

# Girl Scouts of Colorado Troop & Volunteer Code of Conduct

## *Volunteer Expectations*

### **Confidentiality of Girl Information**

#### *Girl Health Histories*

Troop/group leaders are expected to maintain health history records for the group. To download important health forms, start here [www.girlscoutsofcolorado.org/forms](http://www.girlscoutsofcolorado.org/forms). Health history, address and contact details of girls are confidential. Please keep this information in a safe place.

### **Dispensing Medication**

Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's custodial parent or guardian ([Medication Permission form](#)).

### **Volunteer Safety Responsibilities**

The emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is always a top priority. You, the girls, and the parents/guardians of the girls share the responsibility for staying safe.

#### *Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints*

[Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) is a resource that provides instructions for staying safe while participating in various activities. Read the checkpoints and share them with the adults and girls in your group before engaging in activities. Each set of Safety Activity Checkpoints offers information on:

- Where to do the activity
- How to include girls with disabilities
- Where to find both basic and specialized gear required
- How to prepare yourselves for the activity
- What specific steps to follow on the day of the activity

#### *Report Abuse*

Sexual advances, improper touching and sexual activity of any kind with girl members, as well as physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is strictly forbidden. Follow the guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.

#### *Travel Safely*

When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an adult (21+) with a membership and an approved background check, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.

#### *Ensure Safe Overnight Outings*

Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Males should have a separate sleeping area (such as tent, tabin, or separate room). Groups should have access to either a separate restroom or troops should bring a sign to indicate the gender using the restroom at that time. It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area (tent, cabin, or designated area) with the girls, but if an adult female does share the

sleeping area, there should always be two unrelated adult females present. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in adult areas. Overnight Trips training is required before your first overnight activity.

#### *Role-model the Right Behavior*

GSCO expects volunteers to be fully capable of performing their duties. While volunteering, it is not permitted to be under the influence of any substance, including marijuana, which may impair physical and/or mental skills. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.

#### *Create an Emotionally Safe Space*

Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a Group Agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Group Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions, resolving conflicts constructively, and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.

#### *Ensure That No Girl is Treated Differently*

Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

#### *Promote Online Safety*

Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in person meetings with online contacts. On group websites, never divulge girl's contact information. Review the Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints, and teach girls the Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge here, [www.girlscouts.org/help/internet\\_safety\\_pledge.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp).

#### *Keep Girls Safe During Money-Earning Activities*

Girl Scout Cookie sale program and other council-sponsored product programs are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sale programs, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout-approved product programs and efforts.

### **Transporting Girls Safely**

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities (outside the normal meeting time and place) in which a group will be transported in private vehicles keep in mind the following:

- Every driver must be an approved volunteer at least 21 years old, have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.

- All state laws must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in the “Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need” section must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats and chartered flights. Each driver of motorized private transportation must be at least **21** years old and hold a valid operator’s license appropriate to the vehicle. In addition, state laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here.

Anyone who is driving a vehicle with 12 or more passengers must be a professional driver who possesses a commercial driver’s license (CDL). Note, you must check with council to determine specific rules about renting large vehicles. Fifteen passenger vans are not recommended.

Please keep in mind the following non-negotiable points regarding private transportation:

- Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.
- If you will be renting a vehicle, read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. For example, in many cases the minimum age of drivers is 25, and the maximum age is often under 70. In addition, make sure the car is adequately insured and you know who is responsible for damage to, or loss of, the vehicle. Finally, ensure you have a good paper trail that shows the vehicle rental is Girl Scout–related.
- Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.

### **Activity Insurance**

The supplemental insurance arranged by Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) through Mutual of Omaha provides basic medical coverage for injuries and sickness (depending on the coverage selected) for participants at Girl Scout hosted activities and travel. There are two situations in which this supplemental insurance is required:

- Non-member participation in Girl Scout activities(i.e. camps, visit to zoo or aquarium, ice-skating, etc.) Where an injury may occur is covered by Mutual of Omaha’s Plan 2, that is required to be purchased by the volunteer. Any time a non-registered adult (parent or other adult) and/or child (male or female not currently a Girl Scout member) participates. This requirement includes siblings. (Events such as Me & My Guy or a bowling activity with members and non-members participating are examples.)
- Extended travel: All travel three nights or more in length, no matter Girl Scout membership status.

In both circumstances’ insurance is purchased on a per person, per day basis. GSUSA has established low-cost supplemental insurance coverage through United of Omaha. In the event of an accidental injury, the individual’s personal insurance provides primary coverage and the

Mutual of Omaha plans provide secondary coverage. Girl Scouts of Colorado provides no additional coverage for non-members in event of an accident outside of these plans.

#### *Girl Scout Activity Insurance*

Every registered Girl Scout and registered volunteer member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic Mutual of Omaha Activity Insurance plan upon registration. The entire premium cost for this protection is borne by Girl Scouts of the USA, and the basic plan is for registered members (girls and adults) **ONLY** at the time of the claim.

This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an **approved**, supervised Girl Scout activity. This is one reason why all volunteers and girls should be registered members. It is important to remember that non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters, and friends) and other persons are **not** covered by the basic plan.

This insurance coverage is **not** intended to diminish the need for, or replace existing, family health insurance. Mutual of Omaha will work with the family's health insurance to determine the amount of any benefits for expenses incurred that aren't covered under another insurance policy.

The Activity Insurance plan (Plan 3E, 3P or 3PI) is available for Girl Scouts and volunteers taking extended trips (longer than three days and two nights) and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These plans are secondary insurance that GSCO requires to cover participants taking part in any **council-approved**, supervised Girl Scout activity. (Events such as troop trips, canoe trips, camping trips). Contact your volunteer support specialist to find out how to apply.

#### *How to obtain insurance*

Upon completion of the trip notification form, volunteers will be contacted with next steps to complete insurance purchase. If you have additional questions, please contact Girl Scouts of Colorado at 303-778-8774. <http://www.girlscoutsofcolorado.org/en/for-volunteers/forms-and-resources/trip-notification.html>

Review the [Girl Scouts of Colorado insurance overview](#) here.

#### **First Aid and CPR**

For many activities, it is recommended that at least one adult volunteer be first-aid/CPR certified. Safety Activity Checkpoints will tell you when a first-aider needs to be present.

Creating a safe environment for girls is important, so first-aid and CPR training is an acceptable use of group funds. American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, and American Heart Association provide many training opportunities. (GSCO offers first aid training on a limited basis.)

Take child CPR if you're working with younger girls and adult CPR if you're working with older girls and adults. First-aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy GSCO requirements.

#### *First Aider*

A first-aider is an adult volunteer who has taken first aid and CPR training. Healthcare providers such as physicians, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, licensed

practical nurses, paramedics, military medics, and emergency medical technicians may also serve as first-aiders.

First aid requirements are based on the remoteness of the activity. It's important that you or another volunteer with your group has the necessary medical experience (including knowledge of evacuation techniques) to ensure group safety. The levels of first aid required for any activity take into account both how much danger is involved and emergency medical services (EMS) response time.

<b>Access to EMS</b>	<b>Minimum Level of First Aid Required</b>
Less than 30 minutes	First Aid
More than 30 minutes	Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder (WFR)*

It is important to understand the differences between a first aid course, and a wilderness-rated course. Although standard first aid training provides basic incident response, wilderness-rated courses include training on remote-assessment skills, as well as the emergency first aid response, including evacuation techniques, to use when Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is not readily available.

The presence of a first-aider is required for large events of 200 people or more. There should be one first-aider for every 200 participants.

### **Volunteer Grievance Procedure**

A grievance is a complaint related to a volunteer's position not being properly administered or performed. Girl Scouts of Colorado expects parents/guardians and volunteers to first approach the parties with whom they have a complaint and attempt to find resolution. Girl Scouts of Colorado Program staff are available for consultation on best practices for facilitating difficult conversations and conflict resolution. If the conflict cannot be resolved between the parties, please:

1. Submit an initial complaint to the supervisor for that volunteer or staff position. This may be the service unit manager (volunteer) or volunteer support specialist (GSCO support staff) for your area – or the regional manager (GSCO management staff) if the complaint involves staff performance. Local staff and volunteers will respond and assist you in resolving the issue locally, if possible. This may include participating in a conference with all parties involved.
2. If the steps taken in #1 are not successful, initiate the grievance process. Submit a detailed written statement (email is acceptable) highlighting the problem to the volunteer support specialist/regional manager. Council staff will collaborate to gather additional information from you and other involved parties, and objectively define and communicate

a response plan to you within 10 business days. This plan may include a conference or meeting between some or all parties.

3. If necessary, the grievance will be escalated to the chief program officer, who will decide if there is any additional action to take. The decision of the chief program officer is final.

## **Troop Policies**

### **Who Needs a Background Check?**

Every adult who spends 3+ sessions with girls, handles group funds, or attends an overnight activity must become a registered member and submit to a background check.

### **Troop Meeting Locations**

Troop meetings may never be held at a private home/residence, please reach out to your volunteer support specialist for more details. A chaperoned event (one adult guardian for every child in attendance) may take place at a private residence. If it is not a chaperoned event, everyone living in the home over the age of 18 must have passed a criminal background check and proof of homeowner's or renter's insurance must be provided.

### **Default Troop Settings**

All troops are initially set to accept 12 girls and will display in the troop catalog online for easy registration access for new girl members. Communicate your desired number of girls and your preference on whether your troop displays in the catalog using the Troop Update form [insert hyperlink].

### **Troop Definition**

A troop is defined as three unrelated girls, with two unrelated adult leaders, and open to accepting new girl members and adults to volunteer. For a troop to receive troop proceeds from their participation in a product program, the troop must meet these minimum qualifications. Please note that if a troop does not meet the minimum expectation the troop will not be allowed to receive funds in their bank account. Girl Scouts of Colorado currently defines "related" as marriage, partnership, family, or roommates. If you have additional questions, please reach out to your volunteer support specialist.

### **Removal of a Girl from a Troop or Group**

Removal of a girl from a troop or group is never a decision that can be reached by a troop leadership team member without the support of their volunteer support specialist. Using language in the group or family agreement such as "failure to do so will result in removal from the troop" is strongly discouraged.

### **Family Agreements**

Girl Scouts of Colorado strongly encourages the use of Family Agreements within troop and group settings. Family agreements should be created at the first parent/family meeting before the troop begins meeting. This is an opportunity for the leadership team and families to gain a mutual understanding of troop expectations for the year. Some best practices include addressing:

- Meeting time and location
- Drop off and pick up windows/expectations
- Collection of health history paperwork or any other relevant data needed
- Family involvement with the troop, chaperones, additional troop support
- Girl-led expectations

- Troop dues (if any)
- Attendance policy (if any)
- Sharing a little bit about the leaders and each girl
- Troop accounting structure and plans for financial transparency
- Communication methods

Once the group decides on the above-mentioned items, the troop leadership team can put it into one document and send it out to parents or guardians for signatures of acceptance.

### Group Websites

Your troop may want to share information, market Girl Scout products, and celebrate their Girl Scout memories online. While doing so it is important to adhere to these guidelines:

- Groups of girls 13 years or older who have parental permission may set up a group Facebook page or website. Parents/guardians and volunteers may create and manage a group website for girls 12 and under.
- Make yours a site that does not allow outsiders to post message to the site without approval.
- Use girls' first names only and never post girls' personal information including addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses
- Always have an Annual Parent Permission form, which includes a photo release, or all girls.
- Don't violate copyright law by using designs, text, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder.

### Travel

#### *Travel Training*

The trainings listed below are required prior to troop travel. Visit our [Events page](#) to find in-person training courses at [www.girlscoutsofcolorado.org/events](http://www.girlscoutsofcolorado.org/events)

Training	When do you need the training?	cost	length
Overnight Trips	3+ months prior to your first overnight activity	n/a	45 minutes online!
Cooking and Camping	6+ months prior to cooking/sleeping outdoors for the first time	\$10	8 hours in-person
Extended trips	12+ months prior to your first trip of three nights or longer	n/a	3 hours online

#### *Trip Notification*

Approved volunteers who have taken the appropriate travel training are approved to help girls plan trips of any length. While written approval is not required, please be sure to tell us about your trip. For trips of one or more overnights, please submit a [Trip Notification](#) form online. We just need the basics in case of an emergency.

## **Troop Finances**

### **Group Bank Account Policies**

If your group is earning and spending money, the group needs to set up a checking account. Consider designating a troop treasurer who is responsible for managing the group's finances. Each troop account needs two approved, unrelated volunteers as bank signers.

Opening a new bank account and changing signers on a bank account requires a bank authorization letter. Make your request online, you will find the [Bank Authorization Request form](#) in the Forms section of the Girl Scouts of Colorado website at [www.girlscoutsofcolorado.org/forms](http://www.girlscoutsofcolorado.org/forms).

- Account signers are responsible for closing the account and submitting official notification of disbandment when the group disbands.
- Account signers are responsible for filling out a new ACH form whenever banking information changes.
- Troop/group funds are to be spent based on the consensus and decision of the group.
- An [Annual Troop Report](#) is due each year – watch for reminders over email and access the online form here, [www.girlscoutsofcolorado.org/forms](http://www.girlscoutsofcolorado.org/forms)
- Bank accounts need a minimum of two unrelated volunteers to be bank signers who have completed a background check and have a current membership registration.

**Note: “Related” GSCO currently defines as marriage, partnership, family, roommate. If you have additional questions, please reach out to your volunteer support specialist.**

- Groups need to maintain their funds at federally insured financial institutions. Look for a bank that is willing to waive any fees if possible!
- Using debit cards is encouraged, but no borrowing is allowed (including overdraft protection).
- Involve the girls in managing group finances! For older girls especially, your role is to oversee as they manage and record their troop's income and expenses.
- Keep impeccable records of income and expenses, with receipts. Records must be open to girls, parents, the local service unit volunteers, and council staff.
- Always deposit money promptly to avoid loss or theft.
- Never mix personal and group purchases on the same receipt. Do not “borrow” troop/group money for any reason.

**Individual girls may not have accounts.** If the troop makes the decision to keep individual financial records for special travel or awards projects, all decisions regarding troop funds must be made by the girls and communicated to families. Girls, parents, and volunteers must understand that if anyone leaves the troop/group or plans change, the funds do not belong to

the individual and may not follow her should she transfer troops or choose to participate as an Individual Girl Scout or Juliette.

### **Money Earning Policies**

Girl Scout troops/groups earn money in two ways:

1. Council product programs: [Cookie Program](#) and [Fall Product Program](#)
2. Group money earning: Activities organized by the group

There can be no money earning outside of council product programs during the [Fall Product Program](#) (Sept. 21-Oct. 28, 2019), and the [Cookie Program](#). (Jan. 2-March 8, 2020)

#### *Group Money Earning*

When participating in group money earning activities it is important to avoid the following:

- Planning a money-earning activity during a council product program.
- Reselling a commercial product or earning money for another organization (But remember, groups may donate a portion of what they earn!)
- Games of chance
- A direct solicitation of cash
- Sales on the internet, with the exception of GSUSA approved product programs online activities through M2Media and/or Digital Cookie

### **Product Program Rewards and Troop Proceeds**

Troop funds belong to the troop, and never to an individual girl. When girls and troops participate in the Fall Product Program or the Girl Scout Cookie Program, there are two types of rewards earned: troop proceeds and girl prizes. Troop proceeds are those funds that the troop earns by selling cookies or fall products and these funds belong to the troop and not to individual girls. Girls in troops and individually registered girls (Juliettes) may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate rewards such as participation patches, rewards and Cookie Credits.

### **Disbanding or Changing Groups**

Troop funds belong to the troop, and never to an individual girl. Troop funds may never follow an individual girl if her participation changes from her current troop. When groups merge, split, disband, or change in some way, follow these guidelines to manage the remaining funds in the troop bank account:

#### *Girls transferring troops*

Group funds belong to the group, not the individual members.

Note: There is no option to transfer troops during the council product programs.

#### *Merging groups*

If two groups merge, the funds from both groups are combined into one account.

#### *Bridging groups*

Groups with bridging girls cannot transfer funds to the new group.

#### *Disbanding groups*

A disbanded group is a group that is no longer meeting or has not re-registered by December 1. If your troop is disbanding, please notify Girl Scouts of Colorado using the [Troop Update form](#) and consult the [Disbandment Checklist](#) for guidance.

Unused Girl Scout money left in accounts when groups disband becomes the property of Girl Scouts of Colorado. Prior to disbanding, the group may decide to donate any unused funds to a worthwhile organization, the service unit, or Girl Scouts of Colorado to support opportunity grant funding. As when closing a personal account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account. You may have to close the account in person, have the balance issued as a cashier's check to Girl Scouts of Colorado and give to your volunteer support specialist.

*When a troop disbands and girls continue in other groups*

If girls from a disbanding group decide to join another group, the disbanding troop can send all remaining funds to the new troop. The amount is transferred directly from the disbanding group bank account to the account of the group the girls are joining. Remember that troop funds may not follow an individual girl. If an individual girl chooses to continue in Girl Scouting as an individually registered girl or Juliette, troop funds may be donated to Girl Scouts of Colorado. At a later date, should that girl need funding support to reach her programmatic goals, she may seek Girl Scouts of Colorado grant support to reach that goal.

*When a troop disbands and no girls continue*

The girls must decide how to use existing group funds. They may do a final group activity or donate a portion to a charity or cause they consider worthwhile, including Girl Scouts of Colorado. If there are still remaining funds after the group has disbanded, close the bank account and have the balance issued as a cashier's check to Girl Scouts of Colorado and give to your volunteer support specialist.

These funds will be used to support opportunity grants and programs for other Girl Scouts. You may also mail a cashier's check, with a brief explanation of your disbandment status, to:

Girl Scouts of Colorado  
3801 E. Florida Ave, Suite 720  
Denver, CO 80210

## **Social Media Policy**

**Think before you type.** When representing yourself as a GSCO member online, think about the messages you are putting forth and how they will be perceived. You are responsible for what you write or say online about GSCO, even if it is on your personal social media channels. The same rules that apply offline apply online. Use good judgment and common sense. Please do not write or post anything that would embarrass other members or reflect badly on our organization.

**Some people just want to fight.** We can't control the message all of the time, so don't connect/ follow people/organizations simply to monitor their activity/argue with them. If you encounter someone who is posting incorrect information about Girl Scouts, let GSCO know. We also monitor social media and respond to inaccurate reports and misinformation. Feel free to

“set the record straight” from your personal account, but do not engage in a continuous argument with someone.

**Use hashtags appropriately.** Be sure you research any hashtag before using it and check them regularly. A seemingly innocent hashtag may not be. You also want to make sure you are using hashtags correctly and associating Girl Scouts with the right groups. GSCO regularly uses the following hashtags:

[Instagram](#): #GSColo, #gscolorado, #girlscoutsco, #girlscoutscolorado, #girlscoutsofcolorado, #gsGoldAward, #GirlScoutsGiveBack, #gsoutdoors

[Twitter](#): #GSColo, #gsGoldAward, #GirlScoutsGiveBack, #gsoutdoors

**Don't know? Ask!** Know what you are talking about when you engage with others. If you are unsure, ask! If someone has a question you can't answer, ask them to email the question to [inquiry@gscolorado.org](mailto:inquiry@gscolorado.org).