate.
- H) Evacuation Procedures:
  - a) Adults in charge secure first aid kits and have girls in troop/group count off.
  - b) All participants proceed at a steady pace by the safest route to the closest large cleared area, field, or parking lot.
  - c) The event director or designee will serve as check-in person to account for the presence of all participants at the safe area. At council camps, this person is the camp ranger.
  - d) In the event of missing persons, notify emergency personnel.
  - e) All persons are to remain assembled at parking lot or clearing until area determined safe.
  - f) At first safe opportunity, report the incident to Council using the 1-877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752) 24-hour emergency line.

## Health Histories (Including Examinations and Immunizations)

GSLA requires girls to have a completed health history form on file with the troop. One of the troop leaders will keep a copy with them during the activities outside of the regular troop meeting. The leader or event organizer must keep a copy of the girl records. Adults may fill out a green Authorization to Treat card and keep this card easily accessible on their person while attending any GS activity. You can find the form here

[http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/2016\\_17\\_GSLA\\_Health\\_History\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/2016_17_GSLA_Health_History_Form.pdf). Keep in mind that any information from a health forms or examinations is confidential and may be shared only with people who must know this information (such as the girl herself, her parent/caregiver, the first-aiders and a health practitioner).

For various reasons, some parents/caregivers may object to immunizations or medical examinations. Councils must attempt to make provisions for these girls to attend Girl Scout functions in a way that accommodates these concerns.

It is important for you to also be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have.

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's custodial parent or caregiver, [http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSLA\\_OTC\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSLA_OTC_Form.pdf). Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen®, or diabetes medication.
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, and seafood. This means that, before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies, or chips), **ask** whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products, or wheat. Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with their parents/caregivers is always a good idea.
- All first aid documentation is the property of the Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles. First-aiders should verbally inform EMS of any pertinent health history, if needed.
- While treating persons at an event, first-aiders will attempt to make possible the maximum amount of privacy while giving care. First-aiders may not discuss the details of the persons receiving care to other than GS staff and as required with police, Fire/Rescue, and other key Girl Scout adults. Such as other first-aiders and Event Director at event. Debriefs on major incidents will be conducted by GSLA.
- If radios are being used the injured/ill person's name may not be used or any other private information.
- Only GSLA may maintain documentation of persons treated by first-aiders.
- The Health History and Over-the-Counter forms should be updated yearly or periodically as information needs updating. These should be carried by trained volunteers at all times when engaged in girl activities.
- The Over-the-Counter (OTC) and Provided Prescription and/or Provided OTC
  - [http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSLA\\_OTC\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSLA_OTC_Form.pdf)
  - [http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSLA\\_Provided\\_Prescription\\_OTC\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSLA_Provided_Prescription_OTC_Form.pdf)

## Girl Scout Additional Activity Insurance

Every registered Girl Scout and registered adult member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under Mutual of Omaha Basic Coverage, Plan 1, upon registration with GSUSA. The entire premium cost for this protection is borne by Girl Scouts of the USA. The Basic Coverage is effective during the regular fiscal year (Oct. 1 through Sept. 30). Up to 14 months of insurance coverage is provided for new members who register in the month of August. This insurance provides the first \$135.00, then up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity, and is secondary to any individual's primary insurance. This is a terrific, no-cost benefit of membership and a great reason for all adults and girls to register. Non-registered parents, tag-alongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons are not covered by Basic Coverage.

This insurance coverage is **not** intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available.

Additional Activity Insurance is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips, international travel and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These plans are very affordable, secondary insurance that GSGLA offers to cover participants taking part in any GSGLA-approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. This insurance program is available for any Girl Scout activity that involves non-Girl Scouts or lasts longer than three days and two nights. Contact Customer Care 213-213-0123, to find out how to easily obtain coverage. GSGLA makes this mandatory particularly for extended and overseas travel. Click here for more information

[http://www.mutualofomaha.com/girl\\_scouts\\_of\\_the\\_usa/index.html](http://www.mutualofomaha.com/girl_scouts_of_the_usa/index.html).

## Extended Trip Insurance

A Parent Permission Form covers a member for 2 nights on an overnight unless the 3rd night is a Federal Holiday. Thus for Extended Trips troops must FILL OUT THE Extended Travel/High Risk Application e-form

<https://www.gsglavolunteerapps.org/extended-travelhigh-risk-application/>. AND PURCHASE the required Additional Activity Insurance for the longer trip. For Additional Activity Insurance complete this form

[http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Additional\\_Insurance\\_Request\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Additional_Insurance_Request_Form.pdf), Take or send both your insurance request form and a troop check, payable to Mutual of Omaha to your local service center to be processed by GSGLA staff. Please submit your order at least three weeks prior to the event date to allow for processing. Contact the Customer Care Hotline at 213-213-0123 for assistance.

## Non-member insurance

GSGLA requires that Additional Activity Insurance be purchased for every activity in which non-members participate. Additional Activity Insurance is a simple and inexpensive way to take care of your group. To order Additional Activity Insurance for non-members, complete this for,

[http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Additional\\_Insurance\\_Request\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Additional_Insurance_Request_Form.pdf). Write a troop check payable to Mutual of Omaha and send or take to your local service center to be processed by GSGLA staff. Please submit your order at least three weeks prior to the event date to allow for processing, please note a minimum order of \$5.00 is required. Contact the Customer Care Hotline at 213-213-0123 for assistance.

## Tag-Alongs

A tag-along is any unregistered adult or sibling of girls in the troop, or even a registered little sister, who is accompanying the troop on a trip or activity. Non-registered tag-alongs are not covered by Girl Scout insurance, except in special circumstances. It is the practice of GSGLA to prohibit any non-members from attending events planned for Girl Scouts. This excludes planned recruitment events that are designed to recruit non-members and day camp where special units are set up for children of volunteers.

## Experts

The *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for most activities require having an expert on hand to help girls learn an activity. Some things to keep in mind: **Does the person have documented training and experience?** She or he should have documented experience for the activity in question, such as course completion certificates or cards, records of previous training to instruct the activity, and letters of reference.

- **What does she or he need to be able to do?** This person should have the knowledge and experience to make appropriate judgments concerning participants, equipment, facilities, safety considerations, supervision, and procedures for the activity. At the very least, she or he should be able to give clear instructions to girls and adults, troubleshoot unexpected scenarios, and respond appropriately in an emergency.

Questions to ask the expert include:

Do they have the...

- Appropriate level of proficiency in the activity
- Ability to procure, assemble, maintain, and store equipment
- Ability to create a safe space for girls participating in the activity
- Ability to give clear directions to both girls and adults
- Ability to create an instructional plan in which girls are able to learn new skills, step by step
- Ability to troubleshoot unexpected scenarios
- Ability to monitor the safety of the participants
- Ability to respond appropriately in emergency situations

Even when not required to have an expert instruct girls for a specific activity for safety reasons, it is always a great idea to use your personal and troop networks to find experts to teach particular skills. This enriches their experience and yours. Research from Girl Scouts Research Institute (GSRI) has shown girls really appreciate the opportunity to learn from experts whenever possible.

## Providing Emergency Care

As you know, emergencies can happen. Girls need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting to adults any accidents, illnesses, or unusual behaviors during Girl Scout activities. To this end, you can help girls:

- **Know what to report.** See the “Procedures for Accidents” section later in this chapter.
- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.** Certain extreme-weather conditions may occur in your area. Please consult with our council for the most relevant information for you to share with girls.
- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as emergency evacuation, lost persons, and building-security responses.** Every girl and adult must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.
- **Assemble a well-stocked first aid kit that is always accessible.** First aid administered in the first few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911.
- **California has a Good Samaritan Law.** GSGLA recognizes the importance of any person willing to act in case of emergency and will support all reasonable decisions to act quickly. Should an uncertified person be the only or best choice to offer first aid, he should not hesitate. This does *not* negate the necessity to have qualified first-aiders in your group.

## First Aid/CPR/AED

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. For any activities outside of your regular meeting place, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer be certified in first aid, CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) and AED (Automated External Defibrillator). For that reason, if you have the opportunity to get trained in GSGLA-approved First Aid/CPR/AED, do it! You can take advantage of First Aid/CPR/AED training offered by chapters of the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, MEDIC First Aid, American Heart Association, or other sponsoring organizations approved by our council. Try to take age-specific CPR training, too—that is, take child CPR if you’re working with younger girls and adult CPR when working with older girls and adults.



Troop adults will notice that most activities outside of the regular meeting place require a first-aider. This is assuming that troop meetings are held within 30 minutes of EMS services. GSGLA recommends always having back-up trained adults to take on the first-aider position to ensure that the troop can attend the event. This responsibility includes making sure that all troop medical paperwork is in order for each girl: Parent Permission Form, Health History and Over-the-Counter (OTC) and Provided Prescription and/or Provided OTC medication (if needed) have all been signed by a parent and tracking incidents on a Troop Medical log <http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/GSGLA-Troop-Medical-Log.xlsx>. All adults attending an activity should have their Adult Emergency Information and Authorization for Treatment\* (green card) cards easily reachable. This will ensure that should an emergency occur the first-aider will be permitted to treat the injured person and have all the information needed to transfer to EMS if needed. In addition, it is also the responsibility of the first-aider for a troop/group activity or event, to give care to all in the group while on duty.

\*The Adult Emergency Information and Authorization for Treatment\* (Green cards) can be obtained from your local council office. When attending an event, each troop should always bring a first-aider. This is the adult familiar with the medical histories in the group and will be the first to recognize a medical emergency. When attending a large event, they may advertise a First Aid Station on site, however in a perfect scenario a troop shouldn't need to use the First Aid station other than for medical situations beyond basic first aid. Should a troop need assistance from a First Aid Station an adult should accompany that girl with her medical paperwork ready to answer questions asked by the station representative.

**Caution:** First Aid/CPR/AED training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts' requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you're taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous paragraph, or any course that has online components, get approval from your support team or GSGLA.

## First-Aider

A first-aider is an adult volunteer who has taken Girl Scout-approved First Aid/CPR/AED training that includes specific instructions for adult and child First Aid/CPR/AED. If, through the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, MEDIC First Aid, or American Heart Association, you have a chance to be fully trained in first aid, CPR, and AED, doing so may make your activity-planning go a little more smoothly. *Safety Activity Checkpoints* always tell you when a first-aider needs to be present.

For the safety of all involved during Girl Scout activities, the first-aider position requires the following be adhered to: An individual needs to be mobile and move quickly to the scene of an injury, as well as handling compromising positions. They may have intense responsibilities and MUST be able to communicate effectively while caring for the injured. Every activity and event will be different and have its own specifications. If anyone feels they do not have the ability to perform the skills as a first-aider they should not serve as a first-aider. We trust all GSGLA Volunteers and Staff to make the right safety choices to offer the best of care.

Activities can take place in a variety of locations, which is why first aid requirements are based on the remoteness of the activity—as noted in *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for that activity. For example, it's possible to do a two-mile hike that has cell phone reception and service along the entire route and EMS (Emergency Medical Service) is, at maximum, 30 minutes away at all times. It is also possible to hike more remotely with no cell phone service at a place where EMS would take more than 30 minutes to arrive. It's important that you or another volunteer with your group has the necessary medical experience (including knowledge of evacuation techniques) to ensure group safety.

GSGLA requires adults serving in a first-aider role to be currently certified in First Aid/CPR/AED. The CPR portion should include ventilations. This certification needs to be renewed every 2 years.

The levels of first aid required for any activity take into account both how much danger is involved and how remote the area is from emergency medical services. See below:

Access to EMS	Minimum Level of First Aid Required
Less than 30 minutes	Basic First Aid
More than 30 minutes	Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder (WFR)* or EMR (Emergency Medical Responder)

\*Although a WFR is not required, it is strongly recommended when traveling with groups in areas that are greater than 30 minutes from EMS.

It is important to understand the differences between a first aid course, and a wilderness-rated course. Although standard first aid training provides basic incident response, wilderness-rated courses include training on remote-assessment skills, as well as the emergency first aid response, including evacuation techniques, to use when EMS is not readily available.

**Note:** The presence of a first-aider is required at resident camp. For large events—200 people or more—there should be one first-aider for every 200 participants, one of whom is to have Wilderness & Remote First Aid (WRFA) or higher certification. If several first aid stations are required a Wilderness or higher first-aider should be present at at least one of the stations. The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders; physician, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic, and emergency medical technicians as long as they have current licensure and valid certifications in First Aid/CPR/AED.

GSLA recognizes Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) training as acceptable higher level of training to be a first-aider. First-aiders must also be aware of documentation, abuse reporting, and administration of OTC/prescribed medications. The event director shall be in the possession of the physical document to give to first-aider. After helping a troop or in a station the first-aider is responsible for ensuring the privacy of all medical logs and transfer back to the event director with a debrief of any incidents.

## First Aid Kit

Make sure a general first aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). **The troop first-aider should have the first aid kit near them ready to respond (not in the car) during the activity or event.** Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a first aid kit, buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its Anatomy of a First Aid Kit <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/get-kit/anatomy>. Note that the Red Cross’s suggested list includes aspirin, which you will not be at liberty to give to girls without direct parent/caregiver permission. You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites, and the like.

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain your council and emergency telephone. During work hours, call the Customer Care Hotline at 213-213-0123; after hours call the I.C.E. Emergency Hotline at 1-877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752). Girl Scout Additional Activity Insurance forms, parent consent forms, and health histories may be included, as well.

## Lifeguards and Water Safety

**Ensure the presence of lifeguards.** For swimming activities in public pools, hotel and cruise-ship pools, and backyard pools, ensure the lifeguards are at least 16 years old and have American Red Cross Lifeguard Training certification or the equivalent. For swimming activities in lakes, slow-moving streams, and rivers, ensure one adult lifeguard (certified in American Red Cross Lifeguard Training plus Waterfront Lifeguard course or the equivalent) is present for every 10 swimmers, plus one watcher. When girls are wading in water more than knee-deep, an adult with American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue certification or with documented experience is required. For swimming and wading activities, consult the “Swimming Lifeguards and Watchers Ratios” chart for standards.

**Ensure the presence of watchers.** A watcher is a person trained in the use of basic water-rescue equipment and procedures who works under the direction of the lifeguard. American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue certification or equivalent is appropriate. Lifeguards and watchers are stationed at separate posts and stay out of the water, except in emergencies. An American Red Cross Lifeguarding Instructor or American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor (WSI) can provide training in Basic Water Rescue.

### Swimming Lifeguards and Watchers Ratios

Number of Swimmers	Lifeguards	Watchers
1–10	1	1*
11–25	1	2*
26–35	2 persons, at least 1 is an adult; others may be 16 years of age or older.	3*
36–50	2 persons, at least 1 is an adult; others may be 16 years of age or older.	4*

\*Must be an adult

These numbers are a minimum. The ratio of lifeguards and watchers to swimmers may need to be increased depending on the number of girls in one area, swimming level and ability, girls with disabilities, age level and ability to follow instructions, type of swimming activity (instruction, recreation), type of swimming area, weather and water conditions, and rescue equipment available. If you are unsure whether your swimming lifeguards and watchers ratios are sufficient, be sure to contact our council.

**Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at GSGLA-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted on the day of the activity. Consult with our Girl Scout council for additional guidance.

**Guidelines for Hot Tubs:** Ensure the presence of at least two adults no further than 10 feet from the water, when girls are in a hot tub; for Seniors/Ambassadors at least one adult must be present no further than 10 feet.

## Procedures for Accidents

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe GSGLA procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the sick or injured person. Follow established GSGLA procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of GSGLA staff, parents/caregivers, and emergency services such as the police, fire department, or hospital emergency technicians. Check with our council for emergency contact information.

GSGLA's 24-hour, bi-lingual (English and Spanish) emergency line will connect you with GSGLA staff who are prepared to help you make decisions for any and all emergencies. 877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752) is the number to call to report any crisis or emergency to GSGLA.

After receiving a report of an accident, GSGLA staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance at the scene, if needed, and will notify parents/caregivers, as appropriate. If a child needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow GSGLA procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents or caregivers. If the media is involved, please say "I am not the council spokesperson" and for your protection do not discuss with the media. GSGLA staff will contact the Chief External Relations Officer to manage the media.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, notify the police. A responsible adult must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings. Follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, your authorized GSGLA staff member, and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel. Please do not discuss with the media.

**All serious emergencies and crisis should be reported to 1- 877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752). If media is involved, let the ICE operator know.**

From pink card – in case of serious injury, accident, emergency or fatality involving Girl Scouts:

1. Give priority attention to the ill or injured person. Call 911 or ambulance, police, and fire personnel, as needed.
2. In the event of a fatality, always notify the police. Do not disturb the victim or surroundings.
3. Place a competent person in charge of the group. If a minor is injured, when available, have another adult contact the parent of the victim.
4. Call 1-877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752) 24-hour emergency service, to alert the GSGLA's Emergency Team. State: "I am from Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles" and indicate your emergency.
5. Provide the name, location, and telephone number you are calling from.

Complete and submit Accident/Incident Report Form

([http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Accident\\_and\\_Incident\\_Report\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Accident_and_Incident_Report_Form.pdf)) within 72 hours

# Serious Accidents and Major Emergencies

## GSGLA Emergency Management Plan

Follow these procedures when emergency response or immediate action by authorities is required:

1. Give injured person(s) first aid and simultaneously have someone call a hospital, ambulance service or doctor. Call 911 if available; if not, call the police. If there has been an automobile accident, a death or a suspected crime, call the police.
2. Contact the camp ranger if you are on camp property.
3. Put a responsible adult in charge of accounting for all individuals; organize a search for anyone who is missing.
4. See that a responsible adult remains with the injured person. Do not move the person unless her/his life is in danger by being left at the scene of the accident. If there has been a death, do not move the victim or change the surrounding area until the police have arrived.
5. After immediate emergency needs have been met, call GSGLA's Customer Care Hotline at 213-213-0123 during business hours; after hours call the 24- hour emergency line: **1-877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752)**. The staff emergency contact person will arrange for additional help and provide guidance for the next steps.
6. For your protection, do NOT discuss the incident or give out information to anyone except the police or known and identified GSGLA leadership. If the media contacts you, please do NOT make a statement. Please say "I am not the council spokesperson". When making the report to our emergency service 1-877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423-4752) note the media inquiry and have the emergency service contact GSGLA's Chief External Relations Officer.
7. Make a record of the following, indicating the time and what procedures were followed:
  - a) How the accident or emergency happened.
  - b) First aid given and by whom.
  - c) Statements made to ambulance attendants, doctors, police, etc.
  - d) Telephone calls (who made them, who they called, what they said).
  - e) Names and addresses of all witnesses.
8. As soon as possible, and no later than 72 hours, submit a written report to GSGLA. Use GSGLA's Accident/Incident Report form. [http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Accident\\_and\\_Incident\\_Report\\_Form.pdf](http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Accident_and_Incident_Report_Form.pdf)