



Activity and Trip Planning Guide

As of September 1, 2020

Activity and Trip Approval at a Glance

Activity or Trip	Age Levels	Examples	Forms Required*	Council Approval Required?
Day or overnight trips to Girl Scout properties	All age levels	An overnight stay at a Girl Scout camp	Follow process for campsite reservation and/or event registration.	Yes
Day trips within the Council	All age levels	Girl Scout day at the local ballet, touring the local fire station	Activity and Trip Form submitted at least 4 weeks in advance	Yes
High risk activities OR contracts requiring authorized signature	All age levels	Horseback riding, ropes and challenge courses; discussing religion, health, some advocacy projects	Activity and Trip Form submitted at least 4 weeks in advance	Yes
Day trips outside the Council	Girl Scout Brownies and older	A day trip to another city such as Austin or Houston	Activity and Trip Form submitted at least 4 weeks in advance	Yes
Overnight trips that are 1-2 nights in length.	All age levels (Daisies can participate in day trips and 1-night within council boundaries.)	a weekend camping trip to a state park or overnight trip to Corpus Christi	Activity and Trip Form submitted at least 4 weeks in advance	Yes
Trips lasting 3-4 nights	Girl Scout Juniors and older	3 night trip to Houston or Dallas	Activity and Trip Form submitted 6 months in advance and before money earning	Yes
National trips lasting a week or more	Girl Scout Cadettes and older	Troop trip to Savannah, Florida or Washington DC	Activity and Trip Form submitted 6 months in advance and before money earning	Yes
International Trips	Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors	Trip to Canada or Mexico; visits to the WAGGGS World Centers; trips to anywhere a passport is required	Activity and Trip Form submitted 1 year in advance Other forms will be required before approval.	Yes

Note: For trips & activities outside the normal troop meeting, troops must carry a [Activity or Trip Permission to Participate Form](#) for the event/activity and [Health History Form](#) for each participant. Use the Safety Activity Checklist Matrix to view specific activity approvals.

Troop Trip Planning Guide

Girl Scouts love to travel and it's one of the many ways troops can Discover, Connect and Take Action. Traveling with your troop is a progressive experience. Your experiences may begin with a hike outside your troop meeting place and then progress to overnight camping, a visit to a city in another state, and ultimately a long excursion to one of the four World Centers of Girl Scouting (United Kingdom, Switzerland, Mexico, India, and Africa).

When planning trips, it is important to keep a few things in mind:

- The trip should meet the needs and interests of the girls and be appropriate for their age group. Girl Scout Daisies might visit a local farm or take a behind-the-scenes tour of a local restaurant. Girl Scout Cadettes, on the other hand, might plan a weekend trip to a big city.
- Safety-Wise ([Volunteer Essentials](#), Chapter 4) and [Safety Activity Checkpoint](#) procedures must be observed. Be sure you know policies and procedures before venturing out. You can find these resources on our [website](#) under Volunteers.
- Drivers and troop helpers need to be approved volunteers who are registered members with an approved background check.

Girl Scout Travel Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent travelers, including how to plan and organize trips. Because when girls take the lead, the possibilities are endless.

LOCAL FIELD TRIPS
Get your travel feet wet! Walk to a nearby garden, or take a short ride to a firehouse or other local spot.
Keep it girl-led: girls choose the location.

DAY TRIPS
Take an all-day trip!
Keep it girl-led: girls choose the location and activity (perhaps working toward a badge) and make plans for lunch.

OVERNIGHTS
Start with one night, maybe at a camp or museum. Progress to a weekend trip in a nearby city or state park.
Keep it girl-led: girls plan the activity and meals, create travel games, and pack their own overnight bags.

REGIONAL TRIPS
Spend three to four nights away somewhere a few hours from home.
Keep it girl-led: girls plan key details of the trip, such as the activities, the budget, the route, and lodging.
(Extended trip insurance required.)

NATIONAL TRIPS
Travel the country! Trips often last a week or more. Girls should think beyond a typical vacation location and consider historical sites, museums, or national parks!
Keep it girl-led: girls lead the entire planning process and might add a community service or Take Action project.
(Extended trip insurance required.)

INTERNATIONAL TRIPS
Travel the world! These life-changing trips usually take one to three years to prepare.
Consider visiting a WAGGGS World Centre!
Keep it girl-led: girls download the Global Travel Toolkit and plan their entire trip (including learning about the language, culture, passports and visas, exchange rates, etc.).
(Extended trip insurance required.)

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL
Older girls with national or international travel experience can travel nationally or internationally independently through council-offered travel opportunities or GSUSA's Destinations program. Check with your council, or visit the Girl Scout Destinations website!

Check with your council about age requirements. Girls should have experience at every level of the progression before moving on to the next level. For regional travel, girls must be Juniors or older. For national and international trips, girls must be Cadettes or older.

When moving up to each level of the progression, consider girls' independence, flexibility, decision-making skills, group skills, and cross-cultural skills.

Girl-Led Trip Planning

Girls of all ages have ideas of places they want to go and, through the progression of experience and skills, they can research, plan, budget, earn money and put together an itinerary for a trip.

Start a discussion with girls using these questions:

- Where could we go?
- When?
- How will we get there?
- How much will it cost?
- How should we get ready?
- What will we do along the way?

The *girls* should plan the trip, not the adults. Even Girl Scout Daisies can brainstorm a list of ideas; Girl Scout Juniors can make phone calls to find out admission fees and hours of operation. Girl Scout Seniors can make airline reservations. Let the girls take on the leadership roles in planning and carrying out their trip.

Activity and Trip Checklist

- Girls brainstorm ideas for things they would like to do.
- Discuss activity/travel opportunities and research ideas.
- Girls vote or use troop government to choose a destination.
- Girls consider costs and money earning potential and develop an activity/trip budget.
- Adults read applicable sections of *Volunteer Essentials* and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), found on our website, girlscouts-swtx.org, under Volunteers.
- If council permission is needed, submit the [Activity and Trip Form](#) online.
- Once council approval is obtained, proceed in booking activity/trip.
- Plan and participate in money earning projects, if needed. Approval for activities and trips is needed before money earning projects will be approved.
- Secure enough approved drivers and troop helpers to appropriately supervise the trip or activity. Find adult-to-girl ratio chart in Safety-Wise, [Volunteer Essentials](#), Chapter 4. Drivers and troop helpers must be registered members and have an approved background check.
- Collect signed [Activity or Trip Permission to Participate Form](#) and bring these and girls' Health History Forms with you on the trip. Purchase additional insurance, if needed, at least 4 weeks prior to event/trip.
- Have FUN on your trip!
 - As a troop, evaluate the experience.
 - What did you enjoy?
 - What would you change?
 - What did you learn?

Activity Notification for Approval

Council permission must be obtained for the following activities and trips by filling out the online [Activity and Trip Form](#) within the stated timeline below. Approval for activities and trips is needed before money earning projects will be approved.

- Day Trips inside & outside council boundaries – 4 weeks prior to trip
- Overnight Stays - 1-2 night (including camping on non-council sites) – 4 weeks prior to overnight
- High-Risk Activity – 4 weeks prior to activity
- Contracts/Hold Harmless Agreements - submit with [Activity and Trip Form](#) - 4 weeks prior to activity
- Extended Travel (3 or more nights) – 6 months prior to trip
- International Travel – 1 year prior to trip

When an application is submitted, troops will receive an email within 2 weeks giving one of three answers:

- Trip or activity is approved – no further steps are required.
- Trip or activity – additional information is needed. This email will describe the additional steps.
- Trip or activity is not approved. The email will give an explanation.

Once approval is granted, troops may start booking the trip. If plans change, a new application must be submitted.

Troop Money Earning

Any troop wishing to conduct a money-earning project must participate in both Girl Scout Product Programs. Money-earning projects must adhere to Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas policies, be age and skill appropriate, properly supervised and decided upon with girl input and leadership. All money-earning projects must be approved prior to participation. To get money earning projects approved, complete the [Money Earning/Solicitation Form](#) and submit the form at least 6 weeks prior to the project to [Customer Care](#). If you are earning money for a trip or activity that needs approval, the [Activity and Trip Form](#) must be approved prior to starting a money earning project.

Contracts

As a co-leader, you might encounter contracts that need to be signed. Some common contracts include facility or equipment rental agreements. Many contracts contain hold harmless agreements and need to be reviewed and signed by a designated staff person. To submit a contract for review, complete the online [Activity and Trip Form](#) and attach the form.

Community Events

Communities can submit one [Activity and Trip Form](#) for troops attending a community activity or decide to have each troop send in a form. When a community submits the form for approval, a roster of people attending and the certified/trained adults with their certification dates are required. If communities have questions about this process, please contact [Customer Care](#) for assistance.

Safety

The most important factor in having a safe and successful outing is good planning. Let girls do as much of the planning as possible. When girls have been included in planning, they will take the responsibility for enforcing safety procedures. The co-leaders need to guide the group to ensure plans are appropriate to girls' experience and skill level. Part of the planning process is to learn and practice the basic skills that girls will need to carry out the trip.

Before planning any activity or trip, a co-leader is responsible for reviewing the following resources:

[Volunteer Essentials](#) is the Girl Scout volunteer handbook. It includes basic policy and procedure information; health and safety guidelines; and information about Girl Scout basics, volunteer tips, Girl Scout activity resources and traditions; and ideas for ways to engage girls. The following chapters are especially important for troops planning an activity or trip.

- **Volunteer Essentials: Chapter 4: Safety-Wise** is the key safety reference document, providing volunteers with basic program activity guidelines and assuring safe and quality experiences for girls.
- **Volunteer Essentials: Appendix B: For Travel Volunteers** provides key information for troops planning overnights or trips and must be reviewed.

[Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) provide specific instructions for staying safe while participating in various activities. They are activity specific and should be reviewed before engaging in activities with girls.

Approved Adults

Troops must maintain proper adult/girl ratios during all Girl Scout activities. Troops use the Events, Travel and Camping ratios in the "Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need" in [Volunteer Essentials](#) when planning field trips, overnights and travel. Adults accompanying a group should be chosen for their patience, flexibility and good judgment.

They need to understand their responsibilities during the trip. Any adult participating in a field trip, overnight or trip including drivers and other parents must be approved volunteers. This means that the following conditions are met: **Adults must be registered members and have an approved background check through Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas. Drivers must be 21 years old.**

First-Aid/CPR

A qualified volunteer with first-aid/CPR is required for all activities that involve risk. Review [Volunteer Essentials](#) for requirements.

Family Activities and Trips

Most Girl Scout activities or trips are intended for the girls in the troop and their adult volunteers. In some cases, it might be appropriate to host a family event or overnight. To qualify as a family event, the following conditions must be followed:

- The event must be advertised as such and all families are invited.
- The activity must be age appropriate for everyone attending including tagalongs. Tagalongs are siblings, both boys and girls, who come with parents or guardians to a Girl Scout event.
- For Girl Scouts who do not have family attending, there must be enough approved volunteers to fulfill adult/girl ratios.

Contact person

Designate an emergency contact person who will remain near home during the duration of the trip.

- Leave a list of names, phone numbers, emergency contacts and other vital information of all people going so that they can contact you or the girls' families in an emergency.
- Provide the contact person with a complete trip itinerary including contact numbers for hotels, campgrounds and attractions you plan to visit.
- Leave your route of travel with the contact person along with basic vehicle information.

Health History

Co-leaders should collect a complete, accurate, signed health history from each girl in the troop annually. A [Health History Form](#) is available on the council website. It is a fillable PDF and can be emailed to families at the beginning of the Girl Scout year.

Overnight Safety

To ensure the safety of sleeping areas, use the following guidelines.

- Each participant has her own bed. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed.
- Adults and girls never share a bed unless it's a parent/daughter.
- It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area (tent, cabin, hotel room, or designated area) with the girls. However, if an adult female does share the sleeping area, there should always be two unrelated adult females present.
- If males are participating, a separate sleeping area and bathroom facilities must be provided.

Transporting Girls

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities in which a group will be transported in private vehicles, keep in mind the following:

- Every driver must be an approved volunteer at least 21 years old and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle.
- 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. In addition, the girl-volunteer ratios in the "Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need" section of [Volunteer Essentials](#) 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, one of whom is female, and care should be taken so that a single car is not separated from the group for any length of time.
- Fifteen passenger vans are not permitted for use to transport girls.
- Review [Volunteer Essentials](#), "Transporting Girls" and "Appendix B: For Travel Volunteers".

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats and chartered flights

Insurance

A portion of the individual annual Girl Scout membership dues pays for supplementary insurance for Girl Scout members only. This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred in case of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity lasting two nights or less, after the individual's primary insurance pays out. This is one reason that all adults and girls should be registered members. Non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons are not covered by basic coverage.

An optional plan of activity insurance is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips (3 nights or more) and for non-members who participate in approved and supervised Girl Scout activities. These plans are secondary insurance that covers individuals while participating in any approved supervised Girl Scout activity.

- Optional insurance coverage must be purchased for any Girl Scout activity that involves non-Girl Scouts, lasts longer than three days and two nights or involves travel outside the United States.

For plan descriptions, see below or visit [Mutual of Omaha's website](#) for more detailed information. To purchase additional insurance, submit the [Plan 2 Enrollment Form](#) and [Payment Form](#) to [Customer Care](#).

Questions? Contact [Customer Care](#) if you have any questions about when supplemental insurance is needed or what type of insurance is required.

Types of Extra Insurance

Plan 2 Accident insurance (\$0.11 per participant per calendar day)

For members participating in approved Girl Scout activities lasting 3 days/2 nights or less. For non-members *participating* in an approved and supervised Girl Scout activity such as a Father/Daughter dance or family event at a local park.

Plan 3E Accident and Sickness Insurance (supplemental to individual insurance) (\$0.29 per participant per calendar day)

For *participants* in approved Girl Scout activities - most often purchased for council sponsored activities such as resident camp or for troop travel of 4 days/3 nights or longer. This acts as a supplement to an individual's personal insurance.

Plan 3P Accident and Sickness Insurance (\$0.70 per participant per calendar day)

For *participants* in approved Girl Scout activities – most often purchased for council sponsored activities such as resident camp or for troop travel of 4 days/3 nights or longer. This acts as a primary and is recommended for trips outside council boundaries.

Plan 3PI Accident and Sickness Insurance for International Trips (\$1.17 per participant per calendar day)

For *participants* in approved Girl Scout International Trips – this is a requirement for international travel.