

Troop Government Overview

Troops Government is an easy, structured way for girls to govern and manage their Girl Scout troop as part of the Girl-Led process.

What is Troop Government?

Troop Government takes the three Girl Scout processes (Girl-Led, learning by doing and cooperative learning) off the planning page and into real life. It is format for helping girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how of their activities and learning how to work together toward shared goals.

Forms of Troop Government

The traditional forms of Girl Scout Troop Government are:

- The Daisy Circle
- The Brownie Ring
- The Patrol System
- The Executive Board
- The Town Meeting

Each form of troop government gives girls hands-on learning experiences in how to lead the planning, decision-making and fun in their group as much as possible.

Why should I implement troop government? Why is it important?

Troops are expected to use Girl Scout processes of; girl-led, learning by doing and cooperative learning in all Girl Scout activities. You can start with your very first meeting--- or begin at any time! Using a democratic form of girl-led troop government is one way to implement the Girl Scout processes. Not to mention that troop government allows each girl the opportunity to be a leader within the troop and have a voice in what the troop does.

How can I implement troop government?

- **Be Prepared;** come to meetings prepared with choices and ideas for the girls to discuss. Use pictures, charts, Girls Scout journey books and other materials to help girls make decisions. Since girls at some age levels need structure, come prepared with a list of choices. If you wish to take it a step further, you can ask girls for their ideas. For example, if the girls wish to go on a field trip you can field suggestions from the group at one meeting and have girl record the suggestion. After the meeting you

can consolidate the ideas (to what is feasible & realistic) and then offer during a follow-up meeting a list of options (stemmed from their ideas) from them to discuss and decide on as a group.

- **Establish a Discussion Process;** Girl Scouts need to understand how things are done. They need structure. Establish this for your discussion time. Use the Talking Buddy for sharing time. (The only one holding the object can talk). Use the Quiet Sign to redirect (right hand up, everyone must do the same and become very quiet). Use the talking sign for taking turns to contribute to the discussion (three fingers placed down in the center of the ring shows you want to talk). Keep things fair in the circle by establishing a troop rule that no-one criticizes ideas.
- **Record Discussion;** Have an adult or co-leader record the ideas and main points in the troop discussion. This will help with planning and implementing the girls' ideas.
- **Evaluate;** Use the time in the ring to evaluate activities with the girls. Ask questions like, 'What happened? What did you like or dislike? Would you do it again?' Take advantage of the time to help the girls make meaning of their experiences and activities.

Will it work??

Sometimes you find out by trial and error if a type of system will work for your troop. The first few meetings (or several) may not be perfect and the discussions may not run smoothly or go as you had planned. It's okay! Remember that you are helping the girls learn a form of leadership and cooperation. Experience and mistakes will help shape learning troop government and its benefits. Adjust how your government functions based on the needs of you, the girls and the group as a whole.