

Returning to In-Person Troop Meetings and Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Volunteers 8/17/2020

This guidance is being provided as of 8/17/2020 (when a vaccine has not been made readily available). Girl Scouts of the Sierra Nevada (GSSN) may modify this guidance, from time to time as circumstances change. Please read the full document in order to understand all of the guidelines which GSSN is implementing.

COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community. Take all reasonable precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, volunteers, and families.

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 and continue to check the [GSSN COVID-19 page](#) as we will update it as circumstances change.

Guidelines:

Troop Leader COVID-19 Meeting Training. All GSSN troop leaders and troop volunteers will be required to view our [GSSN COVID-19 Training Video](#) and review and sign the [GSSN COVID-19 Risk Acknowledgment Form](#) before they are permitted to conduct in-person meetings of any kind.

[The GSSN COVID-19 Training Video](#) will outline COVID-19 meeting procedures which are:

- Masks are required for all meeting participants
- All participants must wash their hands at the beginning and end of meetings
- The meeting space (tabletops, chairs, light switches, supplies) must be sanitized before and after each meeting.
- Meeting participants must remain 6 feet apart for the duration of the meeting
- Meeting participants must answer five questions before the meeting to determine if they are suited to attend the meeting:
 - Do you have a cough?
 - Do you have a sore throat?
 - Do you have a fever?
 - Have you lost your sense of taste or smell?
 - Have you been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 that you know of?

Please note that this training is required only for those who wish to conduct in-person meetings. Your troop is free to continue meeting virtually if that is what you prefer.

Reporting and communicating a positive COVID 19 test. In the event of a COVID-19 positive test result, do NOT contact the parents or troop members. Promptly contact GSSN if one of your girls tests positive COVID-19, or you or someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19. GSSN staff and NOT volunteers, will be responsible for:

- 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, and
- Alerting the state department of health.
- Coming up with a remediation plan to facilitate the sanitation of the facility where a person with a positive case

Let other volunteers know that GSSN staff, NOT volunteers, 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 GSSN staff member.

[GSSN COVID-19 Risk Acknowledgement Form.](#) After viewing the [GSSN COVID-19 Training Video](#), all volunteers will need to indicate they have done so on [GSSN COVID-19 Risk Acknowledgement Form](#). This form will also ask them to indicate where they plan to hold their in-person meetings and if the volunteer has chosen this location with all of the meeting place suggestions in mind (see below.)

[COVID-19 Activity Waiver.](#) All Girl Scouts will need to have written permission from their parent or guardian that they are allowed to meet in person via the [in-person activity waiver](#).

Troop Meeting Space. Troop leaders who wish to hold in-person troop meetings will be responsible for finding a suitable troop meeting space. The troop meeting space must be large enough that the meeting participants only take up 50% of the room's capacity. GSSN will open its doors for troop meetings at limited capacity and availability, see below.

If you decide to hold your troop meetings at your house, every member of your household must be reported to GSSN and every member of your household must pass a background check.

Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained are strongly recommended for meetings. Outdoor gatherings must be attended by no more than 25 people. Masks must still

be worn at outdoor meetings and social distancing of six feet apart must still be followed at outdoor meetings. Please consider air quality and weather before meeting outdoors.

Get advance permission from the property owner or the jurisdiction that provides the location.

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 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.

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.

Troop Meetings at GSSN. We will open GSSN to offer the large downstairs conference room and upstairs conference room as troop meeting spaces. Each troop will be allowed to schedule their use of this space for no more than one meeting per month to allow every troop a chance to use it. There will be a GSSN employee present to ensure the space is properly sanitized before and after each meeting. [Please fill out this form to schedule your troop meetings.](#)

Troop Meetings in the home. GSSN strongly suggests no meetings in the home out of concern that there would be greater risk of exposure to other family members. The recommendation is to stay away from in-home meetings for the time being.

If you are holding troop meetings at your house, every member of your household must be reported to GSSN and every member of the household must pass a background check.

Troop Meeting Size. GSSN currently suggests a maximum of 18 people (15 girls and three unrelated adult volunteers) as well as taking up a maximum of 50% of the room's capacity. However, if your local restrictions call for gatherings of less than 18 people, follow the local restriction. Restrictions vary greatly from state to state, county to county, and even from town to town—and frequently change.

If you have a large troop, stay connected while you wait for a safe time for everyone to gather. Large troops are wonderful, so stay together! 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, if splitting groups up please ensure there are still two troop leaders at each meeting.
- Larger troops can meet at the same venue and same time so long as the venue is large enough to divide their girls into groups of nine girls and one troop volunteer while maintaining six feet of distance between each other.

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. Troops that are able to run online meetings as needed (or wanted) should do so. GSUSA recommends maintaining a virtual to in-person ratio of at least 20/80, which means to maintain virtual troop meetings at least 20% of the time to keep tech skills and virtual meeting habits fresh. Use the [Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Meetings, to guide your meeting plans: Virtual Troop Meetings](#).

Day trips and activities. In conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints, follow the same guidance as Troop Meetings and Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance in this document. Call ahead to the facility or vendor to confirm that they are following CDC and state health department guidelines. If activity or sporting equipment is being provided, ask the provider if they wipe down equipment in between uses, similar to equipment at the gym. Make whatever appropriate accommodations that are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

Travel and overnight stays. Overnight trips are not permitted until after the home state (Nevada/California) is successfully past Phase 3 of its re-opening process. The timeframes will vary from state to state and even from county to county in some cases. As always, contact GSSN for prior approval before planning any overnight stays and follow guidance in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

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 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 98.6 should skip the in-person gathering until their temperature is normal.

Personal contact. Hugs, handshakes, “high-fives,” and even activities like the friendship circle 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 tapping elbows).

First Aid Supplies. Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items including hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), tissues, facemasks, and disinfectants. If you have difficulty securing these supplies, please [contact GSSN](#) and we can provide these to you. 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. 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.

First Aid / CPR Training. Keep skills up-to-date for any emergency. Check the [GSSN calendar](#) for upcoming first aid and CPR training dates.

Disinfectants and Disinfecting. [Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces](#) and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., table tops, markers, scissors, etc.). Use a household cleaner, 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. Check that the bleach is not expired and determine if it can be used on a given surface. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

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. Volunteers should remind girls that Girl Scouts wear face coverings (masks) not only to protect themselves but to protect others. Face coverings are a civic responsibility

and a sign of caring for the community. Girls can bring their own face coverings. Have disposable masks on hand for those who need them. Volunteers can teach girls [how to handle their face coverings](#) so that the coverings are effective. Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks, due to medical conditions such as asthma. Contact your council for guidance on how best to handle these exceptional circumstances as they arise.

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