



Activity and Trip Planning Guide

Activity and Trip Approval at a Glance

Activity or Trip	Age Levels	Examples	Forms Required*	Council Approval Required?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day or overnight trips to GS properties Day trips within the Council jurisdiction 	All age levels	An overnight stay at a GS camp; Girl Scout day at the local ballet, touring the local fire station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow process for campsite reservation and/or event registration. 	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High risk activities Discussions of sensitive topics * Contracts requiring authorized signature 	All age levels	Horseback riding, ropes and challenge courses not operated by GS; discussing religion, health, some advocacy projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity & Trip Application submitted at least 4 weeks in advance 	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day trips outside the Council jurisdiction Overnight trips that are 1-2 nights in length. 	GS Brownies and older All age levels (Daisies can participate in day trips and 1-night within council boundaries.)	A day trip to another city such as Wichita or Jefferson City; a weekend camping trip to a state park or overnight trip to St. Louis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity & Trip Application submitted at least 4 weeks in advance 	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trips lasting 3-4 nights within the Midwest area. 	GS Juniors and older	3 night trip to St. Louis or Branson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity & Trip Application submitted at least 6 months in advance and before money earning 	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National trips lasting a week or more 	GS Cadettes and older	Troop trip to Savannah, Chicago or Washington DC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity & Trip Application submitted at least 6 months in advance and before money earning 	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Trips 	GS Seniors and Ambassadors	Trip to Canada or Mexico; visits to the WAGGGS World Centers; trips to anywhere a passport is required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity & Trip Application submitted at least 1 year in advance Other required forms will be sent after application is approved. 	Yes

Note: For all trips & activities outside the normal troop meeting leaders must carry a specific [Parent Permission Slip](#) for the event/activity and [Health History Form](#) for each participant. *More information on Sensitive Topics can be found on page 9 of this document.

Troop Trip Planning Guide

Taking trips is 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 (India, Mexico, London, or Switzerland).

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. A Girl Scout Daisy troop might visit a local farm or take a behind-the-scenes tour of a local restaurant. A Girl Scout Cadette troop, on the other hand, might plan a weekend trip to a big city.
- All *Safety-Wise* ([Volunteer Essentials](#)) and [Safety Activity Checkpoint](#) procedures must be strictly observed. Be sure you know all of the policies and procedures before venturing out. You can find these resources on the GSKSMO website under Forms & Resources.
- All volunteer drivers and adult helpers need to be approved GS volunteers who have completed an online volunteer application and criminal background check. [Additional insurance](#) will need to be purchased for adults who are not registered members.

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](#). (These can be found on the GSKSMO website under Forms and Resources.)
- If council permission is needed, submit the [Activity and Trip Application](#) online.
- Once council approval is obtained, proceed in booking activity/trip.
- Plan and participate in troop money earning activities, if needed. All money earning activities must be approved by council.
- Secure enough approved GS volunteer drivers and helpers to appropriately supervise the trip or activity. (All drivers and helpers for troop trips must complete a volunteer application and criminal background check.)
- Collect signed Parent/Guardian Permission Slips and bring these and girls' Health Histories with you on the trip.
- Purchase additional insurance, if needed, at least 4 weeks prior to event/trip. (See page 11 for insurance information.)
- Have FUN on your trip!
- As a troop, evaluate the experience.
 - What did you enjoy?
 - What would you change?
 - What did you learn?

Activity and Trip Application for Approval

Council permission must be obtained for the following activities and trips within the stated timeline:

- Day Trips 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
- Sensitive Issues – 4 Weeks Prior to Program/Discussion
- Contracts - 4 Weeks Prior to Due Date
- Extended Travel (3 or more nights) – 6 Months Prior to Trip
- International Travel – 1 Year Prior to Trip

To obtain council permission submit the [Activity and Trip Application](#) online (gsksmo.org/forms in the “Frequently Used Forms” section) In all cases, permission must be obtained before money earning activities are approved.

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

1. Trip or activity is approved – no further steps are required.
2. Trip or activity is tentatively approved. This email will describe additional steps.
3. Trip or activity is not approved.

Once some type of 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 activity must participate in the Girl Scout Product Sales Programs. Money-earning activities must adhere to GSKSMO policies, be age and skill appropriate, properly supervised and decided upon with girl input and leadership. All money-earning activities must be approved prior to participation. To get your money earning project approved, complete the [Money Earning Application](#) and submit the form at least 6 weeks prior to the project to your Membership Manager. If you are raising funds for a trip or activity that needs approval, the Activity and Trip Application must be approved prior to money earning activities. Full details on troop money earning can be found online in [Troop Leader Central](#).

Contracts

As a troop leader, you might encounter contracts that need to be signed. Some common contracts include facility rental, vehicle rental or equipment rental agreements. Contracts must be signed by a GS staff person. To submit a contract for review and to be signed, submit an Activity and Trip Application Form. You will then receive an email requesting the contract. It can be submitted via email, fax or mail.

Service Unit Events

Service Units should follow the same trip and activity guidelines as if a troop was planning the activity/trip. The event planner will need to submit one Activity and Trip Application for the event. Individual troops do not need to submit an application.

Keep in mind the following requirements

- Daises can only participate in a 1-night overnight within council boundaries
- All drivers and adult helpers must be approved Girl Scout volunteers

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 leader needs to guide the group to ensure that the plans are appropriate to the 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 leader is responsible for reviewing the following resources:

- [Volunteer Essentials](#) - *Volunteer Essentials* is the Girl Scout's 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 for Travel Volunteers*** provides key information for troops planning overnights or trips.
- [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) – These 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 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:

- Have completed a background check through the Girl Scouts within the last 3 years.

[Additional insurance](#) should be purchased to cover non-member parents/adults who attend to assist with activities & provide transportation. Reminder: all leaders and assistant leaders must be registered members.

First-aider

A qualified first-aider is required for all activities that involve risk. Review [Volunteer Essentials](#) for requirements.

Family 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. In order 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 all attending including tags.
- For Girl Scouts who do not have family attending there must be enough adults to fulfill ratios who are approved (background check and a volunteer application) who are not responsible for any other children.
- [Insurance](#) must be purchased for all non-registered children and adults. It is \$0.11 per person per day. It is best if it is purchased at least 4 weeks in advance.

If the event involves an overnight, these conditions must also be met:

- All children attending must be kindergarten and up including tags. If out of council boundaries all children must be 2nd grade and up.
- Separate sleeping and bathroom areas must be set up for men/boys.

For additional clarification in regards to insurance, see the end of this guide.

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

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.

- Overnights cannot take place on private property or in homes.
- 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.
- 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 and bathroom facilities are provided for them.

Car Rental

Troops might need to rent vehicles to go on a trip or activity. Keep the following in mind when renting cars.

- Girl Scouts/troops are never allowed to rent or use 15-passenger vans.
- Troops are able to rent 12-passenger vans only if the drivers have proven experience using these vehicles.
- The following types of insurance for the vehicles will need to be purchased through the rental company:
 - Loss Damage Waiver
 - Additional/Supplement Liability
 - Please note these names can vary by Rental Company, talk to the council if you need clarification.
- You will be asked to submit a confirmation of rental and insurance before you leave.

Sensitive Topics

Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of cultures. In order to be contemporary and responsive to girls' needs, some Girl Scout activities focus on subjects that may be considered sensitive in nature. There is no definitive list of sensitive issues but possible examples are listed below. Keep in mind that what is considered a sensitive issue in some families, communities or school districts may not be considered so in others.

When girls discuss sensitive topics, council and parent approval is required. Apply for council approval using the [Activity and Trip Application](#) 4 weeks in advance. After council approval is granted use the [Sensitive Issue Permission Form](#) to obtain parent permission.

Examples of sensitive issues:

- Substance Abuse: drug awareness activities and education, including tobacco and alcohol.
- Child Abuse: information about types of abuse, including sexual abuse or molestation; danger awareness and person safety.
- Puberty/Human Sexuality: information about the physical and emotional changes that come with puberty; personal hygiene and teen pregnancy.
- Violence: rape/date rape, sexual harassment; school violence, family violence.
- Youth Suicide: recognizing the warning signs of plans for suicide; how to react/what to do; suicide prevention; and dealing with depression.
- Religion: discussion of religion among girls of different beliefs. If working on the My Promise/My Faith Award or any of the established religious awards, council approval is not needed but parent permission is required.

Insurance

A portion of the individual annual GS membership dues pays for supplementary insurance for Girl Scout members only. This insurance provides 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 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. Visit [Mutual of Omaha's website](#) for more detailed information. To purchase additional insurance, submit the [Insurance Purchase Form](#) to the council.

Explanation and Examples of Supplemental Insurance for Meetings and Events

Types 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 Father Daughter Dance or Court of Awards

Plan 3E Accident and Sickness Insurance (supplemental to individuals 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.

Review the [Girl Scouts insurance plan](#) description here.

Terms

Participants: This includes adults, minors, members and nonmembers who participate in an event. For example, at an enrollment event, it would include current Members, the volunteers and any staff that will be attending and managing the activities designed especially for the potential enrollees, their parents, the children placed in a Supplemental Supervised Unit, and the supervisor(s) of that unit. As always, it would not include “Tagalongs” (see below)

Supplemental Supervised Unit: This may be called by many names. Some common ones include “boys’ unit,” and “pixie unit”. It is the children who would be “Tagalongs,” except for the fact that they are kept under the continuous supervision of an adult while a Girl Scouting activity takes place for Members. The reason they are insurable is that they are continuously supervised. While camping there may be a counselor/adult assigned specifically to supervise the children of staff who are not campers. In the group setting, it may be siblings who are kept together away from the Girl Scout programming and supervised by an adult; member or nonmember, or a properly trained and adult supervised older Girl Scout.

Tagalong: Tagalongs are siblings and friends, both boys and girls, who come with parents or guardians to a Girl Scout event. If they are not in a Supplemental Supervised Unit – they are not insurable and should not be attending and/or participating in Girl Scout program activities.

Purchasing Supplemental Insurance

[Forms for purchasing extra insurance are located on the council website.](#)

Examples & Clarification

Troop Activities:

- Activities/field trips for Girl Scouts in specific a troop and their approved adult volunteers.
- Approved adults must have completed a background check.
- It is the responsibility of the leader to ensure that the Safety Activity Checkpoint and safety-wise information in Volunteer Essentials is followed for each activity.
- Examples include Saturday field trip to the local pottery store, troop camping trip (2-nights or less), and ziplining at a council camp.
- Additional insurance only needs to be purchased for these activities if an approved volunteer is not a registered member.
- High-Risk activities, overnights and trips outside council boundaries require council approval. Troop leaders should submit an [Activity and Trip Application](#) at least 6 weeks in advance.

Family Events:

- To qualify for a family event, the event must:
 - Be open to all families and advertised as such.
 - All participants still must meet the age and skill level according to council or safety activity checkpoint standards. For example, if an event is only appropriate for Brownies and above, then all children participating in an event must be in at least 2nd grade.

- Examples of family events include a father/daughter dance, court of award, and family picnic.
- Supplemental insurance needs to be purchased for all non-registered members.

Overnights Longer Than 2-Nights:

- These are considered troop activities and all girls must be registered members and all adults must be approved volunteers (background check completed).
- Additional insurance will need to be purchased for all people participating in the trip.
- Council approval is required. Troop leaders must submit an [Activity and Trip Application](#) at least 6 months in advance.

Age and Skill Appropriate Activities:

- In order to qualify as a participant, a person must meet the age and skill level of the activity.
 - If a safety activity checkpoint says that an activity is only appropriate for Juniors and up, then all participants must be grade 4 and up.
 - A few examples:
 - A Cadette troop plans a field trip. If one of the girls has a sibling who is a registered Brownie, the sibling is considered a tagalong since this is a Cadette activity and cannot attend.
 - A Cadette volunteers to work with a Brownie troop while completing her Leader in Action Award. This is approved activity and insurance does not need to be purchased for the Cadette.

Additional children (non-Girl Scout or not in the right age group) at troop or service unit meetings:

- These children are considered tagalongs.
- There are two options for troops/service units to consider.
 - Set up at supplemental supervised unit and purchase additional insurance. This means that you have an adult (who has completed the background check) who watches all of the tags in a separate room or area. This adult is separate from the adults that are watching the girls in the troop and fulfilling the adult/girl ratios.
 - They do not attend.

Non-registered adults at meetings:

- If they are interacting with girls and/or fulfilling girl/adult ratios, they must complete a background check. Additional insurance needs to be purchased if they are not registered members.
- If they are waiting for their daughter, they may sit to the side or in a different room or area. They do not interact with girls during the meeting and additional insurance does not need to be purchased. These adults do not count in the girl/adult ratios and cannot assist with activities.