



General Council Policies

Safety-Wise, produced and distributed by Girl Scouts of the USA, provides guidelines specific to program standards, basic safety, trip planning, and a variety of other Girl Scout activities. Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSGLA) provides volunteers (at the Service Unit, Troop/Group, and Independent levels) with specific adult volunteer practices and procedures found in *Volunteer Essentials* that are also guidelines to assist them in their roles with the Council.

The following ***Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles Policies*** build upon the content of these two documents to further ensure girls and volunteers throughout the greater Los Angeles Girl Scout community have the safest and most positive experience possible. These policies are approved by the GSGLA Board of Directors and must be adhered to at all times.

Safety

- i. **Communicable Diseases:** In the case of easily transferable communicable diseases, GSGLA will follow appropriate communication guidelines as established by local or state health organizations and/or the CDC.
- ii. **Weapons:** GSGLA strictly prohibits volunteers or girls from possessing any forms of weapons or explosives restricted by local, state, or federal law at any time while engaging in Girl Scout activities, programs, or while on any Girl Scout properties. Exempted from this are Law Enforcement Personnel when acting in a professional capacity. Volunteers and girls may use pocketknives, kitchen knives, hatchets, and other such equipment only under strict supervision and only after proper instruction.
- iii. **Fireworks:** GSGLA strictly prohibits the possession, use, or sale of fireworks at Girl Scout events or on Council owned properties.
 - a. Fire powered projectiles or rockets may be approved for an organized program or activity conducted with a council approved instructor or agency.
- iv. **Child Abuse:** Leaders or volunteers who suspect that a child is being abused (physically, emotionally, or sexually) should consult with their respective regional Membership Specialist. California Law stipulates that "Volunteers of public or private organizations whose duties require direct contact and supervision of children are encouraged to obtain training in the identification and reporting of child abuse (Penal code 11165.7. subd .(d)). Volunteers, **however**, are not mandated reporters." Source: *Child Abuse Prevention Handbook... and Intervention Guide, Crime and Violence Prevention Center, California*

Attorney Generals Office. In situations where a volunteer believes that a child is in imminent danger as a result of child abuse, they are encouraged to report the suspected abuse directly.

Los Angeles County Report Line	800-540-4000
Kern County Report Line	661-631-6011
San Bernardino County Report Line	909-384-9233

Please contact your Membership Specialist or Regional Vice President subsequent to any direct reporting of suspected abuse.

- v. **Substance Abuse:** The use, distribution, or possession of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages is not permitted at Girl Scout events or activities where minor girls are the focus of the event, i.e. troop meetings, outings, or activities, camps, council programs, etc.
 - a. **Smoking:** According to *Safety-Wise* (pg 41), “alcohol is the most abused drug among youth in the United States, followed by tobacco.” As role models to Girl Scouts, leaders and volunteers are prohibited from smoking at Girl Scout events or activities where minor girls are the focus of the event, i.e. troop meetings, outings, or activities, camps, council programs, etc.
- vi. **Transportation:** Adults who transport girls must complete the *Automobile Transportation & Health History Form* and must have appropriate automobile insurance (minimum coverage according to California Law). All drivers of Girl Scouts must comply with California requirements for age and weight, as well as the use of infant/child safety seats. All vehicles must have one seat belt for each passenger and the seat belts must be used. Male drivers are encouraged to have an unrelated adult female in their vehicles for the duration of any trip. When using contracted vehicles (buses, etc), leased vehicles, or other modes of transportation all *Safety-Wise* requirements need to be followed.

Troop Finance

- i. **Bank Accounts:** ALL Girl Scout Troops/Groups must have a bank account under the name *Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles Troop # ____* (or name of group, i.e. Rock N’ Roll Robots) and its Federal Tax ID. This account is required to protect both the Troop/Group funds which are limited to troop/group activities and trips, as well as to protect against any potential misperceptions of inappropriate conduct pertaining to troop funds.
 - a. There must be at least two signatories for the account, none of whom are related. Senior or Ambassador Girl Scouts may be listed as signers on the account.
 - b. Banks are to be notified immediately if there are changes in the authorized signatures.
 - c. It is recommended that Troops/Groups designate a registered adult as the Troop Treasurer to oversee all troop/group finances and provide the Troop/Group/Service Unit leadership with timely reports.

- ii. **Disbanded Troops/Groups:** Troops/Groups that disband are required to submit a final *Annual Troop Finance Report*, along with the balance of funds in the Troop/Group account, and an inventory list of all Troop/Group equipment and materials to their respective GSGLA Membership staff within 30 days of their final meeting. If girls from the disbanded troop/group are continuing with Girl Scouts in new troops/groups, the funds will be re-distributed (on a per capita basis) to the new troops/groups. Any remaining funds will be allocated to the GSGLA Financial Aid fund for girls. Equipment and materials distribution will be determined based on inventory and need. This determination is at the discretion of the respective GSGLA Membership staff and if a fair distribution cannot be agreed upon, all equipment and materials will come to the respective GSGLA regional service center.
- iii. **Split Troops/Groups:** Situations may occur within troops/groups that result in girls needing to or choosing to move to a new troop/group (currently existing or newly formed). Should this happen, the leaders of the new troop/group are encouraged to contact their respective GSGLA Membership staff to ascertain whether troop funds can be transferred along with the girls to the new troop (this would be done on a per capita basis). This also applies to troop equipment and materials/supplies. Equipment and materials distribution will be determined based on inventory and need. This determination is at the discretion of the respective GSGLA Membership staff and if a fair distribution cannot be agreed upon, all equipment and materials will come to the respective GSGLA regional service center.

Volunteer Membership

- i. **Male Volunteers:** As indicated in *Safety-Wise*, “Because the female role model is essential to fulfilling the purpose of Girl Scouting, at least one member of the leadership team must be an adult female.” Male volunteers are welcome at GSGLA in various roles including as Troop/Group Leaders. However, male volunteers **must** have an unrelated adult female present, especially when camping or meeting with a girl individually. Male volunteers must comply with the *Safety-Wise*, *Standard 13* requirements for trips.

Other

- i. **Contracts:** Neither Girl Scout Troops/Groups nor individual volunteers has the authority to sign any legally binding contract or agreement on behalf of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles. Any contracts related to GSGLA must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Vice President (regional or local contracts) or the Vice President of Business and Administration (council-wide or administrative contracts) for approval and signature. This includes any contracts involving liability insurance. Individuals or companies organizing activities in the name of Girl Scouts must contact their regional Service Center to request specific contracts, “hold harmless agreements,” or certificates of insurance.