

Welcome to your third training module in the Volunteer Basic Training Series, Finance and Safety!

Your Troop Leader Training Path



Volunteer Basic Training Series

1. Welcome to Girl Scouts
2. Logistics and Resources
- 3. Finance and Safety**

Knowledge Check

- A short quiz to test your knowledge
- Links in your email and on our website

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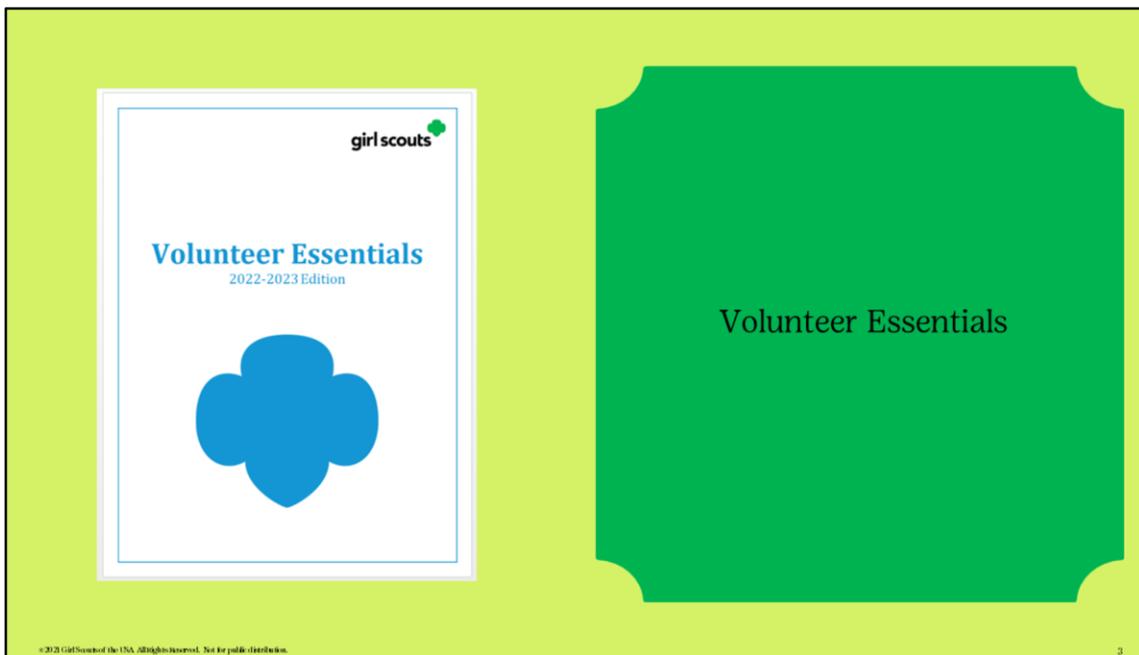
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Before we dive in, let's briefly go over what you can expect as a new troop leader.

This is the third of three training modules you'll complete **before** you meet with your troop.

This training module, "Finance and Safety" will walk through how to fund your fun and keep your girls safe. The other two training modules are "Welcome to Girl Scouts," which introduces you to Girl Scouts, being a troop leader, what girls do, and "Logistics and Resources," which will teach you how to run your troop meetings.

After completing these three training modules, we will ask you to complete a Knowledge Check. Once you've completed the knowledge check, you will receive an Approval Letter in your email. This email will provide more information about your Service Unit, grade-level training, and additional resources as you get started with your girls.



We'll start by talking about troop finances.

Throughout this module, I'll go over the basics of troop finances. Often, I'll point you to Volunteer Essentials for full details, policies, and instructions.

[Volunteer Essentials](#) is the primary GSUSA & GSWNY reference document and should be consulted for finance, safety, and planning guidelines and procedures. Volunteer Essentials includes all policies to ensure that your troop is functioning within our local and national guidelines. By agreeing to be a Girl Scout volunteer, you're agreeing to follow the items laid out in this resource.

This handbook is updated yearly -- You can find the most current version on our website under the Volunteer tab.

Funding your fun

Troop activities are powered in two main ways:

Troop dues

- Dues provide startup funds for troop activities and supplies.
- These could range from a few dollars per meeting to a lump sum for the entire school year.
- Ask families what they feel most comfortable with

Money-earning activities

- Fall Product Program sale
- Cookie Program

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Helping girls decide what they want to do and coaching them as they earn and manage money to pursue their goals, is an integral part of the Girl Scouts.

Troop activities are powered in two main ways: troop dues and money-earning activities.

Start-up funds to cover the cost of supplies and activities come from **troop dues**. Troop co-leaders can decide how much dues will be and how to collect them at the beginning of the year. Ask families what they feel most comfortable with during your first parent/caregiver meeting. Each girl or family can pay \$1-\$2 per meeting, or you can ask for one-time dues of \$20-\$50 at the beginning of the year. At your parent/caregiver meeting, you can also ask for families to donate supplies to the troop like markers or scissors.

Girl Scouts also has two primary Council-organized **money-earning activities**: the fall product program and the cookie program beginning in the winter. The benefits are twofold: these programs allow girls to learn essential business skills, while providing key funding for your troop.

With the support of your Service Unit volunteers, each troop will build a Cookie team to ensure the program is enjoyable and successful. After attending the Troop Leader Cookie Training, as well as working with your Service Unit Product Program Manager, you'll feel confident and ready for your troop to participate in the fall and cookie programs.

Keep an eye on your email – we'll send you lots of great information for how to participate in the fall and cookie product program sales as they arrive.

Opening a Bank Account

1. Complete the Volunteer Basic Training Series
2. Receive the Bank Letter from GSWNY in Approval Letter email
3. Connect with your Service Unit Finance Consultant (SUFC)
4. 3 **unrelated** individuals must be signers on the account, one of whom is your SUFC

Now that you know the two primary forms of funding your troop's fun (troop dues and money-earning activities like the cookie sale), you'll need to open a bank account.

If you're taking over an existing troop, you may inherit an account, but with a new troop, you'll need to open a new account.

There are a few steps to this process:

First, complete the Volunteer Basic Training Series and take the Knowledge Check. Once that's been completed you will Receive the Bank Letter from GSWNY's Volunteer Experience Team. We will talk more about that on the next slide.

Then, you'll need to connect with your Service Unit Finance Consultant to find out which banks the Service Unit typically uses. Their information will also be included in your approval letter email.

Next, you'll identify 2 unrelated individuals to be signers on the Troop bank account. Married couples are considered related in this instance, and cannot be the two

signers. The third signer must be a member of the service unit leadership team - most often the Service Unit Finance Consultant.

These policies and procedures are outlined in detail in *Volunteer Essentials*. Be sure to consult this document as you open your troop bank account.

Bank Letter

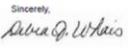
 Date:

Dear Branch Manager,

The Girl Scouts of Western New York, Inc. is authorizing the Troop/Service Unit listed below to open an account:

1. The Girl Scouts of Western New York council federal ID number is 16-0743096
2. The name of each Troop/Service Unit bank account should be:
Girl Scouts of Western New York, Inc.
Girl Scout Troop or Service Unit.
3. In accordance with Girl Scouts of Western New York, Inc. policy, the account must have 3 non-related signers. One must be the SU Finance Consultant. Only one signature is required for troop transactions. The troop account may not have any credit cards associated with it. Debit cards are permitted for the account. Internet banking (except viewing the account on-line) is also prohibited. Do not pay overdrafts from checks or ACH debits and do not process debit card withdrawals when there are insufficient funds to cover the purchase. The signers for this account will be:
Name: Volunteer Position: Service Unit Finance Consultant
4. The address for the bank account will be as follows:

Thank you for your assistance. Please contact me at (888) 637-6410 ext. 6041 with any questions.

Sincerely,


cswwny@gsny.org
1.888.637.6410 Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. 

Locations across NY/NJ to serve you. For hours and addresses, please visit gsny.org

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You will receive a Bank Letter in your approval email after you've completed the VBTS and knowledge check.

The Bank letter gives you the council's Federal Tax ID number to supply to the bank. The letter also authenticates your identity as a GSWNY volunteer.

Follow the printed instructions on the letter, open the account with the troop volunteers, and keep a copy of the completed letter.

If the bank has a question or needs additional information from Council, please have them contact our Chief Financial Officer via the contact information on the bank letter.

Don't forget!

Account Requirements

- Choose a bank works for both troop and Service Unit
- Photo ID and SSN
- Include “Girl Scouts of Western New York” and troop number or Service Unit name

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You can open a bank account at the financial institution (including credit unions) that is most convenient for the troop volunteers and the Service Unit volunteer.

Each bank may have specific requirements for opening accounts, but **all** will require photo identification for signers along with each signer’s social security number. This is a federal requirement and is for identification purposes only. The Council’s tax identification number is the number that is associated with the account for income tax and legal purposes.

When you open your account, you must include the name “Girl Scouts of Western New York” and the troop/group number or service unit name.

Managing Troop Funds

- Submit your Troop Bank Account Reporting Form (included in your Approval Letter email)
- Two signers on all withdrawals
- Internet banking is prohibited
- Credit cards are prohibited
- Reconcile bank accounts monthly
- Keep your receipts

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Once you've opened your account, you will need to report your bank account information the council using the Troop Bank Account Reporting form. We'll send you this form in your approval letter email, once you've watched all three training modules in the Volunteer Basics Training Series and completed the Knowledge Check.

A minimum of two signers is required for withdrawals and troops are prohibited from using internet banking (except viewing the account online)

Please note that if a troop or service unit utilizes debit cards with the account, the bank will only require one signature on checks. However, two signers should still sign all checks. This is a GSWNY requirement and is part of our internal checks and balances that assist in prevention of misuse of funds. Debit card receipts should be signed by a second signer after the purchase is completed.

Debit Cards are allowed, but credit cards are not permitted to be issued or used with the bank account.

Security of troop funds is essential- the bank account should be reconciled monthly and all transactions reviewed. Best practices are that more than one individual

manages the account and reconciles to the bank statement. If this is not possible, a timely review process should be in place where a second person reviews the bank statements and reconciliations.

Be sure to keep all of your receipts. These will be important to have on hand when you complete the mandatory on-line Troop Financial Activity Report (TFAR) detailing the troop's income and expenses. We'll talk about this more on the next slide.

Troop Expenses

- Program supplies
- Fees for field trips
- Refreshments and paper products
- Uniform components and badges/patches/pins
- Photocopies, paper and printer ink
- Troop organizational needs
- Leader trainings
- Health and safety supplies
- Registration fees

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Troop funds are for the benefit of all girls in the troop and should be spent in the year the funds are earned, unless the troop has a long range plan for spending the funds. It is important to note that the funds belong to the troop as a whole. Per IRS guidelines for charitable organizations, troops are prohibited from keeping separate individual girl accounts or tracking troop funds by individual girl.

So what qualifies as a troop expense?

- Program supplies, such as paper, crayons, and craft supplies, as well as copies of GSUSA
- books for leader and girl use
- Fees for field trips
- Refreshments and paper products
- Uniform components and badges/patches/pins
- Photocopies, paper and printer ink for printing troop paperwork
- Troop organizational needs such as totes, binders, folders
- Leader trainings that enhance troop programming, such as First Aid/CPR, outdoor and
- GSWNY-sponsored enrichment training
- Health and Safety supplies like Masks, hand sanitizer, surface cleaner

- Registration fees for girls and/or leaders

That's a lot of stuff! And funding it shouldn't be overwhelming or come out of the troop co-leaders' personal funds.

Volunteer Toolkit Finance Tab

The screenshot displays the Girl Scouts Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) interface. On the left, a user profile for Abigail Brengle is visible, with a pink arrow pointing to the 'Volunteer Toolkit' link in the 'My Account' menu. The main content area shows the 'Cadette Explorer 2022-2023' page, with a pink arrow pointing to the 'FINANCES' tab in the top navigation bar. Below the navigation bar, there are two main sections: 'Explore Meeting Plans' and 'Pre-selected Tracks'. The 'Explore Meeting Plans' section includes a search and filter option and a button labeled 'EXPLORE MEETING PLANS'. The 'Pre-selected Tracks' section includes a description and a button labeled 'VIEW POPULAR TRACKS'. The bottom of the page contains a footer with the text '©2021 Girl Scouts of the USA. All Rights Reserved. Not for public distribution.' and the page number '10'.

You'll record your troop's ongoing expenses and income and submit your annual finance report through the Finances tab in the Volunteer Toolkit, pictured here.

You'll remember from previous modules that you can access the Volunteer Toolkit through your myGS account on our website, gswny.org.

Once you're inside the VTK, you'll click on the Finance tab. I'll go over the basics here – but remember we have detailed instructions for recording and reporting your troop finances in the Volunteer section of our website as well as in Volunteer Essentials.

VTK Finance Tab: Recording troop finances

- Co-leaders and caregivers have access
- Record expenses and income
- Monthly updates

Both co-Leaders in the troop will be able to access the Troop Finance Tab through the Volunteer Toolkit. There you will record your ongoing troop expenses and income. We recommend that you update your troop finance balances at least monthly. This will allow parents/caregivers to be informed on the troop's financial status. Regular updates will also make the end of year report submission quick and easy.

VTK Finance Tab: Reporting troop finances

- Troop Financial Activity Report (TFAR)
- Attach your April bank statement
- Submit between May 1 and June 1 **only**

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Once per year, all troops are required to submit their financial activity through the Troop Financial Activity Report (TFAR). This mandatory report includes your April bank statement and should be submitted anytime between May 1 and June 1, please do not submit this report outside of these dates.

This process provides an opportunity to make sure that the girls' money is being spent appropriately and to check in with the troop leaders to verify that they are keeping all their receipts and documentation. Remember- troop funds are for the benefit of all girls in the troop and the bank account should be managed and safeguarded so that the troop has maximum benefit from their efforts and minimum exposure to fraud and other losses.

We will be in touch with you as the window for submitting your TFAR approaches and will share detailed instructions. If you have any questions regarding this process, please reach out to your Service Unit Finance Consultant. The SUFC will have answers to all of your VTK Finance Tab questions.

Tax Exempt Form

ST-119.1
(1971)

New York State Department of Taxation and Finance
New York State and Local Sales and Use Tax
Exempt Organization
Exempt Purchase Certificate

Single purchaser certificate
 Multiple certificate

Your exempt organization number is not your federal employer identification number see instructions

Organizational number (if applicable) issued by NY State Dept. of Taxation and Finance
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4

Name of exempt organization
 Girl Scouts of Western New York and its associated units

Address
 1300 Elmwood Avenue, Door 9 (Buchalter Service Center)

City State ZIP code
 Rochester NY 14620

The exempt organization must be the direct purchaser and payer of record.
 You may not use this form to purchase motor fuel or diesel motor fuel exempt from tax.
 Representatives of governmental agencies or diplomatic missions may not use this form.
 Carefully read the instructions and other information on the back of this document.

I certify that the organization named above holds a valid Form ST-119, Exempt Organization Certificate, and is exempt from New York State and local sales and use taxes on its purchases.

Certificate: I certify that the above statements are true, complete, and correct, and that no criminal information has been omitted. I make these statements and issue this exemption certificate with the knowledge that this document provides evidence that state and local sales or use taxes do not apply to a transaction or transactions for which I tendered this document and that failure to issue this document with this intent to evade any such tax may constitute a felony or other crime under New York State Law, punishable by a substantial fine and a possible jail sentence. I understand that this document is required to be filed with and submitted to the nearest tax agent for the Tax Department for the purposes of section 1828 of the Tax Law and is deemed a document required to be filed with the Tax Department for the purpose of prosecution of offenses. I also understand that the Tax Department is authorized to investigate the validity of tax exclusions or exemptions claimed and the accuracy of any information entered on this document.

Name of officer of organization
 Signature of officer of organization
 Date issued
 March 13, 2014

Need help?
 Visit our Web site at www.tax.ny.gov get information and register your taxes online.
 Check for new online services and features.

Telephone assistance
 Sales Tax Information Center (518) 482-0889
 To order forms and publications (518) 487-3421

Text Telephone (TTY) Helpline for persons with hearing and speech disabilities using a TTY. TDD, or voice access to a TTY is available at (518) 482-0889. Call for more on a TTY or for more information on the TTY Helpline. For more information on the TTY Helpline, visit www.tax.ny.gov.

Persons with disabilities: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, we will ensure that our website, office, meeting rooms, and other facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. If you have any questions, call the information center for persons with disabilities.

Include on the form

- ✓ Officer of organization: Troop leader's name and signature
- ✓ Title: Troop leader, TroopXXXXX

Once you have completed the Volunteer Basic Training Series and taken the knowledge check you will receive the GSWNY Tax Exempt form from the Volunteer Experience Team. This Tax exempt form will allow you to make purchases for the troop without paying New York State or local sales tax. Please do not share it with anyone and remember it's only for Troop related expenses!

On the tax exempt form, the leader will write her name and signature in the space provided as an officer of the organization

In the space for title, write "troop leader" and include the troop number.

We recommend making several copies of your tax-exempt form. You will need to give the seller a copy with each purchase you make.

Be sure to read *Volunteer Essentials* for the detailed procedures for using the tax exempt form.

Additional Money-Earning Activities

- Juniors and above **only**
- Complete an “Additional Money Earning Activity Application”
- Games of chance (raffles, contests, bingo, etc.) are **prohibited**

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In addition to money-earning programs organized by the council such as the Girl Scout Cookie program and Fall product program, older Girl Scouts (Juniors and above), can participate in group money-earning activities organized by the troop. Additional money-earning activities might include collections (Christmas tree recycling), meal events (lunch box auction), or services (raking leaves, weeding, shoveling snow, etc.)

If you are considering participating in money-earning programs outside those organized by Council, be sure to read *Volunteer Essentials* carefully. There we list sample money-earning activities and outline all of the necessary guidelines.

You will need to complete an Additional Money Earning Activity Application at least one month prior to the activity.

As you think about additional money-earning activities, remember: GSWNY **prohibits** games of chance. Any activity that could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo, etc.) is prohibited.

Additional resources

gswny.org

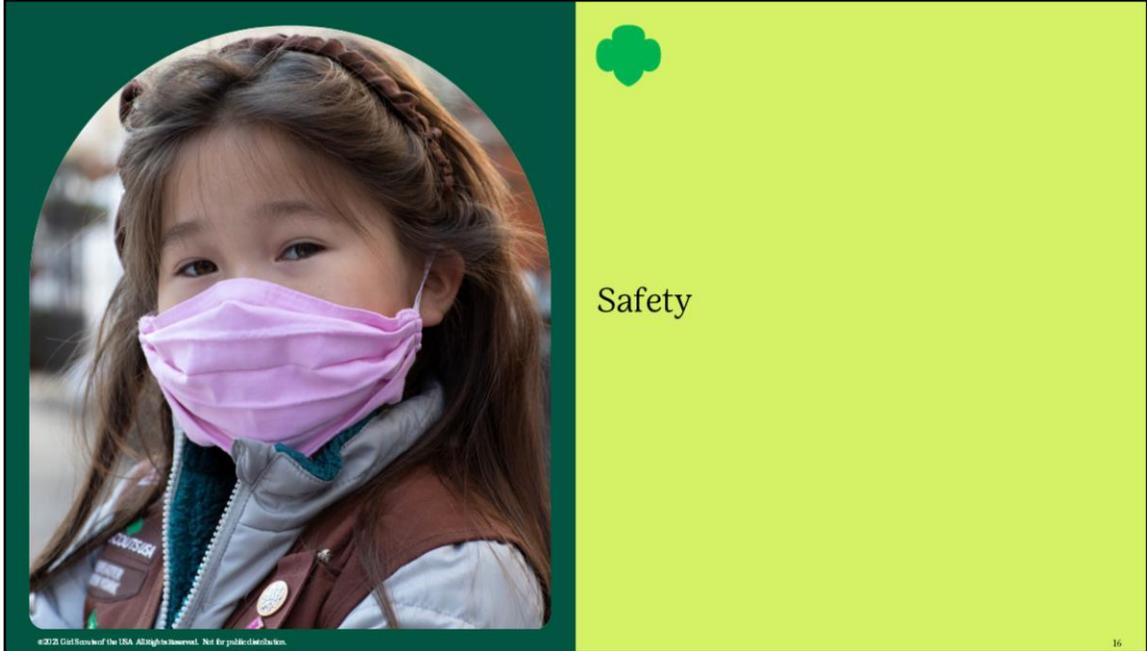
- *Volunteer Essentials*
- Troop finance forms and instructions
- Financial assistance
- More!

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After completing this portion of the training, you might be feeling like managing troop finances is a big job, and that's okay! To make things easier, we've compiled all of the resources you might need when working with your troop's finances. Under the Volunteer tab of our website, you'll find *Volunteer Essentials* as well as:

Troop Finance Forms
Information on financial assistance
And more!



In the final section of this module, we'll go over the resources and procedures you'll need to use and follow to keep your girls safe.

Before your troop can meet

- ✓ Two (2) co-leaders who are unrelated, one of whom must be female
- ✓ All co-leaders must:
 - be 18 years or older
 - pass a criminal background check
 - be approved (complete VTBS and receive an approval letter in their email)

A safe space is where girls feel that they can be themselves, without explanation or judgment. As a volunteer, the environment you create is just as important as the activities girls do—it's the key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of! Cultivate a space where confidentiality is respected, and girls can express their true selves.

BEFORE YOUR TROOP CAN MEET, YOU MUST HAVE 2 APPROVED, UNRELATED VOLUNTEERS, ONE OF WHOM IS FEMALE, in place as co-leaders. It's important to note that married couples are considered related in this instance. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and must pass a criminal background check before volunteering. As a reminder: One co-leader in every troop must be female.

Girl Scouts Volunteer-to-Girl Ratios	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for up to this number of girls:	One additional volunteer to each additional:	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for up to this number of girls:	One additional volunteer to each additional:
Girl Scout Daisies (Grades K-1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (Grades 2-3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (Grades 4-5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
Girl Scout Cadettes (Grades 6-8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Girl Scout Seniors (Grades 9-10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (Grades 11-12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

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From camping weekends to cookie booths, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure their girls have fun and stay safe, no matter their grade level.

Not sure just how many adults you'll need for your activity? This volunteer-to-girl ratio chart ensures that you always have the right number of adults to support troop activities and keep the girls safe while they enjoy everything Girl Scouts has to offer.

This chart can be found in *Volunteer Essentials*. We recommend keeping it handy so you always know how many adults you need to keep your Girl Scouts safe.

For example, you'll see that for a Daisy troop with 12 girls, at a regular troop meeting you'll need 2 unrelated co-leaders, one of whom is female. If that same troop with 12 Daisies heads out on a fieldtrip to the Zoo, they would need a minimum of two additional volunteers.

These supervision ratios ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls.

It's important to note that on this chart, "Volunteer" refers to a registered, approved adult with a current background check who has completed council-required leader training. Troops must have a minimum of 2 approved volunteers who are unrelated/not at the same address/not in a significant relationship, at least one of whom is female, who have completed council required leader training.

Safety Guidelines

Safety Activity Checkpoints

- Specific guidelines for GSUSA-approved activities like camping, archery, horseback riding, and more!

Concerns

- Health and wellbeing of girl: Contact GSWNY
- Emergency: Call 911, inform GSWNY as soon as able

Safety Activity Checkpoints: www.gswny.org

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In addition to these volunteer-to-girl ratios, the Safety Activity Checkpoints outline the standard of safety expected at meetings and other girl scout activities. It also provides specific guidelines for approved Girl Scout activities such as camping, archery, horseback riding, and just about any other activity your girl scouts might want to try! You can find the Safety Activity Checkpoints on our website, gswny.org under the Volunteer tab.

There may be times when you worry about the health and well-being of girls in your troop. We take your concern about a girl's wellbeing and safety seriously, and we will guide you in addressing these concerns. Contact a staff member at GSWNY and find out how to refer the girl and her parent/guardian to experts at school or in the community.

Call 911 if an emergency occurs during a Girl Scout meeting or activity, then inform GSWNY as soon as you are able. Please call our emergency answering service if the emergency occurs after business hours at 1-800-882-9268

First Aid and Troop Drivers

First Aid/CPR

At least one registered volunteer in all troops must be first aid certified before leaving the meeting place for field trips and outings

Troop Driver

Every driver must be an approved volunteer at least **21 years old**, and have a clean driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle

Check COVID-19 guidelines. www.gswny.org

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At least one registered volunteer in all troops must be first aid certified before leaving the troop meeting place for field trips or outings.

We encourage co-leaders to be First Aid and CPR Certified but another troop adult may fulfil this role. Some of your troop caregivers may already hold a First Aid and CPR certification and be excited to help out!

GSWNY offers first aid trainings throughout the year. You can find these on our website, gswny.org under Volunteer Resources tab. You can also become certified with an outside vendor, like the Red Cross, or you can get trained through your Service Unit if it is offered.

The qualifications for a First Aider are found in *Volunteer Essentials*

Because Girl Scouts use resources wisely, you may choose to carpool. Every driver must be an approved volunteer at least 21 years old, and have a clean driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle. ☒ Girls never drive other girls.

If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved

adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female.

Be sure to check our most recent COVID-19 guidelines to ensure carpooling is safe and approved. These guidelines can be found at [GSWNY.org](https://www.gswny.org)

Permission Slips and Health Forms

Permission Slips

- Keep girls safe outside normal meeting times and location
- Provide emergency contact information
- Annual Permission Slip with COVID-19 waiver

Health Forms

- Informs any medications or allergies
- Medication can never be dispensed without prior permission from girl's custodial parent or guardian

Permission slips and health forms: www.gswny.org

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Permission slips are a communication tool that help keep girls safe whenever the activity they want to do is beyond the troop's normal meeting time and place. The permission slip communicates to the girl's family where they'll be going and what they'll be doing. It also allows the family to communicate not only their permission for their Girl Scout to attend the activity, but how to get in touch with the girl's emergency contact if it becomes necessary.

You should utilize the Annual Permission Slip with COVID-19 Liability Waiver for any non-meeting activity, which can also be found on our Safety Page.

Permission slips can be found in the Volunteer Resources page of our website.

It is important for you to be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have which is why having a health form for each girl and adult in your troop is necessary. You maintain these records for your group. Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's custodial parent or guardian. Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen, or diabetes medication.

Keep in mind that information from a health examination is confidential and may be shared only with people who must know this information (such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian, and emergency health care worker during an emergency situation). The health form helps you to be aware of common food or environmental allergies so that everyone in the troop can have a great experience without being at risk or feeling left out.

Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with their parents/guardians is always a good idea.

COVID-19

- Follow most recent COVID-19 guidelines
- Follow Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Utilize Annual Permission Slip with COVID-19 liability waver

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All GSWNY volunteers must consult the most current COVID-19 guidelines for in-person meetings and activities and Safety Activity Checkpoints for virtual meetings prior to planning, and review any related webinar recordings.

Please ensure you are familiar with the most updated guidelines.

View our current COVID-19 Guidelines on our Safety Page.

You should utilize the Annual Permission Slip with COVID-19 Liability Waiver for any non-meeting activity, which can also be found on our Safety Page on our website.

Your Troop Leader Training Path

1. Welcome to Girl Scouts
2. Logistics and Resources
- 3. Finance and Safety**

Knowledge Check

- A short quiz to test your knowledge
- Links in your email and on our website

Thank you for completing this “Finances and Safety” training module.

If you haven't yet, you will need to complete two additional brief trainings, Welcome to Girl Scouts, and Logistics and Resources. Then please take the Knowledge Check online to receive credit for completing the Volunteer Basic Training Series. Once you have taken the knowledge check, you will receive an Approval Letter in your email. This email will provide more information about your Service Unit, grade-level training, and additional resources as you get started with your girls.