

This guidance is intended to be used for volunteers in conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints and according to Girl Scouts of Southwest Indiana (GSSI) state and local COVID-19 circumstances which remains fluid. It is important that you continue to monitor local and federal guidelines and the other resources indicated below such as the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#). GSSI may, but is not obligated to, modify this guidance, from time to time, in its sole discretion. Please use the following expectations to help guide troop activities.

Reminder:

COVID-19 risk is fluid and the guidance provided does not supersede more recent government guidance or restrictions. Since COVID-19 continues to change as infection rates rise and fall in different areas, there may be regional differences or developments that occur after this edition is provided.

Troop Meeting Size:

Group meeting size should follow all state/county facility and gathering guidelines.

Large Gatherings:

GSSI may permit larger gatherings, following state/county facility and gathering guidelines. Always follow CDC guidance and Girl Scout guidance available in this document pertaining to large in-person gatherings and/or events.

Troop Meeting Space:

Scheduling activities outdoors instead of indoors whenever possible is a good practice to help lower contact risk.

For meetings held at public facilities, volunteers should contact the facility ahead of time and ask:

- Is the space cleaned and touch surfaces (i.e., tabletops, light switches, chairs, etc.) sanitized.
- 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, work to supplement any practices that are less ideal. For Example:

- In the case that the troop arrives directly after another user group, they should plan to bring sanitizing wipes to get the space ready for their troop.
- If faucets are manual, ask volunteers to show girls how to shut them off with a paper towel and to use paper towels for doorknobs whenever possible.

Troop Meetings in the Home:

GSSI may allow all levels (Daisy-Ambassador) on a case-by-case basis to meet within a private residence if a public facility is not available and if the residence and volunteer meets all the guidelines listed below. However, troops are strongly discouraged from meeting in private homes due to the following: Girl Scouts has no control over a private residence and a typical home is not setup to host other people's children on a regular basis.

Our goal is to protect both the Council and the homeowner. If something goes wrong, the homeowner could potentially be legally liable for accidents, injuries, etc., and we do not want to put troop leaders or troop parents in that position. GSSI encourages troops to find an alternative public facility location to hold meetings.

GSSI's approval process and considerations will include:

- The home must be at the home of a council-approved registered volunteer with a current background check on file.
- Girls may not meet in a home where a registered sex offender lives.
- GSSI requires background checks for all adults living in the home.
- The troop needs to be able to focus without disruptions from other household members.
- Animals should be kept in a place that is separate from the meeting space.
- Homeowners should consider any personal homeowner insurance implications. The homeowner should ask their homeowner's insurance carrier if there are any insurance exclusions regarding holding troop meetings at the home, in the event an accident or injury occurs.
- Weapons must be completely out of view and stored in a locked space.
- Medication, dangerous cleaning products, or any poisonous substance must be stored in a secure space out of sight and preferably locked.

Transportation

Carpooling may resume as necessary with precautions. For example:

- Girls and adults should wear masks when inside of a motor vehicle if masks are required in the state/county/school.
- Keep car windows opened, at least slightly, to circulate fresh air.
- Consider the personal situation of your girls:
 - Do they live with an immunocompromised person that they can put at risk? If so, perhaps make other accommodations for her with her parents.
 - Have the families been isolating, and free from contagion? If so the troop may essentially be a safe bubble.

Remember, sustained contact within less than six (6) feet for longer than fifteen (15) minutes within an enclosed area creates a high risk for virus transmission.

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 continue to do so. Use Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Meetings to guide your meeting plans. See [Virtual Troop Meetings](#).

Day Trips and Activities:

Safety Activity Checkpoints, the afore listed guidance for troop meetings, and the *Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation* section in this interim guide should be followed for day trips and special activities. 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 sanitize equipment in between uses, and make the appropriate accommodations necessary. If needed, bring extra sanitizer or disinfectant wipes if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

Travel and Overnight Stays:

Overnight trips are permitted. As always, volunteers must seek council prior-approval before planning any overnight stays, follow guidance in Safety Activity Checkpoints and continue to follow the *Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation* section of this document.

Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation:

Follow the resources developed by credible public health sources such as the [CDC](#) or your local public health department. Share these with girls and volunteers and ensure that they are practiced during meetings and activities. Remind girls and volunteers to engage in **everyday preventive actions** to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Actions 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 these areas.
- When necessary, volunteers, girls, and parents should be reminded to take temperatures prior to group interaction to confirm the individual is not running a fever or above 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 can transmit COVID-19 from person to person. Create a safe way for girls and volunteers to greet and end meetings.

First Aid Supplies:

Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items including hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), tissues, and disinfectants. Trash baskets or bags should be supplied for meeting and activity spaces, if not already available. Disposable or no-contact thermometers may be added to supplies if available and not cost-prohibitive.

Disinfectants and Disinfecting:

Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., tabletops, 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:

When participating/meeting in a Girl Scout capacity, individuals and groups should follow state/county/school/facility mask expectations. If an area or facility (or your group's school) requires masks, the group must wear them while participating indoors and if you are unable to maintain the appropriate distance when outside.

Vaccinations:

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) strongly encourages, but does not require, vaccination for volunteers. Deciding to receive a vaccine is a personal decision and GSSI encourages our staff and members to respect the privacy of fellow members and their families. While parents/caregivers may certainly ask, volunteers are under no obligation to disclose their personal vaccination status. Also, under no circumstances should a volunteer discuss the personal healthcare decisions of another volunteer with anyone.

COVID-19 Incident Response:

Reporting and communicating a positive COVID 19 test will be managed by a council staff member. Volunteers do not manage COVID-19 communication responsibilities.

Volunteers should contact council staff at support@girlsouts-gssi.org or 812-421-4970 in the event of a COVID-19 positive test result. Remember: *All health information is private/confidential to be shared only on a need-to-know basis. There are laws and regulations governing the sharing of health data.*

Council staff, NOT the volunteer, will notify parents and others about a positive test result and that the tester's identity is confidential.

The council staff point person responsible to manage COVID-19 positive tester reports will:

- Record the facts
- Confirm the positive tester
- Notify the facility or homeowner where a troop has met
- Contact the parents of anyone who may have been exposed, or other adult volunteers

Again, **do not** share the positive tester's identity.

If an individual arrives and, based on assessment, displays COVID symptoms:

- Place a mask or face covering over the individual and yourself and isolate him/her away from the group.
- Notify the individual's parent/guardian or emergency contact of the situation and make arrangements for pick up.
- Isolate the individual's belongings and any items she may have touched or come in contact with during the activity.
- Clean and disinfect the area, surfaces, and items that stay with the troop. Have the remaining group members wash hands and clean areas.

The troop leader should notify GSSI at support@girlscouts-gssi.org or call us at (812) 421-4970 to discuss next steps. GSSI will notify all attendees of the activity without divulging the identity of the affected person if a positive case is identified.

Reminder: Every registered Girl Scout is covered by a basic accident insurance plan. The plan is designed to help supplement medical expenses if an accident occurs during a supervised Girl Scout activity. Girl Scout insurance **does not** cover healthcare or illness.

Food, Dining, and Snacks:

Safety precautions should be followed when handling and serving food and when girls are eating.

Safety recommendations for food, dining, and snacks include:

- Encourage girls to bring their own foods to eat (bag lunch or dinner)
- Encourage girls not to share their food after having touched it, such as a bag of chips
- Individually wrapped items are recommended
- If providing snacks, especially if unwrapped, have one person, wearing gloves, hand out items to each person, such as with cupcakes or cookies
- Use a serving spoon or scoop rather than reaching into a bag or bowl of snacks
- Use disposable plates, forks, napkins, etc. when possible
- Ensure everyone handling or serving food wash hands (even if they will be wearing gloves) prior to any food prep or meals, following CDC handwashing guidelines
- If sharing outdoor cooking utensils (roasting forks), they should be washed and sanitized between each use (or bring enough utensils so that each person gets her/his own)

Restrooms:

Be very careful in public restrooms. Ensure girls take appropriate turns to maintain social distancing and that they wear their masks in the restrooms, if required by the area/facility. It is ideal to have automatic flushers and sensory faucets to wash hands. If these are not available, girls and adults should get in the habit of using tissue or paper towel to open doors and latches. Restrooms and toilets are fraught with germs normally, and more so now considering the contagion of coronavirus and other infectious diseases.