

Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of Girl Scouts, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** The Checkpoints are resources that provide safety standards and guidelines for council approved activities. They are available on www.GSNorCal.org/forms. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents/guardians, and Girl Scouts before engaging in activities. [[Safety Wise: Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)]
2. **Points common to all Safety Activity Checkpoints include:**
 - Provides a brief background on each activity
 - Indicates if council approval is required to engage in the activity
 - Indicates what level of Girl Scouts may or may not participate in the activity
 - Provides links to all forms, resources, and websites that are mentioned in the checkpoint
 - States the appropriate adult-to-girl ratios for activities (if they are different than the standard adult-to girl ratios used for meetings, etc.)
 - Provides tips on planning and executing your activity or trip
 - Lists required or recommended safety gear
 - Provides safety information on what do while engaging in the activity
3. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of Girl Scouts.** Your troop must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of the Girl Scouts. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old, be registered as a member of Girl Scouts of Northern California (GSNorCal), have completed and cleared the adult background check, and have taken the appropriate adult learning courses before volunteering.

One lead volunteer in every group must be female. In addition, GSNorCal expects volunteers to be fully capable of performing their duties. Volunteers are not permitted to use or be under the influence of any substance which may impair their physical and/or mental skills at any time when they are supervising Girl Scouts as part of the adult-to-girl minimums, even if Girl Scouts are not in the same room or are sleeping. This includes alcohol or prescription medications, medical marijuana, or illegal drugs. Volunteers are not allowed to smoke or vape when supervising Girl Scouts. [[Safety-Wise: Adult-to-Girl Ratios](#)]

4. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal meeting time and/or place, or a topic is discussed that could be considered sensitive, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for their Girl Scouts to participate. Communicate with council and parents. Follow council procedures to obtain activity approval, certificates of insurance, and council guidelines about Girl Scouts' general health examinations. Make arrangements in advance for all transportation and confirm plans before departure. [\[Activity/Event Permission Form\]](#)
5. **Report Abuse and Neglect:** The State of California has mandated that all volunteers and staff who are in contact with Girl Scouts must take mandated reporter training and must be [fingerprinted](#) as part of their background screening process. The training can be found in [gsLearn](#) and must be completed every two years. Please reference the [AB506: Child Abuse & Neglect Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information about fingerprinting and Mandated Reporter training.

Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is forbidden. Follow GSNorCal's guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting. [\[Safety-Wise: If You Witness, Experience, or Suspect Abuse\]](#)

6. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with Girl Scouts and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health history forms, and contact information for girls' families. [\[Safety-Wise: Emergencies, Accidents & Incidents\]](#)
7. **Use the Buddy System.** Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girl Scouts are encouraged to stay near the group or their buddy with another team of two in case someone is injured. That way one person can care for the injured person while two others seek help.
8. **Travel safely.** When transporting Girl Scouts to approved Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal meeting times and/or place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer, age 21 or over, and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. A male volunteer may act as a driver but must never have one girl in the car alone, except for his own daughter. Everyone must be in a legal seat and wear their seat belt at all times. Adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats. [\[Safety-Wise: Outings, Trips & Travel Planning\]](#)
9. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** During overnights, adults should sleep in areas separate from the Girl Scouts, unless this is a family event, where parents/guardians are supervising their child and ensuring the child's safety while at the event. During family events, ensure the sleeping details are clearly explained in the parent/guardian permission slip. More than one family may use a tent or single room cabin only if both families agree.

Adults should sleep within a reasonable distance from the Girl Scouts to respond to emergencies without infringing on their privacy.

While participating in overnights with minors, the “Rule of Three” must always be followed. This means an adult should never be alone with a camper; there should always be another camper or another adult present.

Each participant should have their own bed or sleeping bag. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed.

In the case of transgender or transitioning girl members, sleeping arrangements should reflect their identified gender, i.e., transgender males should have separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms for their use.

10. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Do not consume alcohol, smoke, vape, or use foul language in the presence of Girl Scouts. Alcohol is not permitted at an event where the main objective is girl program. If Girl Scouts are present where alcohol is served at an adult-only event (sponsored and run by adults), they must be supervised by an adult who is not consuming alcohol and is responsible for the Girl Scouts’ safety and well-being. *(If alcohol is being served at a Girl Scout event, the participants will not be covered by Girl Scout insurance unless prior approval has been obtained from the insurance carrier; contact insurance@gsnorcal.org for more info).* Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of Girl Scouts unless given special permission by GSNorCal for group marksmanship activities. [[Volunteering: Volunteer Policy](#)]
11. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where Girl Scouts are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of Girl Scouts by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination. [[Girls & Adults: Creating a Safe Space for Girls](#)]
12. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status, gender identity, or sexual orientation. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all Girl Scouts involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places. [[Girls & Adults: Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance & Inclusion](#)]
13. **Promote online safety.** Instruct Girl Scouts never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent, guardian or designated adult. On group websites or Facebook groups, publish Girl Scouts’ first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach Girl Scouts the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) that can be found at

www.gsnorcal.org/forms and have them commit to it. [[Safety-Wise: Online Safety](#)]

14. **Keep Girl Scouts safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product programs are an integral part of the Girl Scout experience. During Girl Scout program, you are responsible for the safety of youth, money, and products. In addition, many organizations, causes, and fundraisers may ask the Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics, non-Girl Scout commercial products, or that are not Girl Scout-approved product programs and efforts. Girls cannot fundraise for another organization. [[Product Program: Participating in the Product Program](#)] [[Program: Advocacy Projects](#)] [[Money: Money Earning Projects: Approval Required](#)]