

# Trip & Outdoor Advisor Basic Planning Guide

The Trip & Outdoor Advisor Basic Planning Guide is for Troop Leaders, Trip Advisors and Camp Advisors who will be present during trip and outdoor activities and will assist youth as they plan their travel and camping adventures.

If the group will start and end at the regular meeting location, but will walk to a local park or other destination, this activity is not defined as a trip. The 636 Trip & Outdoor Advisor learning path in [gsLearn](#), will prepare and qualify you to take youth on local field trips and day trips away from the regularly scheduled troop meeting location. A Girl Scout trip is an opportunity for youth to have fun, to experience adventure, and to enrich their ongoing Girl Scout program.

The [Trip or High-Adventure Form](#) must be completed and approved before Girl Scout trips more than 60 miles or longer than 6 hours in duration. The guidelines in the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), [Volunteer Essentials](#), and this guide should be consulted when planning a trip of any length. Care should be taken to determine if troops are ready to participate in troop/group trip and travel. Safety and money-earning procedures are also available in this resource. Refer to the [Trip & Outdoor Planning Checklist](#) for the planning and approval timeline.

Not only do some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout's life happen while taking trips, but travel also offers a wealth of opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills. Following travel and outdoor progression guidelines listed on the next few pages will help you prepare Girl Scouts for local, day, overnight, regional, national or international travel of any scope and duration.



# Progression

Progression allows Girl Scouts to learn the skills they need to become competent in the outdoors and the planning of various trips. In addition to the group's overall readiness to travel and exploring outdoors, how ready are you as a troop? Girl Scout Daisies, for example, can begin with a discovery walk. As they grow in their travel outdoor skills and experiences and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer more adventurous trips. For more information of progression check out [Volunteer Essentials: Girl Scout Troops and Program: Outings, Trips, and Travel](#).

## Travel Progression

Youth love trips, and Girl Scout's is a great place for them to learn how to plan and take exciting trips. Travel is built on a progression of activities—that is, one activity leads to the next.

**girl scouts**  
of northern california

## Travel Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent travelers, including how to plan and organize trips. In addition to this Travel Progression Chart, also follow the Outdoor Progression Chart, to help girls develop outdoor skills and experience outdoor travel and adventures. When girls take the lead, the possibilities are endless.

### LOCAL FIELD TRIPS



Get your travel feet wet! Walk to a nearby garden, or take a short ride to a firehouse or other local spot.

Keep it girl-led: girls choose the location.

### DAY TRIPS



Take an all-day trip!

Keep it girl-led: girls choose the location and activity (perhaps working toward a badge) and make plans for lunch.

Forms: Trip and High-Adventure Form may be needed

### OVERNIGHTS



Start with one night, maybe at a camp or museum. Progress to a weekend trip in a nearby city or state park.

Keep it girl-led: girls plan the activity and meals, create travel games, and pack their own overnight bags.

Forms: Trip and High-Adventure Form needed

### REGIONAL TRIPS



Spend three to four nights away somewhere a few hours from home.

Keep it girl-led: girls plan key details of the trip, such as the activities, the budget, the route, and lodging.

Forms: Trip and High-Adventure Form needed; Additional insurance required

### NATIONAL TRIPS



Travel the country! Trips often last a week or more. Girls should think beyond a typical vacation location and consider historical sites, museums, or parks!

Keep it girl-led: girls lead the entire planning process and might add a community service or Take Action project.

Forms: Trip and High-Adventure Form needed; Additional insurance required

### INTERNATIONAL TRIPS



Travel the world! These life-changing trips usually take one to three years to prepare. Consider visiting a WAGGGS World Center!

Keep it girl-led: girls download the Global Travel Toolkit and plan their entire trip (including learning about the language, culture, passports and visas, exchange rates, etc.).

Forms: Trip and High-Adventure Form needed; Additional insurance required

### INDEPENDENT TRAVEL



Older girls with national or international travel experience can travel nationally or internationally independently through GSNorCal travel opportunities or GSUSA's Destinations program. Check with our GSNorCal Travel and Adventure webpage, or visit the Girl Scout Destinations website!

Forms: Trip and High-Adventure Form needed; Additional insurance required

Girls should have experience at every level of the progression before moving on to the next level.

**When moving up to each level of the progression, consider girls' independence, flexibility, decision-making skills, group skills, and cross-cultural skills.**

**Note:** Volunteer training is required for all of the above trips. Check our [learning path](#) and [course](#) options on [gsLearn](#).



## Outdoor Progression

Acknowledge a Girl Scout's mastery of an outdoor skill and invite them to challenge themselves further by taking that next step up and out! Outdoor fun can be endless when Girl Scouts take the lead.



Note: Volunteer training is required for all of the above trips. Check our [learning path](#) and [course](#) options on [gsLearn](#).

## Skill Progression

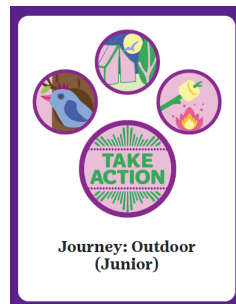
### Girl Scout Program

Girl Scout travel and learning outdoor skills is an ideal way to offer youth leadership opportunities. To ensure that any travel you do with Girl Scouts infuses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience at every opportunity, limit your role to facilitating the troop's brainstorming and planning—but never doing the work for them. Allow them to lead, learn collaboratively, and learn by doing (and by making mistakes). All the while, however, provide ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement! You can incorporate an outdoor element to many of our [badges and Journeys](#) and some are solely focused on the outdoors.



Here are some examples of trip and outdoor badges Girl Scouts can earn.

- Encourage them to choose a Leadership Journey. Tying your trip to the topic of a Leadership Journey is a cinch. For example, if Cadette Girl Scouts have chosen the MEdia Journey, before their trip they can read online newspapers from the area to which they're traveling—and evaluate when they arrive how well the media reflects the realities there.
- Most of our outdoor and camping badges are available in our Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) as well. These badges can be earned individually or as part of an Outdoor Journey Year Plan.



- If Girl Scouts also want to complete skill-building badge requirements as part of their trip, they can. The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, which fits perfectly into planning a trip. There are also several cooking badges available that will be useful when they are ready to add in the cooking element. In addition, they can explore other badge topics, depending on the focus of their trip. For example, Ambassador Girl Scouts can work on their Photography badge while documenting their trip.



Be sure to check the [Volunteer Toolkit](#), and our [Girl Scout Shop](#) for even more possibilities!

## Inclusion

As you know, Girl Scouts promise to be a “sister to every Girl Scout.” In practice, that means we include others, even when doing so presents challenges. You might also need to find ways to accommodate:

- Those who learn differently
- People with physical or mobility challenges
- Travelers with behavior that challenges others
- Youth who have little parental support
- Those who have medical conditions, such as allergies, that are worrisome

It is the responsibility of troop adults to model respectful, inclusive behavior. This means that we make reasonable accommodations when possible. Inquire how to do that with direct, respectful questions. Communicate with the individual with disabilities, allergies, or medical needs, and/or their parents/guardians to assess any needs and accommodations. Address the individual when possible, and check in with the parents/guardians, too.

## Readiness

As you begin to plan trips, from the simplest to the most complex, ask yourself what the Girl Scouts are ready for. Build necessary skills and give youth opportunities to practice (and even fail). If your group is thinking about trips and outdoor adventures, consider first whether they are mature enough to handle the trip. For any kind of trip, practice in some basic life skills, as well as specific travel-related skills is a necessity. Give them a chance to experience progressive trips before taking an advanced trip.

### Girl Scouts are ready for a short trip or outing when:

- They have gotten to know one another
- They get along well and behave in a group
- Understand the Buddy System
- They can clean up after themselves and follow rules
- They have stamina to participate in the planned activity

### How about adult readiness?

Adult readiness should be evaluated, too! Are you up for troop travel? Just like with camping or any other particular activity, if travel is not your “thing” it’s fine to delegate to another troop volunteer (note: at least one adult who has completed the required learning courses still needs to go along). But if you’re willing and able, you’ll be able to build your own confidence and skills along with the Girl Scouts in your troop. You don’t have to be a travel expert to help your Girl Scouts have wonderful experiences. Ask for help if you need it.

Parent or guardian readiness is a factor when it comes to troop travel, too. To make complicated plans and raise funds, the troop will need parental support and “buy-in.” Also, if a parent doesn’t have confidence in his/her child’s ability to be independent, it can be very difficult to “let go!” Be sure to provide progressive experiences that allow them to develop skills in a safe setting—and then share those successes with families.

If you notice that several parents are feeling uncomfortable with the idea, this may be a sign that you’re attempting a plan that’s a bit too ambitious! Take a good, honest look at the progression of activities your Girl Scouts have experienced so far. Is your troop jumping ahead in its progression too fast?

You can have youth, parents, and Troop Leaders/Advisors take the “Am I Ready for Travel?” quiz in the [Girl Scout Guide to U.S. Travel](#) to help determine the readiness of your troop.

### Things to remember about readiness:

Please know you can say “no” to any activity you do not feel ready you , the parent volunteers, or the Girl Scouts are ready to handle. Everyone needs to feel comfortable and ready!

Not all Girl Scouts will want to go!	Let them choose when ready.
Not all Girl Scouts are ready to go!	Don’t force them. Don’t rush them.
Not all parents are ready to let go!	Invite them to help at your meeting. Make sure they are helping all youth. Have a parent meeting to discuss your upcoming plans
Not all adults are ready to lead!	Let them talk about their concerns. Have your co-leader and parents take the necessary training.



## Trip & Outdoor Advisor Learning Matrix

At least one adult must take the online modules required for the activity the group will be doing.

Visit the [gsHelpCenter](#) to review the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)

Take online training in [gsLearn](#) (Log-in through [MyGS](#))

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Type of Activity			Required Courses									Additional Forms					
Day Trips																	
Local field trips away from the regular meeting location*		X										X	X				
*Note: for local field trips involving high-adventure activities, council approval and a First Aider are required-see <a href="#">Safety Activity Checkpoint</a>																	
Day trips farther than 60 miles or 6 hours in duration	X	X										X	X		X		
Overnights																	
Indoor overnight for 1-2 nights with indoor plumbing and electricity	X	X	X									X	X	X	X		
Outdoor overnight for 1 night close to home with indoor plumbing and electricity	X	X	X				X					X	X	X	X		
Camping trip farther from home without indoor plumbing and electricity for 1-2 nights	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X		
Indoor overnights for 3-4 nights only in the following states (CA, NV, OR)	X	X	X						X			X	X	X	X	X	
Outdoor overnights for 3-4 nights only in the following states (CA, NV, OR)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	
Indoor overnights for 5 or more nights anywhere nationally and internationally	X	X	X						X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Outdoor overnights for 5 or more nights anywhere, nationally and internationally	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Backpacking with overnight camping	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
Cooking and Campfires																	
Anytime girls will cook indoors (no cook, stoves, ovens, etc.)	X	X		X								X	X				
Any trip involving fire and/or campfire (includes roasting marshmallows)	X	X		X	X							X	X				
Girls cook simple meals outdoors (no cook, one-pot, simple stick cooking, and solar cooking)	X	X		X	X	X						X	X				
Girls cook advanced meals outdoors (propane, charcoal, dutch/box oven)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X				

# Girl Led Planning

As Girl Scouts progress from Daisies to Ambassadors their decision making capabilities increase and they will become more and more involved in every part of the planning. As they progress to each higher level, their leadership role increases, as the adult role decreases. The older the Girl Scout, the more you step back and serve as a resource and support. Younger Girl Scouts will still need a lot of guidance and support as they take on more of the planning, decision making, and responsibilities for the trip planning and budgeting. As they mature and gain experience they should be able to:

- Plan the entire trip
- Research travel options and plan logistics
- Manage details
- Create and manage the budget
- Be responsible for their personal conduct and safety



Trips are an important Girl Scout tradition since they are a fun way to build new skills, go to camp for the first time, and experience adventures. On a trip Girl Scouts will discover and try new things, seek challenges, develop a greater sense of self-confidence, connect with their true friends, and enhance youth's ability and desire to take action on the community issues they learn about. The Girl Scout program—what they do in Girl Scouting and how they do it—is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), a national model that helps Girl Scouts become leaders in their own lives and as they grow. Refer to [Volunteer Essentials: Girl Scout Troops and Program](#), for information on the Girl Scout Program and letting youth take the lead.

Although it's tempting to do all the planning and take care of the logistics, your Girl Scouts would miss out on a great opportunity to build life skills. How involved they are in the planning process is determined by the troop's program level and readiness. Girl Scouts at every level take can take an active role in determining what, when, why, and how they'll structure activities. Use the [Trip & Outdoor Planning Checklist](#) to help you and your troop begin planning.

## Leader Responsibilities

As the Troop/Group Leader your planning responsibilities will vary depending on the program level and readiness of your troop. However, some responsibilities should be handled by the leader only or with close leader supervision for older Girl Scouts.

These parts of planning require adult involvement:

- Managing site reservation and payment of fees– overseeing the youth's budget and troop finances
- Securing permission for the trip from your Service Unit Manager or designee and council
- Securing a trained First-Aider and ensuring a well-stocked first aid kit is available
- Securing sufficient adult help (proper adult-to-girl ratios are followed)
- Securing responsible drivers, proper insurance, seat belts
- Securing permission forms and health history forms
- Knowing any health problems your Girl Scouts may have and how to deal with them
- Having a backup plan/alternate plans, setting cancellation criteria, rescheduling
- Working toward a spirit of inclusiveness
- Communicating responsibilities to other adult chaperones

## Planning Steps and Timeline

Planning for a fun and successful trip and outdoor adventure starts several months before. The Girl Scouts should be involved in all aspects of planning and preparation. When preparing and planning for a trip, it will take several meetings with the troop before they will be ready to leave for their adventure. The following steps should be considered the minimum preparation required for any trip or outdoor adventure. Refer to the [Trip and Outdoor Planning Checklist](#) for approval and planning timelines and to help you stay on track.

Steps To Planning A Trip	
1. Think ahead	Review badge, Journey, or Take Action activities in the badge pamphlets, Journey books, and Volunteer Toolkit according to the interests of your troop. Look in Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints for information on council policies and safety standards. Consider facilities, time of year, cost, purpose for the trip, the troop's experience level, and the trip goals.
2. Get ideas from the troop	Share some of your research, from Step 1, with the the Girl Scouts in your troop. Have them look at the badge and Journey requirements. Involve them in the planning by asking them some questions. Where do they want to go? What do they want to do? For older Girl Scouts, you could break out into patrols and have them brainstorm ideas for the trip. Come back together and compile a master list.
3. Sift through ideas, decide on a trip, and create the plan with your girl scouts	Prioritize, decide, and come up with a plan for the trip. Assign different planning responsibilities to different patrols—meals, activities, permission forms, and transportation, etc. Always have a back-up plan; for example, in case weather forces one activity to be canceled.
4. Inform parents, other adults, and council	Communicate with parents and other adults working with the troop. Be specific in enlisting support-drivers, grocery shoppers, etc. Distribute necessary paperwork (Permission Forms, Health History Forms, etc.) Submit the <a href="#">Trip or High Adventure Form</a> to council with plenty of time for approval and don't make non-refundable reservations until your trip is approved.
5. Implement and discuss	Gather your adults, Girl Scouts, supplies, drivers, and go. Help Girl Scouts to see the advantages of their pre-planning as the trip progresses. Have a "Plan B" in mind, in the event that things don't go according to the original plan.
6. Evaluate during and after the experience	Review the experience as it is happening and at your next troop meeting. During the trip/activity, ask open-ended questions about what they see, how they feel, what they like so far, and so on. At the next meeting, continue to review by asking questions designed to make youth think. What went well? What was your favorite thing? What were the surprises? What could we do better next time? Are we ready to step up to a bigger trip? Do we want to try a different place or a different season of the year?

## Create an Itinerary

A good itinerary isn't created after the plans have been made. It IS the plan. Itineraries list the activities planned for an outing and should be done in large blocks of time. It could cover a single day or an entire weekend. Schedules are planned with the troop ensuring that everyone will know what the purpose of the trip is. Your Girl Scouts' itinerary will provide families with clear information, and will remind participants of plans and details as you go. Use the [Creating a Trip Itinerary](#) activity resource to help your troop plan their trip.



# Budgeting

Once you have decided on a trip, you will need to determine your budget. To determine a cost per person, by itemizing all of the costs for the trip and dividing by the number of trip participants. Be sure to include Girl Scouts in the development of the budget so they gain an understanding of the costs involved. Consider the fixed costs of your trip and variable costs when determining your budget. Fixed costs are costs which cannot be adjusted (e.g. site rental). Variable costs are costs that vary according to the number of participants (e.g. food and beverage). Use the [Trip & Outdoor Budget Planning Tool](#) with your troop.

## Consider these expenses:

- Site rental
- Admission fees/tickets
- Food and beverage, kitchen supplies
- Equipment rental
- Program supplies
- Patches, personal spending
- Postage and printing for items such as mailings to parents, confirmations, forms
- Health and safety supplies
- Cost of First Aid/CPR/AED training for adults
- Purchased services such as a lifeguard or naturalist
- Leasing costs for a bus/van or auto mileage reimbursements to encourage volunteer drivers
- Insurance, as needed depending on the type of trip
- Emergency and unexpected costs



## Important topics for discussion:

- Is the amount each Girl Scout pays reasonable? If not, is a money-earning activity needed? Or, should you scale back travel plans? Remember, any Girl Scout activity should fit the “smallest pocketbook” in the troop. Give parents a chance to discuss this privately.
- How many of the troop will be able to attend? If less than 75%, try other dates. While it may be impossible to find dates that work for every family, a strong majority is necessary.
- What about Girl Scouts who can’t go? Is there another trip they could do? You may NOT provide cash as an alternative.
- What about Girl Scouts who join the troop after we’ve started planning and money earning? If you keep your troop open, do pick a cutoff date for trip participation. A Girl Scout who joins 2 weeks before a big trip won’t be well prepared, even if the family is able to pay the entire amount.
- How well did your budget work? Evaluation of budget planning after the trip is valuable for planning future events. Think about what worked well and what should be done differently.

## Ways to fund the trip

Once you have a preliminary budget, you and the Girl Scouts will need to begin thinking of where the money will come from and how they will fund the trip. Below are some examples of where the troop could get their funding.

Available Funds	Sources of Income	Other Contributions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Money in your troop account</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Entrepreneurship Program income</li><li>• Other money-earning projects</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family contributions</li><li>• Community donations</li><li>• Sponsorships</li><li>• Fundraising (adults only)</li></ul>

**Tip:** Use the [Trip & Outdoor Budget Planning Tool](#) to help you and your troop plan your next adventure!

## Involving Families

### Parent Meeting

It's critical to develop a good working relationship between troop leaders and families. After all, you'll be working together on behalf of the troop on a shared vision. Parents need to have clear communication throughout the planning and travel process. Be sure to communicate the mission and vision of the trip, how money will be managed, and specific transportation and safety plans. Everything is easier when clear, reasonable expectations are communicated. For advanced travel, the best practice for parent-leader communication is an orientation meeting. You may even want to host an informational meeting, where you can explore ideas the Girl Scouts have come up with, and gauge parent support for the concepts. Provide a brief financial overview and any known details in writing. Give parents a chance to voice any concerns. The following are some expectations you and parents should expect from each other and topics to discuss at a parent meeting.



### **What parents/guardians should expect from the troop:**

- A chance to give input into the planning process, especially regarding dates, length of travel time, budget, and suitability of the trip.
- Goals and program elements that support the values inherent in Girl Scouting. Remember that parents may not be as well-versed in Girl Scout program or protocol as leaders.
- “Rules” for participation well in advance: payment schedules, who can go, whose expenses will be paid (troop only, chaperones also, etc.).
- A detailed budget and an affordable trip; wise use of troop money.
- An adequate number of well prepared adult chaperones; willing to work with all Girl Scouts.
- Emotional and physical safety.
- Ample notice of what their daughters will be expected to provide for the trip, medical exams, special equipment, spending money, participation in fundraising activities, etc.
- A detailed itinerary. Clear understanding of departure and arrival times and locations.
- At-home contact – role, name, and all contact information for the person.
- Notice of changes or updates.

### **What the troop should expect from parents/guardians:**

- An investment of time in understanding the mission and purpose of the trip and Girl Scout values.
- Support in reaching individual goals.
- Communication of any concerns throughout the planning process.
- Timely completion of needed paperwork.
- Adherence to Girl Scout standards.
- A commitment to dates, participation, and money-earning goals, once agreement to participate has been confirmed.
- Attention to updates or changes in plans.

### **Topics you might wish to discuss at a parent meeting:**

- Council policies and safety standards governing the trip and money-earning projects (written parent permission slips, first aid kits, council permission, etc.).
- Girl Scout and accompanying adult behavior expectations.
- Purpose of trip and activities that achieve this.
- The importance of youth-planning and progression.
- The importance of opportunities for youth to learn independence and self-reliance.
- Mistakes will happen, all may not go smoothly. It is important that they have the opportunity to learn from mistakes and be able to cope with “less than perfect.” Let parents know that making mistakes in a safe environment is part of the experience.



# Safety Considerations

## Forms

Girl Scouts of Northern California allows the use of the [Annual Permission Form](#) to be used if the activity meets all of the following criteria:

- Destination is located within 60 miles of the regular meeting place
- Does not exceed 6 hours
- Is not considered high adventure

If your trip or outing does not meet these requirements, a [Activity/Event Permission Form](#) is needed. In addition, there should always be an updated [Girl Health History Form](#) with the group. Refer to [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise: Permission Forms and Health History Forms](#) for detailed information on when to use each form.

## Insurance

Additional insurance (beyond basic coverage included in Girl Scout membership) must be purchased for:

- Any Girl Scout activity, event or trip lasting 3 nights or more
- For trips out-of-state or any other trip where sickness could occur
- Where one or more participants does not have personal family insurance (or where personal insurance may not be honored)
- Any trip out of the country

See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for more information. Troop Leaders (or other registered adults in charge of an event) may order insurance by completing the [Trip Insurance Enrollment Plans Form](#). Contact the Risk Management Team at [insurance@gsnorcal.org](mailto:insurance@gsnorcal.org) if you have any questions.

## Adult Ratios and Roles

For any trip or outing, adult supervision is required regardless of the program level of the Girl Scouts. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and may not still be registered as youth members. Adult-to-girl supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of all participants taking part in the activity. Consult the [Girl Scout Adult-to-Girl Ratios](#) chart to determine the appropriate number of Adult-to-Girl ratios based on program level for Events, Travel, and Camping.



## Chaperones

Once you know how many adults you will need on the trip, you can begin to start asking for help. Troop Chaperones should be committed to following the guidelines outlined in [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise: Chaperones](#). Be sure each chaperone understand their responsibilities and which Girl Scouts they are responsible for. Also, ensure that the Girl Scouts know which chaperone they report to. Specify who is responsible for contacting the emergency contact person in case of any emergency situation. Be sure that everyone understands that the chaperones are responsible for proper supervision of youth and ensuring safety.

## Emergency Planning

As you know, emergencies can happen. Girl Scouts need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting any accidents, illnesses, or unusual behaviors during Girl Scout activities to adults.

- Read [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise: Emergencies, Accidents, & Incidents](#) for information on how to prepare for an emergency.
- Have the Girl Scouts help to create an emergency plan. Bring this plan on your trip. Use the [Emergency Checklist](#) in Volunteer Essentials to help develop an emergency plan.
- Make sure every adult understand and follows the GSNorCal Emergency Management Plan.

### At-Home Emergency Contact Person

An At-Home Emergency Contact Person must be established for every trip. This person would act as a “point person” in case of any emergency on the trip or an emergency or natural disaster at home while the troop/group is away. Refer to [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise: Troop Emergency Contact Person](#) for more information.

### Be Prepared: Carry forms with you

In case of emergency, troop/group leaders should always carry a copy (multiple copies for a large group) of the following:

- [GSNorCal Emergency Management Plan](#)
- [GSNorCal Emergency cards](#)
- [Accident-Injury Report Form \(pdf version\)](#)
- [Incident Form \(pdf version\)](#)
- [Media Information Sheet](#)
- [Insurance Claim Form](#)

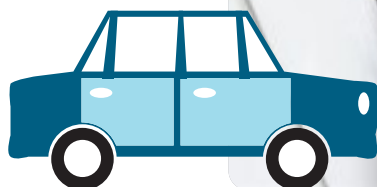
Communicate with the GSNorCal Risk Management Team within 24 hours in case of any accident, injury, or incident by completing the online forms or emailing the Accident-Injury Report Form or Incident Report Form (along with a copy of the girl’s or adult’s Health History Form) to: [insurance@gsnorcal.org](mailto:insurance@gsnorcal.org).

## Transportation

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities—outside the normal meeting time and/or place—in which a group will be transported in private vehicles, follow the steps outlined in [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise: Transporting Girls](#). All troop driver must complete the 636 Troop Driver learning path in [gsLearn](#).

### Trip Folder

All drivers or adult chaperones should carry a folder containing all of the youth and adult forms and emergency forms. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) and take the learning path 636 Troop Driver.



## Safety Activity Checkpoints

[Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) and [Girl Scout Safety Guidelines](#) are designed to keep the youth and adults safe and to protect the adults and the council from legal liability.

When preparing for any activity with Girl Scouts, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. If there is no Safety Activity Checkpoint for your activity, check Volunteer Essentials to see if the activity is not allowed ([Activities That Are Never Allowed](#)).

In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can also email or print them for co-volunteers, parents/guardians, and the Girl Scouts themselves. The checkpoints are formatted as checklists, so that you, your co-volunteers, and the Girl Scouts can check off that each step has been accomplished.

Have adult volunteers take the 636 Troop Chaperone/Helper learning path, in gsLearn, and read [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise](#) to find out more information on Safety Activity Checkpoints and Girl Scout Safety Guidelines.

### High-Adventure

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and your Girl Scouts are interested in, check with GSNorCal Risk Management Team before making any definite plans with the troop. A few activities are allowed only with written council pre-approval and only for youth 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely.

Written pre-approval is required from the GSNorCal Risk Management Team for any travel or high-adventure activities. Review Volunteer Essentials to see a list of [High-Adventure Activities](#). To request approval for a troop/group activity, use the [Trip or High-Adventure Approval Form](#).

### GSNorCal Approval

Some activities and trips require approval from GSNorCal. Refer to the chart in [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise: GSNorCal Approval](#) to help you determine when and if you need to submit a [Trip or High-Adventure Approval Form](#). Encourage youth to gather the needed information to submit the form themselves, with supervision. Contact the Risk Management Team at [insurance@gsnorcal.org](mailto:insurance@gsnorcal.org) if you have any questions.

### Approved vendors and Contacts

For the safety of our members, the council must approve sites and vendors for activities before a troop uses the site or vendor for a troop or service unit event. Review the Approved Vendor List to see a list of approved vendors. Troops are NOT limited to the facilities and vendors on the [Approved Vendors List](#). Vendors can apply to become approved vendors by contacting the Risk & Management Team at [insurance@gsnorcal.org](mailto:insurance@gsnorcal.org). Remember troops, service units, and committees are NOT legal entities, and therefore cannot legally enter into contracts. Read [Volunteer Essentials: Money: Contracts & Certificates of Insurance](#) for more information.

### Staying Safe

At Girl Scouts, safety is always out #1 priority. Be sure to discuss the [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise: Staying Safe During the Trip](#) list with the Girl Scouts and their parents before you leave on any trip.

Share the [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise: Safety Tips for Hotels, Motels, Hostels, or Dormitories](#) safety tips with everyone before you leave on any trip that involves a stay at a hotel, motel, hostel, or dormitory.



# Group Management

## Group Dynamics

A successful trip is dependent upon the ability of the group to work and function together as a team. The team includes youth and any adult chaperones who will be participating in the trip. Certain factors are crucial, including:

- The ability to function as a team member
- The ability to follow as well as lead
- The ability to accept more direction and leadership from the group leaders than they are used to at home

A group needs to establish a working relationship prior to traveling together. This can be done through planning meetings, activities, and electronic correspondence prior to the trip. Ways of addressing differences and emergencies, whether life-threatening, cultural, or due to individual attitudes, should be discussed prior to travel.

Establishing a team agreement prior to leaving for the trip on how the group will function and make decisions is very important. Here are some things to consider:

- Safety rules and expectations.
- What are your rules for the buddy system, and what if two or more people clique up for the entire trip?
- Curfews and consequences for breaking them.
- Policy on bringing extra money for souvenirs or snacks.
- Rules/expectations about cell phones and other electronic devices.
- How will the group decide where/what to eat?
- Expectations regarding restaurant behavior, and how much food is suitable to order at one meal.
- Expectations on how to behave in public, for example, when visiting museums, participating in a tour, etc.
- What to wear and not wear.
- How much luggage to pack/bring.
- For adults: What is the role of a chaperone? What is expected of a chaperone?

## Kapers

In Girl Scouting, Kapers are jobs or tasks that need to be done to make the event, including troop meetings run smoothly.

- They teach responsibility.
- They teach citizenship by each person contributing to the welfare of the group.
- They help youth take ownership and develop pride in one's self.

To equally share the responsibility for kapers, divide your troop into work groups: as individuals, as buddies, as patrols, or as any other small group. If desired, have the Girl Scouts pick names or symbols for their patrols or work group. Allow for the rotation of jobs and ensure tasks included for each kaper are understood.

## Patrols

A Patrol is a group that works together to complete a set of activities. Each patrol can take turns completing a Kaper chart task. Everyone in the patrol should have a turn at the different jobs to be done and each may have a role (leader, recorder, etc.). Rotate the jobs, on a kaper chart or on a list, that way everyone has a chance to do something new.

## Creating A Trip Itinerary

When planning an itinerary, write everything down and review it with your troop. To help Girl Scouts visualize and understand time management, have them make a picture of a 24-hour clock or use the one provided below. The Girl Scouts should shade in the hours they will travel, eat, and do activities. Make sure to schedule snack time, restroom breaks, shopping, and free time. As the trip gets closer, have a final meeting to solidify the itinerary, and make any changes and updates.

### 24 HOUR CLOCK

