



Parades and Other Large Group Gatherings: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Whether you're participating in a parade or planning a Girl Scout event, series, or other large group gathering, it's important to represent Girl Scouts in the best possible way and encourage girls to plan the festivities.

Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations.

Gear for Parades and Other Large Group Gatherings

Required Gear

- Girl Scout uniform, pin, or some other means of group identification
- Comfortable walking shoes

Recommended Gear

- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lipbalm
- Sunglasses

- Reusable water bottle and water for filling bottles

Prepare for the Parade and Other Large Group Gathering

- Communicate with council and parents.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*.
- Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Consider the appropriateness of the activity or event.** When planning parades or large group gatherings consider the following:
 - The needs, interests and readiness of the girls
 - The sponsor of the event or activity
 - The needs of the community to be served
 - Scheduling issues
 - GSUSA and council guidelines on fund-raising, endorsements, collaborating with other organizations and maintaining nonprofit status.
- Respect parade and large-group gathering standards*.** Local regulations and permit procedures are observed for public gatherings, facility use, food handling, certificates of insurance and sales or excise tax. Guidelines for personal protection are observed. Local authorities are contacted for safety and security suggestions and assistance applicable to the parade or event. For safety reasons, name tags or other personal identification are not worn in public places. GSUSA and council guidelines on publicity, photo releases, and interviews are observed.
- Select a safe location*.** The location for any community event, large group gathering, or parade is inspected in advance, with consideration for the following, as appropriate:
 - Accessibility to the group and to the public
 - Suitability to event size, age groups, and kinds of activities
 - Parking availability
 - Availability of restrooms
 - Security arrangements, including availability of police protection
 - Lighting for evening and indoor events
 - Vulnerability to inclement weather
 - Proximity to medical facilities
 - Fire safety, which includes: not exceeding the occupancy limits for indoor activities or events; sufficient emergency exits, which are well marked and operational; and having an emergency evacuation plan in place.
 - A food-preparation area used for large groups of people meets state and local standards, and includes sufficient potable water and restrooms for participants.
 - Provisions are made for garbage removal and site cleanup.
- Make appropriate plans for parade floats*.** Floats drawn by trucks and automobiles must be covered by automobile insurance in the name of the vehicle owners. Float construction is safe, using non-toxic or flame retardant materials, and secured to the body of the float and the vehicle. Floats are equipped with

portable ABC fire extinguishers. Riders on floats have secure seating, or a secure handhold or safety harness if standing. Floats are not overcrowded. Participants do not walk close to moving floats. An adult accompanies girls on any moving float. Any coupling of a trailer to a vehicle is appropriate to the load and has a safety chain. Nothing is distributed to onlookers from a moving vehicle or a float.

- **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of abrasions, sprains, and fractures. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of the Parade or Other Large Group Gathering

- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, 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.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Take safety precautions.** Instruction is given on safe pedestrian practices, when applicable. Adults know girls' location at all times. Advance arrangements are made for picking up the girls after the event and parents and girls understand the arrangements. Adults and girls pick a place to meet in case of separation from the supervising adult or the group.

***These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**