

Volunteer COVID-19 In-Person Meeting and Activities

Girl Scouts of the USA and Girl Scouts of Citrus encourage virtual troop meetings as the most effective way to provide a safe Girl Scout experience until we have successfully completed the Center for Disease Control's Phase Three benchmarks. However, based on the comfort level of Girl Scout troop members and families, we have finalized the details for troops to begin meeting in-person as long as they adhere to the COVID-19 safety guidelines outlined below.

Each troop/family should weigh their participation based on their own health concerns.

As with any social activity, participation in Girl Scouts could present the risk of contracting COVID-19. While Girl Scouts of Citrus takes every safety and preventative precaution, Girl Scouts of Citrus can in no way warrant that COVID-19 infection will not occur through participation in Girl Scout activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to change as infection rates rise and fall in different areas. There may be regional differences or developments since this guidance was published. Continue to follow local and national directives. Discuss plans with families.

As we begin to phase into certain in person activities, please keep in mind that these guidelines can change daily based on information from the CDC, GSUSA, and other governing bodies. Citrus Council's website will have the most current information.

All Girl Scout members who wish to participate in any Girl Scout activities (based on the phasing stage) such as: Outdoor Ceremonies, Outdoor Higher Award Projects and Outdoor Community Service Projects must complete and submit an Activity Request Form 2 weeks prior to requested activity to customercare@citrus-gs.org

Once approved the leader and/or the parent/guardian must keep accurate records for all meetings and activities, which include a detailed schedule, cleaning protocol, attendance, etc. These forms will be located online at <https://www.citrus-gs.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-council/forms.html>

For Troop Meetings

Please note, virtual is the preferred way to engage with the troop, but if the members decide to meet in person, they must utilize all social distancing practices and follow all preventative guidance (such as face coverings, social distancing, cleaning and sanitizing, etc.).

At this time meetings are to be held only in outdoor spaces, where social distancing can be maintained. Be sure to get advanced permission and/or reservations in place prior to the day and adhere to all protocols they have in place. Please be sure to check the GSC website for the most current information and required forms.

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For meetings held at public facilities:

Contact the facility ahead of time and ask:

- ✓ Is the space cleaned, and touch surfaces (i.e., tabletops, light switches, chairs, etc.) sanitized, at least daily?
- ✓ Who else uses the space (how often, what size is the group)? Is the space cleaned between groups?
- ✓ What type of faucets / soap dispensers are available in the restroom (sensory or manual)?

Then, consider whether you can supplement any practices that are less ideal.

- ✓ For example, if you will arrive after another user group, plan to bring sanitizing wipes and/or spray to get the space ready for your troop.
- ✓ Another example: if faucets are manual, take some time to show girls how to shut them off with a paper towel. Use paper towels for doorknobs whenever possible.
- ✓ Leaders should have supplies to ensure areas are clean and sanitized for girls and adults
- ✓ In addition to wipes and/or spray you should have hand sanitizer and disposable masks on hand
- ✓ All girls and adults should have on a mask unless there is documented medical reasons, social distancing must always be in effect.
- ✓ Be sure to implement a cleaning/sanitizing regime for bathroom use. Such as an adult is to clean high touch surfaces after use, ensure girls are correctly washing hands and sanitizing etc.

Meetings **may not** be held in fitness centers or gyms, where a greater risk for contracting the virus may exist. Schools or churches may not permit outside groups on premises, so always check and confirm ahead of time.

For meetings held in residential setting – Outdoors Only:

GSUSA suggests no meetings inside the home, out of concern that there would be greater risk of exposure to other family members. The recommendation is to stay away from meetings held inside the home for the time being.

The following safety guidelines must be followed until further notice:

- ✓ All meetings **must** be approved **prior** to the start of the meetings.
- ✓ Leaders must complete a **Meeting Request Form** (which can be found at <https://www.citrus-gs.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-council/forms.html>) a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the start of the meetings and submit it to Customer Care at customercare@citrus-gs.org
- ✓ The home must be the home of registered, background checked, council approved Volunteer. This does not need to be the Troop Leader.

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- ✓ All other adults in the home must be registered members and have a favorable Background Check
- ✓ Meetings are to be held outdoors, perhaps in the back or front yard of the home (*this is a COVID-19 specific precaution*). Multiple outside spaces can be used if guidelines are followed.
- ✓ Girls may not meet in a home where a registered sex offender lives.
- ✓ Animals should be kept in a place that is separate from the meeting space.
- ✓ Homeowners should consider any personal homeowner insurance implications. The Homeowner should ask their Homeowner's insurance carrier if there are any insurance exclusions regarding holding troop meetings at the home, in the event an accident or injury occurs.
- ✓ Weapons must be completely out of view and stored in a locked space.
- ✓ Medication, dangerous cleaning products, or any poisonous substance must be stored in a secure space out of sight, preferably locked.
- ✓ Ensure the guidelines below for **Hygiene and Risk Mitigation** and all other guidance in this document are followed. (*this is a COVID-19 specific precaution*)

Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation:

Follow the resources developed by credible public health sources such as CDC or your local public health department. Share these with girls and volunteers and ensure that they are practiced during meetings and activities. Place signs in the meeting or activity space to remind girls and volunteers to engage in everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Signs and/or posted guidelines should include:

- ✓ Stay home if you are sick.
- ✓ Cough and sneeze into a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and wash or sanitize your hands.
- ✓ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Wash hands if you do touch.
- ✓ Volunteers, girls and parents should be reminded to make sure temperatures are taken prior to group interaction to confirm the individual is not running a fever and temperature is a normal 98.6 degrees.
- ✓ Members with fever or temperature higher than 100.4 should not attend any in person activities or meetings.
- ✓ If an adult or girl has a temperature or other symptoms upon arrival to the meeting they will be asked to leave.
- ✓ Please do not leave your Girl Scout until her temperature has been checked.

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Personal contact:

- ✓ Hugs, handshakes, “high-fives,” and even activities and traditions like the friendship circles, flag ceremony or squeeze can transmit COVID-19 from person-to-person.
- ✓ Refrain from these gestures for the time being. Create a safe way for girls and volunteers to greet and end meetings instead (like coming up with you own meeting cheer.)
- ✓ Please ensure that if you are singing songs or reciting The Pledge, Promise or Law everyone is wearing a mask and practicing social distancing to avoid the risk of droplet spread.

Troop Meeting Size

Currently, the maximum amount for any meeting is ten people (eight girls and two unrelated adult volunteers). Existing troops consisting of more than eight girls may continue with their current size but will need to plan smaller group interaction when meeting in person. Such as having smaller groups at opposite ends of a yard, while still practicing social distancing within that group or meet at different times.

All troops should monitor local restrictions for small gatherings and refer to the GSC Website for the most up-to-date status on council operations. Restrictions vary greatly from county to county, and even from town to town--and frequently change.

Please note, virtual is the preferred way to engage with the troop, but if the members decide to meet in person, utilize all social distancing practices and follow all preventative guidance (such as face coverings).

How to accommodate larger troops (11+ girls/adults):

If you have a large troop, we want you to stay connected while you wait for a safe time for everyone to gather. Some ideas:

- ✓ Host virtual troop meetings (see below).
- ✓ Gather up in smaller groups—such as age-level groups, patrols, or groups of girls with a particular badge they'd like to work on.
- ✓ Have smaller groups at opposite ends of a yard, with a minimum of 50' between groups, while still practicing social distancing within that group.
- ✓ Meet at two different times or could meet at one or more locations
- ✓ This will ensure they are maintaining the troops/group size and spacing requirements. (To help visualize how far apart your groups need to be, 50' is slightly less than the distance between bases on a little league baseball field.) Also, note that restroom use is a key consideration when planning to avoid overlap.

Each volunteer hosting meetings at a residence must have a ***Meeting Request Form*** on file and follow all safety ratios and requirements for leading a troop within *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

Meeting at a residence is considered the primary meeting location and does not require a first aid/CPR trained adult. This is true even if meeting in more than one residence to

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accommodate group size. However, when meeting in public spaces such as parks, libraries, etc. that are not listed officially as the troop meeting location, it would be not considered the troop's primary meeting location and would fall within the description for troop fieldtrips requiring one first aid/CPR certified adult.

During this exceptional time—to help meet the needs of troops, GSC will allow a troop to have three background-screened adults to serve as safety ratios for a troop that has split into two groups due to having more than eight girl members.

This means that a group of 9-16 girls who will be split into two groups would only require three background-screened adults, instead of the normally required four adults so they can meet at the same time and location while remaining 50' apart. One adult can work with each group while the third adult serves as the safety ratio volunteer who serves for both groups. She/he would be **required to keep both troops within their line of sight at all times** and ensure the troops meet the 50' distancing rule between groups of ten but without being so far apart they could not respond in an emergency while continuing to watch both groups safely and effectively.

Transportation:

Individual parents drop off and pick up their own girls from meetings. Carpooling and public transportation should be avoided, where possible, to maintain social distancing.

Virtual meetings:

Meeting options may need to be flexible based on the fluid nature of COVID-19 risk. Use the GSUSA Guidelines for Virtual Meetings, to guide your meeting plans.

Other helpful resources/support can be found here:

<https://www.girlscouts.org/en/girl-scouts-at-home.html>

<https://www.citrus-gs.org/en/our-program.html>

Day trips, activities, travel and overnights:

At this time any in person troop activities outside of the meeting place are not permitted, except for the following activities that must take place in the outdoors: Ceremonies, Higher Award Projects and Community Service Projects. To participate in these activities they must be approved two weeks in advance and by using the new Covid 19 protocols and guidelines.

Per GSUSA, overnight trips are not permitted until after the home state is successfully past Phase 3 of its re-opening process. As always, contact your council for prior approval before planning any overnight stays and follow guidance in *Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Please check the GSC website for the most current updates on activities.

First Aid/Cleaning Supplies:

Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items including:

- ✓ hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol)

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- ✓ disposable facemasks
- ✓ disinfectants, wipes, paper towels etc.
- ✓ Tissues, gloves and trash bags
- ✓ Trash baskets or bags should be supplied for meeting and activity spaces, if not already available. Make sure that the trash baskets (or bags) are easily accessible for girls. Be sure to tie and dispose of where necessary
- ✓ Disposable or no-contact thermometers may be added to supplies if available and not cost-prohibitive, however, parents should be checking temperatures and allowing their girl(s) to join group activities only when temperatures are normal.

Disinfectants and Disinfecting:

Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., table tops, markers, scissors, etc.). Use a household disinfectant or see the EPA's list of effective cleaners approved for use against COVID-19. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

Household bleach is effective against COVID-19 for up to 24 hours when properly diluted.

To prepare a bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

See the CDC's website for more on cleaning and disinfecting community facilities.

Face Coverings:

Use cloth face coverings as feasible. Note that some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks, due to medical conditions such as asthma. Face coverings are essential in times when proper social distancing is difficult.

Wearing face coverings (masks) is not only to protect you, but also to protect others. Face coverings are a civic responsibility and a sign of caring for the community. Girls can bring their own face coverings, but you should also have disposable masks on hand for those who need them. Volunteers can teach girls how to handle their face coverings so that they are effective.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance

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Reporting and communicating a positive COVID-19 test:

In the event of a COVID-19 positive test result, contact the parents or troop members while maintaining privacy of the individual. The troop leader will notify parents and others about a positive test result and that the **tester's identity is confidential**. Remember that girl and volunteer health information is private and strictly confidential and should be only shared on a need-to-know basis with a council staff member.

- Confirming and tracing the positive tester
- Contacting the parents of anyone who may have been exposed (or other volunteers)
- Notifying a facility or homeowner where a troop has met