

### Online Marketing

Online Marketing is Allowed	Online Selling is NOT Allowed
<p>Marketing the dates of the product program period is allowed. Asking customers if they would like to buy products is only permitted during the program dates. We request that posts regarding order taking cannot be made prior to the start of your GO dates.</p> <p>Girls may send messages to alert friends and relatives about their business and accept customer commitments. In other words, potential customers can relay (via email or a Facebook post, for example) that, "Yes! I'd like four boxes of Thin Mints and three boxes of Trefoil cookies."</p>	<p>Completing the transaction and collecting money online is NOT allowed other than through the council approved links and payment portals. Girls may not independently sell items online (for example, through secondary resale sites such as eBay).</p>

### Using Online Resources and Social Media to Market Cookies and Other Products

Girls may use Social Media, text messages, IMs, and emails as online marketing tools to let family, friends, and former customers know about the program and collect indications of interest after the season start date. All are effective ways that girls 13 and older can promote their businesses. Girls under may not independently set up online marketing sites, but they may use their parent's or guardian's online sites with their approval and supervision. Social media is a fun, fast way to get out an urgent message, such as, "It's Girl Scout Cookie time!" Posting, tweeting, or pinning such a message will get the attention of friends and family.

The primary purposes of the Girl Scout product programs are to help girls grow an entrepreneurial mindset, to develop confidence, and to generate the revenue necessary to provide Girl Scouting to as many girls as possible. For this reason, girls should be directly involved in all transactions, whether in person or over the Internet.

The following sections detail how girls may use electronic marketing, social media, and group websites to gather commitments from family, friends, and previous customers.

Please keep in mind:

- All online activities must be under the supervision of adults.
- Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver orders and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult.
- Girls must meet age limits set by the provider, which is 13 and above in most cases, as per the United States Child Online Privacy and Protection Act and the Child Online Protection Act.
- 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 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.
- Girls may market to and collect indications of interest from customers within GSNorCal's zip codes. Refer prospects that come from outside council jurisdiction to the cookie finder at [www.GirlScoutCookies.org](http://www.GirlScoutCookies.org). Family members and Digital Cookie/Fall Online transactions are the exceptions to this rule.
- Be sure to discuss with girls the need to treat customer email addresses from current and past years—as well as phone numbers, IM addresses, Facebook accounts, Twitter handles, and mail addresses—with respect; they are private and must be kept so.
- Girls may send email messages to alert friends and relatives about product program activities and accept customer commitments when the season starts.
  - Personal emails, street addresses or phone numbers of girls should never be exposed to the public. Instead, use one of the following:
    - A blind return address account where the girls' name or personal email is not revealed to the customer and is instead hosted on a secure site
    - A group account, monitored by an adult (such as troop30988@yahoo.com)
    - An adult's email account, which is supervised by that adult
  - Product-related email is not intended to be spam (unwanted texts or emails), however, remind girls to be sure that their messages will be welcomed by the receiver.
- Social media sites may be used to market product, however, all applicable GSUSA and GSNorCal guidelines must be followed. Always have a parent's or guardian's permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old.
- 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.
- Any use of online video sharing sites (such as YouTube), where the video is representing Girl Scouts or Girl Scout products, must follow specific requirements for that site, as well as

GSNorCal guidelines. Girl Scout [photo release forms](#) (or the [Annual Permission Form](#)) must be filed for girls pictured by parents/guardians and any adults pictured.

- For additional information and guidance please see the “[Product Program Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)”, “[Computer/Online Use Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)”, the Digital Cookie “[Terms & Conditions for Girl Scouts](#)”, and “[Terms & Conditions for Volunteers](#)”.

**For Digital Cookie there are additional, specific guidelines, some of which are:**

- Girls must read and accept the Girl Scout Digital Cookie Pledge before they can participate in Digital Cookie
- Volunteers must read and accept the Digital Cookie Terms and Conditions for Volunteers before they can participate in Digital Cookie
- Girls may only post about their participation on Digital Cookie on social media that allows them to restrict access to friends and family (e.g. Facebook).
- Parents/guardians must approve the content of a girl's Digital Cookie web page before it goes live
- For girls under 13 years old, a parent/guardian must manage the girl's web site and be responsible for all content. In other words, girls under 13 are not allowed to post anything to their websites; it must be done by their parent/guardian.