

Instructions for the Girl Scouts Lifesaving Awards Application

This document is designed to help Girl Scout councils and nominators formally recognize extraordinary acts of heroism by Girl Scouts by 1) helping nominators determine *IF* the Girl Scout's actions rose to the level of national recognition and 2) providing instructions on how to complete the application.

NOTE: In the event of extreme or extenuating circumstances that make completion of this application unreasonable or an extreme hardship, please reach out to lifesavingawards@girlscouts.org for further instructions.

CRITERIA FOR ALL LIFESAVING AWARDS

The National GSUSA Lifesaving Awards were created in 1913 to recognize extraordinary bravery and to honor Girl Scouts whose independent actions were essential to a lifesaving rescue. As such, these awards are *reserved only* for Girl Scouts who initiated and led lifesaving actions or played a critical leadership role in a large rescue situation.

These awards acknowledge a Girl Scout who has saved or attempted to save human life, with or without risk to their own life, and under circumstances that most persons of their age and life experience would not be able to function.

BRONZE CROSS **Given for saving a life or attempting to save a life with risk to the candidate's own life.**

MEDAL OF HONOR **Given for saving a life or attempting to save a life without risk to the candidate's own life.**

Girl Scouts take action daily to help ensure the health and safety of those around them. Some of these actions have a lifesaving component, yet they are not the actions that were essential to the rescue, and therefore are not able to be considered for national recognition.

It can be difficult to determine whether a Girl Scout's actions were critical to the lifesaving rescue as each situation is different and many factors must be considered. Councils can help gather the facts, double-check them for accuracy, and help assess whether an act truly merits a Lifesaving Award.

A candidate for any Lifesaving Award must meet all of the Girl Scout Rescuer Criteria, Risk to Life Criteria, and Girl Scout-led Action Criteria. (See next page.)

Girl Scout Rescuer Criteria:

- The Girl Scout must be a registered girl member at the time of the rescue. No award is given to adults.
- A Girl Scout who has caused or contributed to the circumstances necessitating the rescue is automatically ineligible.
- Consideration of the Girl Scout’s interest in recognition is paramount. The acclaim accompanying such an award might be detrimental. If the rescue, or attempted rescue, has been a particularly harrowing experience, it might not be appropriate to give an award. In addition to consulting with the Girl Scout, consulting with parents/caregivers, friends, and teachers could be helpful in making a wise decision about applying for the award and any associated recognition.

Risk to Life Criteria:

- Awards are given for saving, or attempting to save, human life *only*.
 - Note: A Girl Scout can receive a Lifesaving Award if the person they attempt to rescue does not survive.
- Girl Scout rescuer provided proper first aid and emergency-care procedures to prevent death and reduce further injury.
- Degree of danger to the life of the person(s) being rescued was so great that without the actions taken by the Girl Scout rescuer, death was imminent, or a strong possibility.

Girl Scout-led Action Criteria:

Girl Scout rescuer’s **independent** actions were essential to the rescue in ONE of the following categories where they met most or all of the criteria:

Girl Scout Responding Alone:

- Girl Scout rescuer became aware of the situation on their own with no input from others except possibly the victim.
- Girl Scout rescuer assessed the situation, determined the level of risk to life, and called for help themselves.
- Girl Scout rescuer alone implemented appropriate rescue technique(s) to physically retrieve and/or stabilize the victim.
- Girl Scout rescuer administered appropriate first aid emergency care procedures.
- Girl Scout rescuer stayed with the victim until victim was under the care of professional emergency responders, the person’s legal guardian, or another trusted adult took personal responsibility for any next steps.

Girl Scout Directs Group Members:

- Girl Scout rescuer became aware of the situation in the presence of others.
- Girl Scout rescuer assessed the situation, determined the level of risk to life, called for help themselves or directed others to call for assistance.
- Girl Scout rescuer alone implemented appropriate rescue technique(s) to physically retrieve and/or stabilize the victim and/or directed others in the group to implement their stated directions to enact the physical rescue and/or stabilization of the victim.
- Girl Scout rescuer administered appropriate first aid emergency care procedures and/or directed others in the group to implement their stated emergency care directions.
- Girl Scout rescuer stayed with the victim until victim was under the care of professional emergency responders, the person’s legal guardian, or another trusted adult took personal responsibility for any next steps.

Girl Scout Responding in Large Rescue Situation

- Girl Scout rescuer became aware of the situation in the presence of others or was called to the situation by others.
- Girl Scout rescuer was assigned by the incident chief (person in charge of handling the emergency) specific tasks to implement as part of the large, complex, rescue situation.
- Girl Scout rescuer assessed the environment for available resources (equipment, other individuals, etc.), created an action plan, and implemented their self-designed course of action, making any adjustments needed to achieve their assigned task(s).
- Girl Scout rescuer may have directed additional individuals to take specific actions as part of the task they were assigned to fulfill.
- Girl Scout rescuer reported their completed actions to the incident chief.

HOW TO APPLY

Girl Scouts of the USA has designed procedures to help councils celebrate and formally recognize these acts of heroism. The application for the Lifesaving Award must be submitted **within six months** after the incident occurred and must meet the following requirements:

- Give full details of the incident
 - Reminder: In the event of extreme or extenuating circumstances that make completion of this application unreasonable or an extreme hardship, please reach out to lifesavingawards@girlscouts.org for further instructions.
- Include a personally signed narrative statement (see Guidelines for Narrative Statements section) from the rescuer, rescued person, and up to two different witnesses
- Signed by the nominator
- Recommended by the council before submission to GSUSA

Councils must review the application, determine whether this was a Girl Scout-led lifesaving effort, and make the final decision to recommend it before the council submits the complete application to GSUSA for final approval. Note: GSUSA's National Lifesaving Award Review Committee processes applications on a monthly basis.

If the candidate does not meet Girl Scouts of the USA Lifesaving Award standards, the council is encouraged to honor the candidate locally, within the council, service unit, or troop community.

The following chart outlines the steps and responsibilities for the nominator, council, and Girl Scouts of the USA in completing, submitting, processing, reviewing, and awarding Lifesaving Awards.

Please read the instructions for each component of the application first, to ensure you're able to complete each section correctly.

Step	Application Requirements	Nominator	Council Staff	Girl Scouts of the USA
1	Present summary of the lifesaving act by a Girl Scout to a council staff member for Lifesaving Award recommendation (within 6 months of rescue)	X		
2	Complete contact info for involved parties and rescue details (to the best of your ability)	X		
3	Secure narrative statements	X		
4	Submit all supporting documentation to council staff for recommendation	X		
5	Review supporting documents and determine if Girl Scout's rescue meets guidelines for one of the Lifesaving Awards (i.e., confirmation the rescue was Girl Scout-led)		X	
6	Submit council-recommended Lifesaving Award application to GSUSA for consideration		X	
7	Review council-submitted application (GSUSA reviews applications monthly)			X
8	Communicate decision on candidate status (approval/denial) with council			X
9	If approved, issue a congratulatory letter from GSUSA CEO for council to present honoree			X
10	Purchase Bronze Cross or Medal of Honor pin (UPC #09971 / UPC #09972) and present award to Lifesaving Award honoree. Note: Your council's retail team should be able to coordinate.		X	

GUIDELINES FOR NARRATIVE STATEMENTS

Narrative statements from those involved in the emergency scene provide necessary information to explain how the Girl Scout rescuer met the Lifesaving Award criteria.

Narrative statements from the perspective of the Girl Scout rescuer, the person rescued, and up to two witnesses are required for the Lifesaving Award application. Other supporting documents are optional.

In some circumstances, narrative statements will either not be available or not appropriate to request from the parties listed above as we recognize there may be a degree of discomfort or traumatization following the incident. If this is the case, and if possible, please provide two statements from a witness and/or responding emergency personnel (examples: 911 dispatch, police, fire, or emergency medical personnel). For the health and safety of those involved, we respect your judgement in determining what statements are appropriate to provide.

Each person writing a narrative statement should, from their own perspective, include the following information to best explain how the rescue occurred and the circumstances surrounding the rescue:

1. Writer's name and role in the rescue: Girl Scout rescuer, person rescued, witness
2. Description of place where rescue occurred and what happened that required a person(s) to be rescued
3. Description of exact nature of risk to life of person(s) rescued
4. Description of the rescuer's independent actions (Girl Scout-led) that were essential to the rescue
5. **For rescuer only:** What, if any, of the skills you used in the rescue did you learn in Girl Scouts? (If none, please say "none"). *Note: It is not required that you applied skills learned in Girl Scouts to earn the Lifesaving Award; this is for data collection purposes only*
6. Description of extent of good judgement shown by rescuer in performing the rescue
7. Description of exact nature of risk to life of Girl Scout rescuer (if any)
8. Description of weather and its role in rescue (if appropriate)
9. Any effects of the rescue upon the rescuer
10. Any unique factors of the situation or people involved that support the bravery and heroic act of the Girl Scout rescuer

Narrative Statement Format:

- Statements may be handwritten or typed and signed by the statement writer.
- They must be saved as individual documents in the following format and attached to the submission email:
 1. (Last name, first initial of Girl Scout Rescuer) - Rescuer Statement
 2. (Last name, first initial of Girl Scout Rescuer) - Person Rescued Statement
 3. (Last name, first initial of Girl Scout Rescuer) - Witness Statement

Supporting Document Format:

- Supporting documents must be saved in electronic format. They may include scanned published newspaper articles, working links to media stories, etc.
- They must be saved as individual documents in the following format and attached to the submission email:
 1. (Last name, first initial of Girl Scout Rescuer) - Supporting document