

# Trip & Outdoor Advisor Sleep Out Guide

The Sleep Out Guide is for Troop Leaders, Trip Advisors, and Camp Advisors who will be present during the trip and will assist Girl Scouts as they plan their first outdoor sleep out for one night in a backyard or close to home in sleeping bags under the stars or in tents, cabins, yurts, or platform tents at GSNorCal properties with indoor plumbing and electricity available. At least one adult who will assist youths in planning, budgeting, and who will accompany them on their overnight will need to complete the 636 Trip and Outdoor Advisor learning path and 636 Sleep In course in [gsLearn](#). If you are planning on having youth assist in food preparation and cooking, or are planning on having a campfire, you will also need to complete the 636 Cook Out and 636 Campfire Courses.

## The Sleep Out course will help you to:

- Determine if your troop is ready for an outdoor sleep out
- Understand GSNorCal overnight safety procedures
- Plan and prepare a girl-led sleep out experience

The 636 Sleep Out online course is a prerequisite to the 636 Camp Out Course learning path, which will allow you to camp out with your troop by sleeping outdoors for more than one night in a location without electricity or indoor plumbing and use advanced outdoor cooking techniques.

If your troop would like to participate in a longer overnight (3+ nights) an adult will also need to complete the additional training requirements as listed in the [Trip Planning Checklist](#) and the [Girl Scout Guide to U.S. Travel](#).



## Progression and Readiness

Outdoor sleepovers are in the “Sleep Out” tier of the Outdoor Progression Chart. Before you begin to think about planning an outdoor overnight with your troop, make sure you’ve had plenty of opportunities to “Look Out,” “Meet Out,” “Move Out,” and “Explore Out,” before they “Sleep Out.”

Your Girl Scouts should have already had opportunities to practice sleeping overnight at an indoor location. As they prepare to plan and carry out an outdoor overnight, start someplace close to home like someone’s backyard or a [GSNorCal property](#) with indoor plumbing and electricity available.

### Are they ready?

- They have spent a night away from their family
- They are willing to sleep in a tent/cabin
- They can work cooperatively in a group, follow a Kaper chart and obey rules
- They can pack and repack their own belongings

### Coping Skills

They should be able to cope with:

- Darkness and unexpected noises
- The unknown, including woods, spiders, bugs, and other critters
- Dealing with limited space and managing with little privacy
- Willingness to sleep, eat, and play with all Girl Scouts, not just their best friend

### Concerns

- They are not strong enough to carry their own personal gear and troop gear when needed
- They have not been with the troop for an extended period of time
- They have trouble switching partners
- Their parents are nervous about letting them go without them

### Overnight Skills

- They participated in planning the overnight trip
- They have had practice using and participating in Kaper chart tasks or similar assignment sheet
- They can follow written, verbal, or illustrated instructions
- With practice, they can pack and repack their luggage, roll or stuff their sleeping bag, and help setup a tent

Remember readiness is not determined by age, but by each individual’s physical and emotional readiness and the ability to plan and work individually and as a group. Every troop is different and will advance at different rates. No matter their age, Girl Scouts must be ready for their outdoor overnight adventure in order for their experience to be a positive one.



# Safety Procedures

Outdoor activities are full of fun and excitement. Prepare Girl Scouts for their outdoor sleep out by establishing rules, boundaries and guidelines for staying safe. Always review the appropriate [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) starting with the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) and review any relevant Safety Activity Checkpoints, before your trip, based on the activity you will be participating in during your overnight. Teach Girl Scouts about outdoor safety, the buddy system, and the Hug-a-Tree steps.

## Outdoor Safety Guidelines:

- Choose a buddy and stay with them at all times
- Never walk alone
- Drink lots of water
- Stay away from Poison Oak/Ivy
- Be careful around the campfire
- Wear closed-toed shoes to protect your feet
- Wear sunscreen and hats to protect from the sun
- Wear light colored clothing and long pants to protect from ticks
- Use bug spray to protect from biting insects
- Know what's in a first aid kit and when to use it (each program level has a First Aid badge)

## Prepare for Emergencies

No matter how much you prepare, accidents, and emergencies can happen. If an emergency occurs, follow the GSNorCal Emergency Management Plan and have an established Emergency Action Plan for fire, lost Girl Scouts, evacuation, etc. Youth can and should assist with creating a specific plan so they know what to do and who to report to in an emergency situation.

- Have cars back into parking spaces for fast/easy evacuation
- Know all the roads out of the area
- Establish a central meeting place
- Know the location and phone numbers of the nearest hospital and/or urgent care facility

Make sure you have an established at-home emergency contact who knows the travel and emergency plans, and has a complete roster of all youth and adults on the trip. All adults should have a copy of the [Council Emergency Plan](#) and [Council Emergency Cards](#). You should download copies of the [Accident/Injury Report Form](#), [Incident Report Form](#) and [Media Information Sheet](#), and [Insurance Claim Form](#) before the trip to and have them handy. You can review useful safety and emergency information in the 636 Safety-Wise course and [Volunteer Essentials](#).

Always follow the Girl Scout Safety Guidelines when planning an activity with youth. Make sure the [Adult-to-Girl Ratios](#) are followed, the appropriate forms are completed, you have a troop first aider, and communicate general safety expectations with youth and parents.

- Collect [Parent Permission Forms](#)
- Review [Girl Health History Forms](#) and [Adult Health History Forms](#)
- Collect [Troop Driver Forms](#) from adults driving youth
- Create Trip Folders for all drivers (see [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise: Trip Folders](#))
- Complete and submit [Trip or High-Adventure Approval Form](#) at least 2 weeks before your trip
- Make sure you have a well-stocked first aid kit



# Outdoor Safety: Hug a Tree



Survival Tips for Children Published with permission from the National Association of Search and Rescue

[www.nasar.org](http://www.nasar.org)

The National Association of Search and Rescue is committed to reducing the number of children who become lost each year and to teaching them the basic techniques to aid in their survival if they do become lost.

## 1. Hug a tree

Once you know you are lost, hug a tree! One of the greatest fears many of us have is being alone. Hugging a tree or other stationary object and even talking to it can help calm you down and prevent panic. By staying in one place, you will be found far more quickly and won't be injured in a fall.

## 2. Always carry a whistle and a trash bag

Whenever you go hiking, you should carry a whistle on a lanyard around your neck and a trash bag. By making a hole in the side of the bag for your face (so you don't suffocate!) and putting it over your head, it will keep you dry and warm. The whistle can be heard from farther away than your voice, even when you are yelling very loudly. And it takes less energy to use.

## 3. Your parents won't be angry with you

Time and again, children have avoided searchers because they were ashamed of getting lost and afraid of punishment. Anyone can become lost, even adults! So don't be ashamed. Just admit it, accept it and take actions to be comfortable while you wait for the searchers to arrive. Your parents will be so happy to see you again and to know that you are safe, so there's no need to be frightened or worried about that. And they will be so proud of you for using your head since it is your best survival tool.

## 4. Make yourself big

From a helicopter, people are hard to see when they are standing up, in a group of trees, or wearing dark clothing. Find your tree to hug near a small clearing if possible. Wear a brightly colored jacket (red and orange are easy to see from far away) when you go into the woods or the desert. Lie down and "be large" when the helicopter flies over. If it is cold and you are rested, make crosses or an "SOS" using broken twigs, branches, rocks or by dragging your foot in the dirt.

## 5. Animals are afraid of humans

If you hear a noise at night, yell at it! If it is an animal it will run away to protect itself. If it is a searcher, you will be found.

## 6. You have hundreds of friends looking for you

Many children who are lost don't realize that if they will just sit down and stay put, one of the many searchers will find them. The searchers will be yelling your name, but they are not angry. They are just worried about you and want to find you as quickly as possible. Don't be afraid to let them know where you are.



# Ways to Sleep

When Girl Scouts are ready for their first outdoor overnight, plan to go someplace close to home like someone's backyard or a GSNorCal property with indoor plumbing and electricity available. There are several ways to sleep outdoors, from tents, platform tents, open-air cabins, and yurts.

Sleeping in tents will be a fun learning experience for youth, from setting up to sleeping to the breakdown of the tent. You will first need to make sure you choose the right tent for your location and weather. Be sure to practice setting up and breaking down the tent with your troop beforehand at a planning meetings, so the overnight experience goes smoothly.

## Types of Tents

- **Two season:** inexpensive, warm weather only, light weight
- **Three season:** Most popular, comfortable in spring, summer & fall
- **Four season:** A must for winter, heavier fabric, extra poles

## Tent Styles

- **A-frame:** easy to set up, not much floor or head room
- **Dome:** Easier than a-frame to set up, more head room
- **Cabin:** Holds more people, more floor and head room. Not as easy to set up

## Tent Placement

- Place on durable, smooth and level ground
- Do not trench around tents
- Do not "sweep" ground
- Do not set up near fire ring or cooking/eating area
- Make sure there are no dead branches overhead

## Set Up and Breakdown

- A ground cloth/tarp must be used
- Ground cloth should not protrude from under the tent
- Always stake at least the 4 corners
- Any guidelines should be made night visible
- Clean tents after use-sweeping out dirt
- Roll tents to fit back into carry case

The night is always colder than the day, be sure everyone has the proper sleeping bag. It is a good idea to ask them to bring their sleeping bags to a meeting to practice rolling/stuffing them. It is also a good idea to bring extra blankets with you on outdoor overnights in case someone gets cold. The indoor slumber bags will not keep them warm enough.



## Types & Shapes of Sleeping Bags:

- Rectangular or mummy shapes
- Slumber bags are for indoor use only
- Are rated for temperature/season
- A stuffed bag is easier to carry than rolled

## Down Filled Bags:

- Are light weight, but can be expensive
- Compress well for packing
- Don't insulate well when wet
- Take a long time to dry

## Synthetic Filled:

- Widely available and less expensive
- Don't insulate as well as down and are bulkier
- Keeps you warm when wet
- Dries faster than down



## Sleeping Arrangements

You are responsible for following the sleeping arrangement guidelines in [Volunteer Essentials](#) and the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). Review the general sleeping arrangements and guidelines for families and men. Below is a review of our sleeping arrangement guidelines.

## Sleeping Arrangements

- It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the same sleeping area (tent, cabin, hotel room, or designated area) with youth, but if an adult does share the sleeping area, **there should always be two unrelated female adults present.** Make sure to follow [GSNorCal adult-to-girl ratios.](#)
- No adult should be alone with any youth, unless they are her or his own child.
- Girl Scouts should have their own bed and may not sleep in the same bed with other Girl Scout unless parent/guardian permission is obtained.

## How about Family Members?

- Adults and youth never share a bed. An exception can be made for parent-child pairs, but whenever possible, maintain the troop experience by having youth lodge together.
- One adult should not sleep in a tent or a hotel room with youth unless they are all her/his own children. During family or parent-child overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters (tent, cabin, hotel room, etc.) in program areas.

## Be Prepared

Girl Scouts also need to make sure they are prepared with the proper clothing and equipment. First, consider the weather at the site. Next, consider the activity. Faced with varying weather conditions, everyone must be able to dress appropriately. Consider clothing material (non-flammable around the campfire), wool provides warmth even when wet while cotton is very good for allowing air circulation and for staying cool.



Explain the importance of layering. Layering involves wearing a number of loose fitting garment rather than one or two heavy garments. Each layer must provide warmth and ventilation without getting in the way of mobility or adding weight. Laying helps regulate temperature in warm or cold weather and can prevent hypothermia or heat exhaustion.



# What to Do

You may be wondering, what will we do on our overnight once camp is set up? Really the possibilities are endless! Overnight sleep outs provide the perfect opportunity for Girl Scouts to strengthen friendships and bond as a group. Are you working on a badge or Journey? Look for **badge or Journey** activities that tie-in to the outdoors. There is an Outdoor-specific Journey for each program level and all Journeys provide the opportunity to take the Journey outside. There are also badges for outdoor activities and skills.

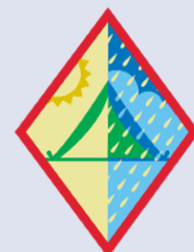
## Daisy

- Between Earth & Sky Journey
- Outdoor Art Maker
- Buddy Camper
- Eco Learner



## Cadette

- Trailblazing
- Primitive Camper
- Night Owl
- Outdoor Art Apprentice



## Brownie

- Wonders of Water Journey
- Hiker
- Bugs
- Outdoor Art Creator
- Outdoor Adventurer
- Cabin Camper



## Senior

- Adventurer
- Adventurer Camper
- Sky
- Outdoor Art Expert



## Junior

- Animal Habitats
- Camper
- Eco Camper
- Flowers
- Outdoor Art Explorer



## Ambassador

- Water
- Survival Camper
- Outdoor Art Master



## Other Activities:

- Crafts, Games and Songs (below)
- **STEM Programs**

## Resources

You can access all resources referenced in this document through these links:

- **[Volunteer Essentials](#)**
- **[gsHelpCenter | Outings, Trips, and Travel](#)**
- **[gsHelpCenter | Resources - Outings, Trips, and Travel](#)**
- **[gsHelpCenter | Resources - Safety](#)**
- **[gsHelpCenter | Resources - Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)**
- **[gsHelpCenter | Girl Scouts Outdoors](#)**
- **[Trailhead: Camp & Outdoors](#)**
- **[Trailhead: Travel & Adventure](#)**

## Activity Resources

- **[Girl Scout Songs](https://www.scoutsongs.com/categories/girl-scout-songs.html)** (<https://www.scoutsongs.com/categories/girl-scout-songs.html>)
- **[Camp Skits](http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activities/camp-skits.html)** (<http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activities/camp-skits.html>)
- **[Ultimate Camp Skits](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/284289795207832093/)** (<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/284289795207832093/>)

## Plan for Success

Remember that Girl Scouts is Girl-Led! Involve your troop in every step of the planning process, from the where and when to the rules and menus. Make sure you give them plenty of opportunity to plan, budget, and prepare for their sleep out experience. Most planning for an outdoor overnight is done 2 to 6 months before the trip. You may want to consider making a planning schedule to stay on task and cover everything. To help you stay on track as you are planning your overnight, use the [Trip Planning Checklist](#). Below is an example of a planning schedule that can be done over the course of 6 meetings.

	Meeting with Girls	Leader Follow-Up
<b>Meeting 1</b>	Discuss overnight with troop Decide where and when Discuss what to do, activities Make a planning chart	Make reservations, if necessary Communicate to parents Read Safety Activity Checkpoint(s) Qualified camp trained adult
<b>Meeting 2</b>	Set the budget Form Patrols Who will go, adult chaperones Discuss activity plans, badges	Recruit volunteers—drivers, first aider, chaperones, emergency contact person
<b>Meeting 3</b>	Practice Skills; rolling sleeping bag, putting up tent, dressing in layers	Send home permission slips Health History form for girls and adult attending overnight Submit Trip or High Adventure Approval form
<b>Meeting 4</b>	Review safety guidelines; buddy system, fire drill, prepare emergency plan Check first aid kit Review personal equipment list	Send home personal equipment list
<b>Meeting 5</b>	Discuss expectations and behaviors for the overnight Review equipment needed for the troop Plan menus	Collect permission forms Set up transportation plan Make arrangements to purchase food
<b>Meeting 6</b>	Make Kaper Chart Review and practice skills Review plans for the overnight Have a Q&A session	Confirm last minute details Review checklist Follow up on any missing permission and health forms Confirm with parents that will be attending
<b>Day of Trip</b>	SMILE and ENJOY Check the girls have everything Driving instructions and Trip folders	After the overnight—evaluate what worked and what didn't work

Congratulations! Each hour of your preparation time will be returned to you many times over. Hearing happy phrases such as “I like sleeping outdoors!” and “This was really fun!” will let you know that involving youth in weeks of planning was the way to build in success for your trip. Just remember that no matter how well your troop plans, the key to all successful planning is FLEXIBILITY.



# Group Management

Each Girl Scout must do their share to make the trip a success. This includes being responsible for their own things, like washing dishes, and cleaning up the kitchen area. It helps to be clear about responsibilities with them and adults right from the start. Also, explain the consequences of not following the rules. Work with them to establish a team agreement and behavior contract that outlines the rules everyone will follow.

## Here are some examples of outlines/rules:

- Use the buddy system
- Proper use of camp equipment
- Stay with the group, no wandering away
- Follow the Kaper chart
- Wear appropriate clothing and shoes

## Here are some tips that will help your overnight run smoothly:

- Figure out the sleeping arrangements before bedtime
- Enforce quiet time and teach Girl Scouts to respect others around them
- Ensure everyone knows how to find the bathroom during the night and who to go to if they need help.

If everyone agrees to follow the rules your sleep out will go much smoother and it will be a fun experience for everyone.

## Kaper Charts

To help manage the group and the various responsibilities of an outdoor overnight, the use of a Kaper chart and patrols are essential. Think about the activities you will be doing and what jobs will be needed. Have the youth decide on a fair way to divide up and rotate jobs, such as, buddies, patrols, or any other small group.



## 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. Rotate the jobs on the Kaper chart that way everyone has a chance to do something new.

# Sleep Out Troop and Personal Packing Checklist

As your plans are coming together, the troop will want to make sure they have all the supplies necessary for a sleep out. Think about the activities you will be doing and pack only what you need. Don't forget to ask the parents what they can provide for the trip, such as, tents, tarps, coolers, etc.

## For Overnight:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Permission Slip for each youth           | <input type="checkbox"/> Whisk broom                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health History for both youth and adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Kaper Chart                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site Permission Form (if needed)         | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice Chest                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Lantern (extra batteries)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Paper and Feminine Supplies       | <input type="checkbox"/> Books (song, nature)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Map of Area                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Craft Supplies                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Girl Scout Insurance Forms               | <input type="checkbox"/> Games                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Contact Phone Numbers          | <input type="checkbox"/> Marking Pens, paper, pencil, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tents (ropes, stakes, poles)             | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Supplies                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tarp/Ground Cloth                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand washing Setup                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hammer/Mallet                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Dishwashing Setup                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repair Kit/Duct Tape                     |  |

If Cooking: Stoves, Fire Safety Equipment.  
Kitchen supplies

## General Guidelines

- Each Girl Scout should bring only 2 bundles that they can carry themselves
- Place sleeping bag in a "stuff" bag with a pillow and extra blanket
- Use a duffel bag, not a suitcase
- Personal equipment often needs to be adapted to the projected weather and site conditions.
- Each and every item should be marked with the Girl Scout's name.

## Leave at Home

- |               |                   |  |
|---------------|-------------------|--|
| • Valuables   | • Scented lotions | • Money  |
| • Electronics | • Gum             | • Cell phones or anything you would be heartbroken to lose |
| • Jewelry     | • Candy           |  |
| • Perfume     | • Aerosol cans    |  |

## Personal Items:

- ☐ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- ☐ Hair brush and comb (hair ties for long hair)
- ☐ Wash cloth/small towel/Soap (in a baggie)
- ☐ Deodorant (no aerosol spray)
- ☐ Feminine products
- ☐ Change of clothes
- ☐ Plastic bag (for wet/dirty clothes)
- ☐ Sunscreen/insect repellent
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Medication(s) with instructions for use signed by parent (give to first aider, labeled in original container(s))

## For Sleeping:

- ☐ Warm sleeping bag (Any extra blanket & pillow may be rolled inside bag)
- ☐ Insulated foam, sleeping pad (if needed)
- ☐ Warm pajamas or sweats
- ☐ Beanie or stocking cap for cool weather (if needed)
- ☐ Flashlight and extra batteries

## OPTIONAL:

Camera, sunglasses, watch, book, small comfort item (stuffed animal)

# Outdoor Overnight Locations

GSNorCal offers several great locations for outdoor overnight adventures. This is a great way to have Girl Scouts experience the fun of the outdoors. You have many sleeping options available from tent space, open air cabins, platform tents, yurts, and even covered wagons! All of the following properties have access to indoor plumbing and electricity. Each rental property has a web page with a summary of facilities, pricing, and capacity. For questions regarding GSNorCal property email [propertyreservations@gsnorcal.org](mailto:propertyreservations@gsnorcal.org) or phone 800-447-4475, ext. 0.

## **GSNorCal Property with Outdoor Sleeping Accommodations**

<http://camp.gsnorcal.org/rentals/rent-a-property>

### **Sugar Pine**

Located in Arnold. This property has cabin style buildings and covered wagons. All areas include bathhouse with flush toilets and showers. They also include picnic tables, campfire circles, and food storage. The Calico unit has 3 large cabins (each sleeps 12) plus 1 standard cabin (sleeps 4), Gold Nugget, Trout, and Frog: 5 standard cabins per unit (each sleeps 8), and Quicksilver: 5 covered wagons (each sleeps 8)



### **Camp Bothin**

Located in Fairfax, Marin County. The Bush unit has three open air cabins, restroom with one shower, cooking shelter with lights, a sink, counter space, picnic tables and bar-b-que. The Bay unit has one Yurt, campfire circle, picnic table and bathroom.

### **Camp Twin Canyon**

Located in Lafayette, Contra Costa County. It has one unit with 2 Yurts with a capacity of 16. It has a large fire circle with seating, bar-b-que area and picnic tables.

### **Butano Creek**

Located near Pescadero. It has three enclosed Sleeping cabins, each one has a wood-burning stove, an outdoor covered cooking shelter with a bar-b-que, picnic tables, and counter space. It has a centrally located shower/toilet building that is shared. It also has five tree house village cabins each with four single beds, electric outlets, lights and balcony area. There is a detached bathhouse with flush toilets and two showers and an adjacent covered outdoor cooking area.



### **Skylark Ranch**

Located near Pescadero. Skylark Ranch is not available for rental at this time due to the damage caused by the CZU fire. However, we're busy working with a team of dedicated Girl Scouts and adult volunteers on planning the phased rebuilding and reopening of Skylark. Check <http://camp.gsnorcal.org/rentals/rent-a-property> for the latest updates.