

**Council Approval:** Required

**Activity Permitted For:** \*D \*B J C S A

**Note:** See \*Project Specific Guidelines below



### About Community Clean-Ups:

Community Clean-ups can include Adopt-A-Highway programs, and beach, river, park or natural area clean-ups. They may be organized by the troop or be part of a community-wide service project. While doing this type of community service, you must be aware of the hazards and educate the girls and adults involved.

**Note:** Clean-ups that are part of a larger sustainable project may qualify as a take-action project for the girls to complete a Journey.

### Community Clean-Ups: General Guidelines

- Call ahead to determine if any permissions or specific permits are necessary or required.
- Hard sole, closed toe, and closed heel shoes are required.
- If clean-up is done in an area of vegetation higher than your shoes, long pants and long-sleeved shirts are required to protect against insects, hazardous plants, vegetation, etc.
- [Adult-to-Girl Supervision Ratios](#) should be followed for each level of Girl Scouting along with additional adult watchers as necessary
- Adult watchers should have a communication plan using two-way radios or cell phones.
- All adult watchers must carry an emergency warning device, air horn, or whistle.
- Girls should use the buddy system at all times.
- An emergency action plan should be created for the event to include communication plans, and all participants should practice the plan before the clean-up.

- Clean-ups are planned during daylight hours, never at night. Light reflective gear is helpful even during daylight hours, particularly on overcast days.
- Permission Forms: Clean-up projects require additional information included on permission forms. Parents must give expressed permission for the event after having received specific instructions on the location and environmental conditions.
  - In the case of roadway clean-ups, the [Activity/Event Permission Form](#) must also include how close to the roadway the girls will be working, (for example, girls will work no closer than within 10 feet of the roadway's shoulder), as well as the time duration.

## \*Project Specific Guidelines

### **Beach clean-up** (Daisies and above)

- Do not enter the water deeper than 6 inches without an adult trained in Open/Swift Water Rescue or lifeguard present.
- Hard sole, closed toe, and closed heel water shoe may be used in place of a regular shoe.
- Observe signs of warnings that are posted.
- [California State Parks Beach Clean-Ups Events and Guidelines](#)

### **River or Water-Way clean-up** (Brownies and above)

- Do not enter the water on rivers or waterways due to potential unstable bank conditions without an adult trained in Open/Swift Water Rescue or lifeguard present.
- Stay away from swift moving water.
- Observe signs of warnings that are posted.
- [California Water Resources Control Board Site Clean Up Program Overview and Guidelines](#)

### **Public Parks, Community Clean-ups** (Daisies and above)

- Call ahead to determine if any permissions or specific permits are necessary.
- Ensure the safety of the grounds and security of the area by choosing a location that is in a public space with human traffic activity (not remote).
- Do not enter any bodies of water, such as lakes or large ponds, without an adult who is trained in Open/Swift Water Rescue or lifeguard present.

**Highway/Road** - (Seniors/Ambassadors age 16+ per the State of California) Speed limits cannot exceed 40 mph. Participants cannot work in or around high-risk areas, such as bridges, overpasses, medians, roundabouts, and steep slopes.

- Contact the [California Department of Transportation](#) about applying to participate in adopt-a-highway programs.
- All participants should work facing traffic.
- All participants wear bright clothing or light reflective gear, especially on overcast days.
- Stay away from rural and winding two lane roads and highways.
- Adult watchers are safety observers at the event. They do not participate in cleaning the area; they observe the roadway and participants to identify hazards and activate emergency warnings to avoid danger.
- An adult watcher should stand ahead of the group facing traffic to flag cars to slow down. At least one adult watcher should be at the front and one at the back of the group. If the two adult watchers cannot keep each other in sight, additional adult watchers are required. Use of air horns should be considered to activate an emergency response.

- Adult watchers must carry an air horn as an emergency warning device.
- Use cones or large bright sign to indicate clean-up in progress.
- Girls and adults are never to wear ear-buds or headphones while participating.

## Learn More:

**Adopt-A-Highway:** Contact the [California Department of Transportation](#) for safety tips, rules and regulations or videos. California has specific laws concerning adopt-a-highway and community clean-ups.

## Making Activities Accessible

In order to make your activity accessible to girls of all abilities, it's important to communicate with all girl attendees and their caregivers to learn about and accommodate their varied support needs. For example, the visual or hearing impaired may require very specific laws and guidelines. You may find more information here: [Inclusion of persons with Disabilities in Service days and Events](#).

## Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities, consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate, such as the proper equipment, prior experiences, and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

## Safety Activity Checkpoints

**Standard Safety Guidelines.** Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" in the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) which apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines, always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

**COVID-19 Guidelines.** Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section in the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section and be certain to consult with [GSNorCal's specific COVID-19 guidance](#). When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

**Emergency Action Plan (EAP).** Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong, such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

The emergency action plan should include:

- Communication plans.
- Adult/girl ratios apply for the number of girls participating.
- Required adult watchers are not included in the adult/girl ratio.
- Air Horns are required for use as an emergency warning device on roadways.
- Whistles or air horns may be used as emergency warning devices on beaches, parks, waterways, and other areas, not including roadways.
- Review of current [COVID guidelines](#)
- All girls and adults should know how to respond to an emergency warning device.
- Consider bringing walkie-talkies with you for areas that do not have cell phone service.

**Girls should plan the activity.** Encourage girls to plan where they want to go, their desired outcome, safety precautions, and how to deal with problems that may arise during the clean-up.

- Traffic
- Public interference
- Heat/cold stress
- UV radiation
- Severe weather
- Dangerous animals (snakes, foxes, alligators, jellyfish, bob cats, mountain lions, cows etc.) dependent on the area you will be working in
- Stinging/biting insects
- Poisonous/toxic plants- poison ivy, poison oak, poison sumac, wild parsnip sap.
- Where collected trash will be disposed, arrangements or permissions may be required.

**Be sure girls and adults have a good understanding of potentially hazardous waste** they should not touch or pick up. Discuss this with them. Explain that if they see something, they should say something – to an adult. The below checklist provides examples of hazardous or dangerous materials:

- Abandoned barrels
- Antifreeze
- Any container with a RADIOACTIVE label
- Any container with liquid including soda bottles
- Broken automotive batteries
- Bulging or dented containers
- Chemical containers
- Containers leaking an unknown substance
- Containers of unidentifiable materials
- Dead animals, sea creatures
- Gas cans
- Hypodermic needles
- Unidentified liquids, powders, chemicals
- Narcotics
- Paint cans
- Pesticide/herbicide containers
- Sharp objects
- Unidentifiable containers
- Used oil
- Weapons

**Prompt girls to share resources.** Encourage girls to distribute a list of safety gear and supplies, and to determine which resources can be shared.

**Choose an appropriate area.** Consider terrain, girl safety, and public access, when choosing a location to clean-up. Work with local community groups that may offer clean up days as part of a larger community beautification project. Locations are restricted to a reasonable length as determined by age, nature of the terrain, physical condition of the girls, abilities, weather conditions, and time of day. The location should always accommodate all girls.

**Assess safety of the clean-up area.** Safety of the girls is of utmost concern during a clean-up. Be aware of the public that girls may encounter when cleaning up, traffic, and the potential hazards listed above. Consider extra safety precautions for areas where driver vision is restricted, such as curves in roads. Avoid areas with steep drop offs. Do not work or stand within 10 feet of the shoulder of the road. Follow all state Adopt- A-

Highway safety rules when working along any roadsides. Ensure that the DOT (Department of Transportation), a land-management or similar agency, is contacted during the planning stage to determine any restricted areas or if any permits are needed.

**First aider is required.** 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 certification. [[Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise First-Aid and First-Aiders](#)]

**Ensure that adults have a comprehensive understanding of the trip.** Group members are trained to be observant of the area, surroundings, and fatigue of individuals. Instruction is given on the safety rules, such as staying together in a group, recognizing poisonous plants, and biting or stinging insects and ticks, respecting wild animals, and behaving effectively in emergencies. Ensure that girls, based on their level, know the safety precautions.

**Permission Forms:** Clean-up projects require additional information included on [Activity/Event Permission Form](#). Parents must give expressed permission for the event including specific instructions on the location and environmental conditions. In the case of roadway clean-ups, the permission form must also include how close to the roadway the girls will be working (for example, girls will work no closer than within 10 feet of the roadway's shoulder).

## Safety Gear

The gear you will need will depend on the clean-up project, location, and weather.

- A water bottle or hydration pack with enough water for each girl for the length of the clean up
- Face mask
- Sturdy footwear
- Sturdy gloves
- Safety vests
- Bright clothing
- Garbage bags
- Tongs (pick up tool)
- A working cell phone held by designated adult in case of emergencies.
- First Aid kit

### Additional Safety Gear for Roads and Highways

- Safety cones or triangles to warn drivers of workers along the road or highway.
- Red Flags for adult watchers at front and back of the group
- Airhorn for each adult watcher, make sure there is air in canisters and they are working