

GSSI's
**Guide for
Travel Volunteers**
2023-2024

**Girl Scouting
builds girls of
courage,
confidence,
and character,
who make the world
a better place.**

girl scouts 
of southwest
indiana

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Girl Scouts of Southwest Indiana

Geographic Subdivisions

Girl Scouts of Southwest Indiana’s jurisdiction includes the following counties:

Contact Information:

Girl Scouts of Southwest Indiana, Inc.
5000 E Virginia Street, Suite 2
Evansville, IN 47715

Telephone: (812) 421-4970

Website: www.girlscouts-gssi.org

Email: support@girlscouts-gssi.org

Facebook Page for Council Updates:

Girl Scouts of Southwest Indiana

Facebook Page for Leader Support:

Girl Scouts of Southwest Indiana Volunteers

For individual council staff contacts,
see “**Our Council**” on the GSSI website.

Girl Scout Office Hours:

Monday-Friday - 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CST

Closed on Saturday and Sunday

Girl Scout Shop Hours:

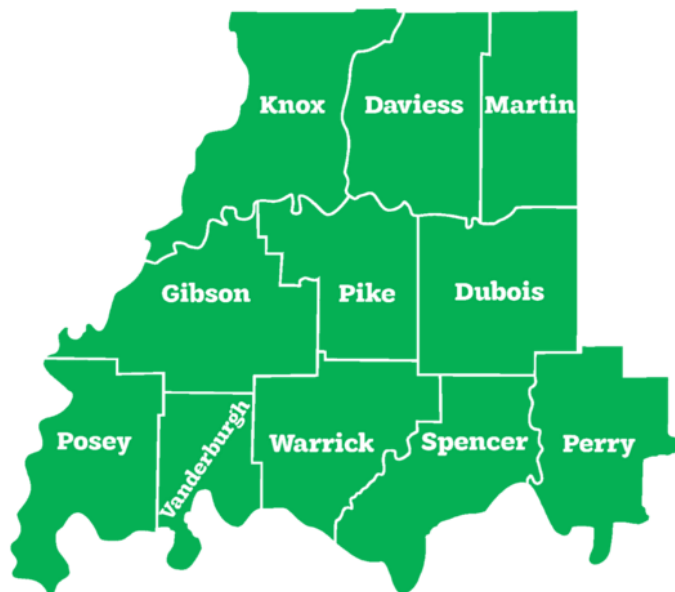
(located at the council office – office is open when shop is closed)

Monday – 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CST

Online and pre-orders are accepted Monday through Friday and may be placed online, by email, or by phone for FREE shipping and pick-up.

Special extended hours during February and March during the cookie program. See website for details.

*The council office may, on occasion, be closed unexpectedly, due to uncontrollable factors, such as unusual weather conditions. GSSI will attempt to post closings on the Web sites of local media and on the council Facebook and Web site, www.girlscouts-gssi.org. On days when Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation school (EVSC) closures are announced, the council office will open 1 hour later than normal and may close one hour earlier than normal. On days when EVSC schools are operating on a delay, the council will be open during its normal hours. To verify if the council office is open, call 812-421-4970.



GSSI's Guide for Travel Volunteers

Some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout's life happen while taking trips. Travel offers a wealth of opportunities for girls to develop leadership, confidence, and practical life skills. This guide can help you and your girls prepare for local, regional, or international travel.

Review GSSI Policies and Standards that pertain to Travel located in the Policies and Standards Guide listed under **Forms and Documents** on GSSI's website, as well as, sections in the **Volunteer Essentials** and **Safety Activity Checkpoints** that relate to your travel activity.

Review **A Troop Leader's Guide to Permission Forms, 2023-2024** for specifics on Permission Forms required.

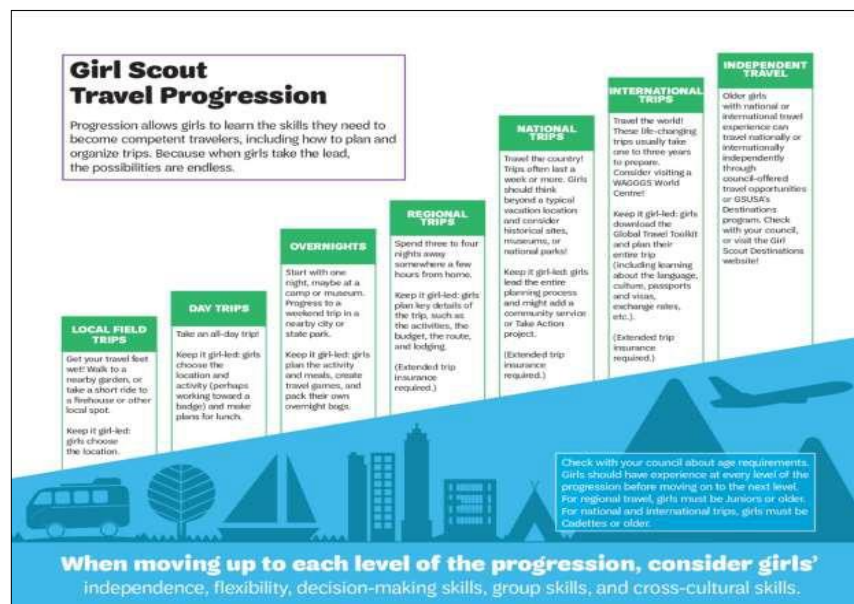
Traveling with Girls

Girl Scouts is a great place for girls to learn how to plan and take exciting trips, because travel is built on a progression of activities—one activity leads to the next. Daisies can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips—even international ones!

For Daisies, this could mean a day trip to an arboretum as part of the Journey they are working on. For Seniors or Ambassadors, it might mean whitewater rafting in Costa Rica or exploring the Our Chalet World Center in Switzerland. Please see the **Girl Scout Guide to U.S. Travel**.

Although many troops decide to travel together, Girl Scouts might join a trip with other girls from around their council or form a new troop with other girls who like to travel. Girl Scouts of the USA offers individual Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors the chance to travel independently and meet other Girl Scouts from across the country through the Destinations program.

The **recommended progression of trips and travel** for Girl Scouts is included in this link or click the image to view larger:



Local Field Trips (Daisies and older). A walk to a nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to a firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies. Keep it girl-led: girls can choose the location!

Day Trips (Daisies and older): An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a daylong trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal) allows younger girls to select locations and do much of the trip planning, without being too far from home. Keep it girl-led: girls can choose the location and an activity (maybe a badge activity?) and help make plans for lunch.

***Note:** Full-day trips may be challenging for Daises, especially for kindergarteners who have not experienced short trips. Make sure girls take some short trips before they progress to a full day trip.*

Overnight & Weekend Trips (Daisies and older): A trip of one—or possibly two—nights away could start with one night camping or staying at a Girl Scout property and progress to a visit to a state or national park, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground—or even an overnight at a large museum! These short trips are just long enough to get girls excited about travel, but not long enough to generate homesickness. Keep it girl-led: girls plan the activity and meals, create travel games, and pack their own bags.

***Note:** A Daisy troop may participate in an overnight experience if the girls are ready. Brownie troops can participate up to two nights. For camp this differs in the following way: girls who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Girls who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights.*

Regional Trips (Juniors and older). Three- or four-nights camping or staying in a hotel, motel, hostel, or vacation rental within the girls' home region taking girls up to a few hours away from home. Keep it girl-led: girls plan key details of the trip such as activities, the budget, the route, and lodging.

National Trips (Cadettes and older). Travel anywhere in the country can last up to a week or more. Try to avoid ordinary recreational trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component—such as incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country. Perhaps the girls want to plan a trip to some national parks as part of the Girl Scout Ranger program. Keep it girl-led: girls lead the entire planning process and might plan to add a community service or Take-Action project.

International Trips (Cadettes and older). Travel around the world can require one to three years of preparation. Ensure passports, documentation, visas, and customs requirements are in order well in advance of your trip. International trips are available to Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, but only to those who have successfully participated in a progression of overnight and extended trips within Girl Scouting. Keep it girl-led: girls download the **Global Travel Toolkit**, and plan their entire trip – including learning about language, culture, passports and visas, exchange rates, etc.

Independent Travel (Cadettes and older). Older girls who already have national or international travel experience can travel independently through council-offered travel opportunities or GSUSA's Destinations program. For opportunities, check with your Girl Scout council and visit the **Destinations website**.

When thinking about progression, consider things like girls’:

- Ability to be away from parents and their homes.
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations.
- Ability to make decisions for themselves and the good of the group well and easily.
- Ability to get along with each other and handle challenges.
- Previous cross-cultural experiences, skills, interests, and language skills (where applicable).

Non–Girl Scouts. If you plan to include non–Girl Scouts on your trip, such as siblings, they should also be the same appropriate grade level in progression with travel experience. For example, an eight-year-old sibling of a Senior should not participate in an international trip. And remember, you will have to purchase supplemental insurance for nonmembers.

WAGGGS World Centers or your Girl Scout council may have additional or different guidelines regarding age requirements for international travel.

Learn More

- [WAGGGS World Centers](#)
- [Girl Scout Guide to U.S. Travel](#)
- [International events through Girl Scouts](#)
- Girl Scouts [Destinations](#) program
- U.S. passports and international travel: [U.S. Department of State](#)
- Travelers’ health (vaccines, medicine, advice): [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [Girl Scout Global Travel Toolkit](#)

Girl Scout Connections

It’s easy to connect eye-opening travel opportunities to the leadership training and skill building your girls are doing in Girl Scouts! When it’s safe to travel together, girls can use their creativity to connect any leadership Journey theme into an idea for travel. For example, girls learn where their food comes from in the *Sow What?* Journey. That would connect well with a trip focusing on sustainable agriculture and sampling tasty foods!

There are abundant opportunities to build real skills through earning badges too. The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, but there are plenty more, such as Eco Camper, New Cuisines, Coding for Good, and, of course, all the financial badges that help girls budget and earn money for their trips.

Want to include Girl Scout traditions on your trip? Look no farther than the [Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace](#) in Savannah, Georgia! Your girls also have the chance to deepen their connections to Girl Scouts around the world by visiting one of the WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) [World Centers](#), which offer low-cost accommodations and special programs in five locations around the world.

And if your girls are looking to stay closer to home? Ask your council about council-owned camps and other facilities that can be rented out.

As your Girl Scouts excitedly plan their next trip, remember to limit your role to facilitating the girls’ brainstorming and planning, never doing the work for them. Share your ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to Girl Scout members with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Always be sure to contact the location and/or the instructor in advance to ensure they are able to accommodate those with disabilities. For more information visit [Open Doors](#), a great reference for learning and traveling with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities, consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the Girl Scout members in your troop that could affect their ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with members and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all Girl Scout members and their families feel comfortable and have access to whatever is needed to fully participate, such as proper equipment, prior experiences, and the skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the “Standard Safety Guidelines” section (p. 4–27) at the top of [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) before taking girls out for any activity and review it with the girls so they too are prepared. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, sudden illness, or sudden weather or water emergencies. Details of an EAP can be found in the Standard Safety Guidelines (p. 8-9) of the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

Plan Transportation in Advance

When planning transportation, keep in mind that large 15-passenger vans manufactured prior to 2013 without driver assistance technology have been flagged as unsafe by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and should therefore be avoided. For more information on operating 15 passenger vans see [Transporting Girls under Standard Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) in the Introduction. If a commercial shuttle service is professionally using the van, this is acceptable.

For chartered buses or rented vehicles always verify safety credentials and commercial driving licenses, check the availability of seatbelts, and request a certificate of insurance showing a minimum of one million dollars Auto Liability insurance.

Choose Accommodations Wisely

Girl Scout groups may stay in a variety of overnight accommodations. Evaluate all options with a view to safety, cost, amenities, distance to planned sights or transportation, privacy, parking, and insurance.

Consider:

- Girl Scout **camp**s and facilities or **WAGGS World Centers**.
- National, state, or local campgrounds, many of which offer cabins to rent. Try **reserveamerica.com**.
- Hostels. **HI USA** offers Girl Scout ready hostels in the U.S.
- Hotels. Consider suites and adjoining rooms to enhance supervision.

Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway

These are permitted however because these are privately owned properties, it can be difficult to qualify safety and credibility. For these reasons, additional steps for Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway are required.

Confirm the following ahead of time:

- The rental is for exclusive use of the home. No other renters will have access to the home during the rental period.
- The space has smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers (these are noted as amenities on booking sites).
- The home and host have substantial, positive visitor reviews. Do not book places with negative, few or no reviews. Look for super-host status on Airbnb.
- The liability insurance from the host covers premises for commercial use, with a minimum of one million dollars General Liability insurance.
- Check the host's profile or identity verification. You may be asked to do the same, as a renter.
- The local host or manager contact info is available for immediate needs. Share this information with an in-town contact (a person not on the trip).
- Check state laws to see if Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway are mandated to meet hotel laws and standards so that you know there is an extra layer of protection.

Check Accommodations Upon Arrival

No matter what housing you book, inspect premises with the group immediately on arrival. Let the front desk or host know if you find any deficiencies. Maintain a budget margin so that you can move to another location if you find a property unsafe. Here are several points to check upon arrival:

- All points of entry are secure and lockable.
- Stairs or fire escapes are identified and shown to girls.
- Evacuation routes are clear and known to all.
- Basic safety systems are in place, as appropriate to the type of building and according to building codes in the jurisdiction, such as a fire extinguisher and smoke alarm.
- Location of local emergency services and how to reach them.
- Confirm any communication services (mobile carrier, Wi-Fi) are running and reliable.

Sleeping & Bathroom Arrangements

Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in the planning so they know what to expect. On trips where male volunteers are part of the group, it is not appropriate for them to sleep in the same space as girl members. Always support and maintain an all-girl atmosphere for sleeping quarters.

On trips where male volunteers are part of the group, it is not appropriate for them to sleep in the same space as girl members. Always support and maintain an all-girl atmosphere for sleeping quarters. Men may participate only when separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms are available for their use. In some circumstances, such as public venue (museum or mall) overnights, with hundreds of girls, this type of accommodation may not be possible. If this is the case, men do not supervise girls in the sleeping area of the event, a designated area is made available out of the way or off to the side so that the men are not sleeping alongside the girls, and the adult-to-girl ratio is adjusted accordingly.

If possible, men should have their own designated bathroom. If a unisex bathroom is used, the door must have a working lock, or a system for notifying others that the bathroom is in use. This system should be reviewed and understood by all girls and adults.

Men should not have to walk through the girls' sleeping area to get to the bathroom. When camping in tents or single room cabins, men must stay in a tent or a cabin that is separate from the girls or women.

During family or "he and me" events (in which girls share sleeping accommodations with men), ensure the sleeping details are clearly explained in a parent/guardian permission slip. More than one family may use a tent or single-room cabin during these events only if both families agree.

For long distance travel, men must have separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms away from girls. Each participant should have their own bed. If girls want to share a bed, they must obtain parent/guardian permission. Girls and adults may not share a bed, however, though some councils may make exceptions for mothers and daughters.

Adults' sleeping quarters are arranged for maximum supervision, but do not share a tent or close quarters with girls. Adult sleeping areas are identified and visible after dark. If younger girls require adults present with them for a positive outdoor experience, registered female adults are permitted to share close quarters with girls under the following conditions:

Follow these points:

Adults are not required to sleep in the same space (i.e., hotel room) as girls; if they do, there should be at least *two unrelated female* adults in the room.

Two unrelated adults sleeping in the same space must each sleep on an outside wall and the adult must sleep next to their daughter/Girl Scout.

Each participant has her own bed. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed.

Girls and adults do not share a bed. However, some councils make exceptions for mothers and daughters. Everyone sleeping in sleeping bags must have their own sleeping bag.

Take the Insurance

When booking flights, consider cancellation insurance which primarily covers the cost for airfare in the event a trip is cancelled due to illness. Read the fine print carefully, as some situations (such as pandemics) may not be covered. Broad cancellation insurance is called "Cancel for any reason" (CFAR) and must be obtained immediately after the first booking. Discuss this option with your Girl Scout council, if needed, as it could be costly.

Activity Accident Insurance

Activity accident insurance is supplemental health insurance that protects registered Girl Scout members. Registered members are automatically covered under activity accident insurance when participating in all Girl Scout events and activities including trips that involve two (or less) overnight stays.

Basic Plan 1. The Basic Plan 1 automatically covers Girl Scout members and non-members, who are invited to participate, and are injured during the Girl Scout sponsored and supervised activity or trip.

Basic Plan 1 will pay the first \$140.00 of medical expenses plus any out-of-pocket medical expenses that are not covered under the injured person's personal (or family) medical insurance, such as out-of-network charges or large deductibles or ambulatory services.

If the injured person does not have medical insurance, the Basic Plan1 will drop down to cover medical expenses from dollar one.

Note: Most situations within Girl Scouts are covered by the automatic Basic Plan 1 which covers accidental bodily injury. Accidental bodily injury would include exposures like a tick bite or food poisoning, for example, as long as the incident is reported as an accident or incident to your council at the time it occurs.

Plan 3P - Accident plus Sickness: Plan 3P covers the same as Basic Plan 1 plus sickness coverage. Sickness coverage must be purchased separately and is intended as an option for extended, long-distance trips.

Plan 3PI - Accident plus Sickness for International Trips: Plan 3PI coverage is required for international trips. It provides accident plus sickness coverage for trips outside of the USA. The Basic Plan 1 will not cover international trips, so it is necessary to purchase Plan 3PI when taking Girl Scouts on international travel.

International Inbound Accident plus Sickness. Accident plus Sickness coverage for Councils who are hosting Girl Guides/Girl Scouts visiting the United States from out of country.

When planning activities and trips, always consult with your Girl Scout council to see if extra activity accident insurance is needed. You can request Activity Insurance [HERE](#).

Plan for contingencies. Occasionally, things will not go as planned. Budget for extra money on hand as a contingency fund for when unexpected changes come up, for example: a cancelled accommodation, a train is missed, or an illness requires quarantine or recuperation.

Leader/Instructor Verification

Verify leader/instructor knowledge, experience, judgment, and maturity. Ensure that at least one adult is trained or possesses knowledge, skills, and experience in the following areas:

- First aid
- Travel progression and readiness, including homesickness
- Trip planning in a girl-led environment
- Safety management
- Program activities specific to the trip
- Group dynamics and management
- Supervision of girls and adults
- If the trip is international, leader must have international travel experience

Prepare a Pre-Trip Orientation

Make sure girls have a detailed itinerary, but do not post the itinerary on a publicly accessible website where others may be able to see it. Ensure that girl and adult participants, and girls' parents, receive information about health, first aid and emergency procedures, plans for transportation and any geographic detail such as the terrain or environment. Also share basic operational procedures (i.e., buddy system at all times) and behavior expectations. You may want to work with your troop to create a group behavior contract, and have members sign it. Another suggestion is to create a personal emergency action plan that each girl can write out herself and keep with her. Make sure to discuss topics like:

- Who her buddy is—and how the buddy system works,
- What to do if she is separated from the group, whether by accident or due to a crime,
- What to do if she loses something significant: money, passport, or luggage,
- What to do if emergency help is needed,
- How to perform basic first aid procedures,
- How to deal with a large crowd, if applicable,
- What positive behaviors are expected of her and the consequences to self or others, by not living up to those behaviors.

International Travel

International travel involves increased travel precautions and requirements compared to domestic travel.

The following Safety Checkpoints apply to International Travel:

- **Register your trip** with the U.S. government's **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** so that you will get updates about safety, and that the State Department knows where you are traveling.
- **Read on the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention website about health concerns for the country.** Make sure girls and parents/guardians review this information. Every participant travelling internationally should visit their doctor to discuss their travel health requirements and any vaccinations or medications necessary.

- **Become aware of any quarantine, vaccine, or screening requirements for return to the U.S.,** as well as what is required for entry into destination countries. This information will help greatly when deciding upon a destination.
- **Confirm the travel advisory level for the country via** the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs. *Note that the State Department now classifies travel advisories with travel alert levels as follows:*
 - Level 1: Exercise Normal Precautions
 - Level 2: Exercise Increased Precautions
 - Level 3: Reconsider Travel
 - Level 4: Do Not Travel
- **Confirm that both girls and their parents/guardians have the advisory information and are aware of the travel alert level in the region you plan to visit.** This can be reflected on a permission slip if your Girl Scout council chooses to handle it that way.
- **Read information about safety issues and concerns carefully.** Pay attention to the in-country travel alerts for the specific region you are interested in. For example, a certain country may be classified as a Level 2, but a particular state or region within that Level 2 country may be categorized as Level 3.
- **Check the travel alert status periodically in the months/weeks/days leading up to your trip for any changes.** For situations where there is a travel alert Level 1 or Level 2, take normal safety precautions to safeguard girls.
- **Travel Alert 4.** When the travel alert Level is 4 (“do not travel”), girls are not to travel to a location under any circumstances.
- **Travel Alert 3.** For situations where the travel alert is a 3 (“reconsider travel”), there are several steps that should be taken before moving forward:
 - Strongly consider selecting a different location.
 - If interest is high, have a conversation with your local safety or risk representative to fully understand the specific risk factors in play.
 - Contact the host destination facility and ask if they are aware of the travel alert level and what extra security measures are in place, if any.
 - Inform girls and parents/guardians and determine if there is still a compelling interest to travel to this location, considering the travel alert level.
 - Get parents’/guardians’ explicit approval to travel to the location, according to specific risks, in writing.
 - Have a conversation with your Girl Scout council and get approval from a legal perspective, from in-house legal or outside legal counsel.
 - Confirm that you have senior management approval within your council prior to moving forward with your plans.

Try to make sure international permission slips are signed by both parents. Discuss with your Girl Scout council about having both parents sign the permission slip and notarizing it. This is recommended by the U.S. Customs & Border Protection and is strongly suggested as a best practice.

Finally, when travelling, be sure to follow the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for specific activities you plan to do on your trip.

What to Do

Seeking Council Permission

Before most trips, you and the girls will need to obtain council permission for travel outside the council or for any overnight trips. A **Special Activities Application** must be submitted four (4) weeks before sending permission forms home. In addition, if planning a trip of more than three (3) days and two (2) nights, an **Extended Trip Itinerary and Budget** must also be submitted. Both forms are on the council website www.girlscouts-gssi.org.

Any trip involving an overnight stay requires an adult with current *Overnights, Trips & Travel (formerly On the Go)* certification. Remember that all adults traveling with girls must be background screened, and in most cases, must also be registered members.

Encourage the girls to submit much of the information themselves, including the following:

- A detailed itinerary, including specific activities involved, mode of travel, and all dates/times.
- Location and type of premises to be used.
- Numbers of girls who will be participating (parental permissions must be obtained).
- Names and contact information for the volunteers participating.
- Any other groups, organizations, consultants, or resource people who will be involved.
- Participants' skill levels, if applicable (language skills, backpacking or camping experience, etc.).
- Any specialized equipment that will be used, if applicable
- Required agreements or contracts (for example, hiring a bus, use of premises)

Involving Chaperones

There are different adult supervision requirements for Girl Scout troop meetings as compared to events outside of the regular Girl Scout troop meeting such as outings, activities, camping and travel. Activities and travel outside of the regular troop meeting space require more adult supervision.

To determine how many volunteer chaperones the girls will need with them on the trip, see the chart below. As you ask for chaperones, be sure to look for ones who are committed to:

- Being a positive role model.
- Respecting all girls and adults equally, with no preferential treatment.
- Creating a safe space for girls.
- Prioritizing the safety of all girls.
- Supporting and reinforcing a group agreement.
- Handling pressure and stress by modeling flexibility and a sense of humor.
- Creating an experience for and with girls.
- Getting fit (appropriate to the trip).

Be sure every chaperone reviews and follows the **12 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines**. For international trips, chaperones should have previous international travel experience.

****Only GSSI Council approved adults are eligible to be chaperones.****

All Chaperones must have an eligible background screening on file at the council. Chaperones must also be registered members to drive girls other than their own daughter, participate in overnight events, or be considered towards the girl-to-adult ratio.

Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

| Girl to Adult Ratios | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Group Meetings | | Events, Travel, and Camping | |
| | TWO unrelated volunteers (at least one of who is female) for up to this number of girls: | ONE additional volunteer to each additional number of girls: | TWO unrelated volunteers (at least one of who is female) for up to this number of girls: | ONE additional volunteer to each additional number of girls: |
| Daisies Grades K-1 | 12 | 1-6 | 6 | 1-4 |
| Brownies Grades 2-3 | 20 | 1-8 | 12 | 1-6 |
| Juniors Grades 4-5 | 25 | 1-10 | 16 | 1-8 |
| Cadettes Grades 6-8 | 25 | 1-12 | 20 | 1-10 |
| Seniors Grades 9-10 | 30 | 1-15 | 24 | 1-12 |
| Ambassadors Grades 11-12 | 30 | 1-15 | 24 | 1-12 |

GSSI Permissions and Certifications

The grid on the following page was designed as a visual supplement to *Safety Activity Checkpoints*, *Volunteer Essentials*, and *GSSI Standards and Policies*. For each type of activity (listed in the left column), the grid indicates the types of documentation and training (if any) that are required prior to the activity. The *Annual Permission Form* and the *Special Activities Application* are at www.girlscouts-gssi.org under **Forms and Documents**.

| GSSI Permissions and Certifications | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|--|----------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|
| Activity | Annual Permission Form | Special Activity Application | Additional Insurance | Overnights, Trips & Travel (On the Go) | Fire Building | Basic Outdoor Cooking | Troop Camp Training Certification | First Aid/CPR Certification |
| Troop Meeting | † | | | | | | | Recommended 4 |
| Day Field Trip | • | Required if outside GSSI or Unusual Risk | | | | | | 4 |
| Overnight Indoors | √ | • | Optional | • | | | | 4 |
| Cabin & RV Camping | √ | • | Optional | • | Required if Building a Fire | Required if Building a Fire & Cooking Basic Meals | Required if Building a Fire & Cooking Advanced Outdoor Meals | • |
| Tent & Outdoor Camping | √ | • | Optional | Required for Backyard Tent Camping Only | Required if Building a Fire | Required if Building a Fire & Cooking Basic Meals | Required for Outdoor Sleeping Other Than Back Yard | • |
| Outdoor Cooking or Campfires | • | • | | | Required for Hot Dogs & Smores | Required for Simple Outdoor Cooking | Required for Advanced Outdoor Cooking | • |
| Extended Trip ² | √ | • | Optional | • | | | | • |
| International Trip ² | √ | • | • | • | | | | • |
| Activity With Unusual Risk ³ | • | • | | | | | | 4 |

Annual Permission Forms are always required.

• = **required** form/application/training

† For regular meetings in the usual location and at the usual time, the Girl Scout registration is sufficient permission until the Annual Permission Forms are obtained. The lead volunteer must have all the girls' Annual Permission Forms, since this form includes a summary of girls' emergency and medical information.

√ Requires an **Overnight Permission Form** in addition to the Annual Permission Form.

¹Activity insurance is supplemental health insurance. *Basic Plan 1* automatically covers Girl Scout members and non-members, who are invited to participate, and are injured during a Girl Scout sponsored and supervised activity or trip. *Plan 3P – Accident plus Sickness* covers the same as Basic Plan 1 plus sickness, is optional, must be purchased separately, and is intended for extended, long-distance trips. *Plan 3PI – Accident plus Sickness for International Trips* coverage is required for trips outside of the USA and must be purchased separately. You can request Activity Insurance [HERE](#).

² An extended trip is defined as a trip lasting more than 3 days and 2 nights and requires *Extended Trip Application*.

³ Activities with Unusual Risk may include (but are not limited to) skating, water activities, horseback riding, and more. Most activities involving over two feet of water require a certified lifeguard and watchers. Examples: wading in a creek, fishing, swimming in the hotel pool or at a leader's house, etc. Specific water activities may have other requirements. See *Safety Activity Checkpoints* and verify with location if they provide certified lifeguards.

⁴ Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer in any group be First-Aid/CPR certified. Activities can take place in a variety of locations, which is why first-aid requirements are based on the nature and remoteness of the activity- as noted in the *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for that activity.

Transporting Girls

How parents decide to transport Girl Scouts 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, in which a group will be transported in privately owned vehicles, arrange qualified drivers, and ensure:

- Every driver must be a registered, background checked member (approved adult volunteer) at least 21 years old, and have a safe driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle and meets council standards and policies for driving and transporting girls.
- Girl Scout youth members never drive other members to, from or during activities or field trips.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, registered background checked members (approved adult volunteers) in the vehicle, one of whom is female.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, registered background checked members (approved adult volunteers), one of whom is female.

Plan for Safe Driving

- Review and implement the standards in the **Checklist for Drivers**, later in this section.
- Share the Checklist for Drivers with all drivers, in advance.
- Build possible delays into your schedule. Allowing time for traffic or other delays will help prevent urgency and stress, which can be dangerous when driving.
- Provide directions for each vehicle.
- For driving trips of more than a few hours, plan a stop where all cars can meet and gather. This will avoid having drivers follow too closely or worry about being separated from the group.
- Anticipate stops every couple of hours, for drivers to rest and refresh. Let drivers know they can stop more often, if needed.
- Arrange for relief drivers if drive time will last 6 hours or more.
- In each vehicle, there should be a first aid kit, and the permission and health history forms for each person in that car.

Borrowing or Renting Vehicles

When borrowing or renting vehicles, drivers may rent cars or minivans in their own names, without council staff signature. Make sure the car is adequately insured; consult the driver's auto insurance company. Know who is responsible for damage to, or loss of, the vehicle. Be sure the vehicle is used only for Girl Scout purposes, as non-related use can compromise coverage.

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

- Even though written agreements are always required when renting or chartering, you are *not* authorized to sign an agreement or contract, **except for rental car agreements**, even if there is no cost associated with the rental. Such agreements must instead be signed by the person designated by GSSI.

- Check with the council to make sure you are following accepted practices when using private transportation. This ensures that both you and GSSI are protected by liability insurance in the event of an accident.
- If GSSI has given permission to use a rented car, 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.

Chartered Vehicles & School Buses

Chartered vehicles, such as buses, are contracted, usually with the driver or operator, for a group's exclusive use. Volunteers may not sign contracts for charters, even if there is no cost. A **Special Activity Application** must be submitted to GSSI for approval and of chartering vehicles.

Procedure for Chartering a Bus

Notify GSSI that you would like to hire a bus. You and GSSI will follow these procedures:

- Check on the safety and maintenance practices of the company.
- Check the current year's insurance information is on file for the company or owner.
- If the information is on file and current (Certificate of Insurance still valid and inspection time limit still valid), proceed with making final arrangements for the trip after council endorsement.
- If there is no information on file, GSSI will contact the company.
- When the requested information arrives, GSSI will place it in the insurance file.
- GSSI will notify your group to proceed with final arrangements for the trip.
- Before boarding chartered transportation, the adult in charge must verify with the driver that the vehicle(s) were inspected on the day of departure.

School Buses

- School bus use is allowed though certain guidelines must be met. Contact GSSI for assistance in identifying possible providers.
- Provider must have \$5,000,000 of liability insurance.
- Insurance carried by a school district does not always apply to the use of a bus by outside groups or for travel outside the school district.
- Additional primary insurance may need to be purchased to cover a bus used by Girl Scouts.
- The driver must be experienced, have worker's compensation, and be properly licensed.
- The bus must meet state and federal safety standards.
- There may be no real cost savings over a charter bus.

Taxis & Ride-Sharing Services

Taxis and Ride-Sharing Services including Uber and Lyft, may be used with these guidelines:

- **An adult should ride in each vehicle** with Girl Scout members when multiple vehicles are being used.
- **Wait for your ride in a safe place.** For taxis, when possible, call (or ask your hotel to call), rather than hailing from the street. Use a taxi stand at airports. Stand away from traffic while waiting.
- **For taxis**, check that the taxi is appropriately marked.
- **For ride-sharing services:**
 - Check that the vehicle's license plate, make and model match what is shown in the app.
 - Compare the app's photo with the driver. Ask for their name and be sure it matches the app.
 - Ask, "who are you here to pick up?" They should have your first name, but no other information about you.
- **If you feel uncomfortable for any reason, do not get in the vehicle.** If you become uncomfortable, end the ride. Report your experience to the taxi service or ride-sharing app.
- **Send your in-town trip contact the name of the driver and your destination.** Most apps have a sharing feature for this purpose.
- **Do not share information about the group or where you are staying to any strangers.**
- **Each passenger must wear a seat belt.**
- **Enter and exit curbside.**
- **In foreign countries**, consult a local expert about how best to call for taxis or rides. Reputable practices vary.

Recreational Vehicles, Campers, & Trailers

Whether privately-owned or rented--may be used if the driver has the appropriate training and license for the vehicle. Passengers must use seat belts when the vehicle is in motion and may not ride in a trailer or in the bed of a truck.

Commercial & Common-Carrier Transportation

This type of transportation is available to the general public. They include buses, trains, airlines, ferries, and similar modes of transportation. In the United States, these are regulated and can be considered safe. Girls can compare fares and schedules and make decisions with adult support.

International Transportation

Consider the transportation options available in the host country and determine safety and accessibility specific to the location.

Vans Designated for 15 Passengers

Volunteers are not encouraged to operate 15 passenger vans as the design of the vehicles makes them inherently unsafe for the average non-professional driver. For atypical circumstances, when another option is impossible, make sure to follow this checklist before driving Girl Scout members in a van designed for 15 passengers:

- Prior council approval must be obtained.
- The van was built in 2013 or later.
- Driver assistance technology has been installed.
- Insurance is valid. Check with the auto insurance company to confirm.
- All other safety measures are in place; see the Checklist for Drivers below.
- No gear is loaded on top, or heavy gear in the back of the van.
- The driver has the appropriate license in the state(s) where the van will be driven. This type of van may need a commercial driver's license.

Note: you must check with GSSI to determine specific rules about renting large vehicles. In most cases, GSUSA and GSSI do not allow the use of 15-passenger vans to transport girls.

These rules do not apply to commercial or professionally operated services such as airport shuttles. Professionally operated commercial vans designed for 15 passengers are permitted.

Checklist for Drivers

When driving a car, RV, or camper, take the following precautions and ask all other drivers to do the same:

- Ensure all drivers are volunteers at least 21 years old.
- Only adult volunteers transport Girl Scout members.
- Never transport Girl Scout members in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer.
- Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first aid kit and a flashlight.
- Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns, and fluid levels before each trip, and recheck them periodically on long trips.
- Load gear appropriately. Heavy objects and luggage can affect vehicle stability and handling. Avoid overloading, especially on the top or back of any vehicle.
- Keep all necessary papers up to date including, but not limited to, your driver's license, vehicle registration, any state or local inspections, and insurance coverage.
- Wear seat belts and insist that all passengers do the same. Each person must have their own, fixed seatbelt.
- Girl Scout members under 12 must ride in the back seats. Use car seats and boosters as required by your state.
- Follow the best driving safety practices:
 - keep at least a two-car-length distance between you and the car ahead of you,
 - do not talk or text on a cell phone or other device,
 - do not use ear buds or headphones, and
 - turn your lights on when your windshield wipers are on.

- Know what to do in case of a breakdown or accident. It is smart to have reflectors, a flashlight, a few tools, and a good spare tire.
- Take time to familiarize yourself with any new or rented vehicle.
- Take a break when you need it. The volunteer in charge of your trip will plan occasional stops, but it is ok to pull over to a safe place whenever you are too tired to continue. Relief drivers are planned for long drives.
- Do NOT drive when you are tired or taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- All drivers must complete GSSI's **Vehicle Information Form** and adhere to the "Safe Driver Pledge".

Checklist for Girls

Girls need to adhere to the following checklist when being transported. You may decide to create a contract listing the following items, which girls sign before leaving on any trip. Girls will:

- Follow all rules and instructions for this trip.
- Assist with reading signs and maps, when asked.
- Keep seat belts fastened at all times.
- Refrain from arguing, yelling, and throwing things.
- Play games or listen to music quietly with other passengers, being considerate of the driver and other passengers.
- Stay with the group during stops.
- Alert your driver and an adult volunteer about a missing buddy, an obstacle, an open door, etc.

Additional Information

Tips for Girls Traveling Alone

If a Girl Scout Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador will be traveling alone during any part of a trip, use the opportunity to help her feel comfortable with and capable of being on her own. Always talk first with her parents to assess her maturity and ability to handle herself and have them complete an emergency form. If she is flying, discuss the possibility of booking a nonstop flight to make her trip less stressful, and ask parents to consider contacting the airline, which can make special arrangements for any unaccompanied minor. With the girl herself, develop a trip plan, discuss security and safety, and talk about avoiding excess communication with strangers, **not** wearing a nametag, and avoiding exposing money or other items that are attractive to pickpockets.

Travel Security and Safety Tip

Share these safety tips with girls before you leave on any trip that involves a stay at a hotel, motel, hostel, or dormitory:

- Always lock the door behind you, using the deadbolt and the chain or anchor.
- Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff claims to be at the door, call the front desk to confirm.
- Don't mention or display your room number when in the presence of strangers.

- Never leave jewelry, cameras, electronics, cash, or credit cards in your room.
- Never leave luggage unattended in the hotel lobby (or in an airport or train or bus station).
- When arriving at the hotel, locate the emergency exits.
- Keep a small flashlight on your bedside table, along with a small bag with your room key, wallet, passport, and cell phone. Take these with you if you must leave the room in an emergency.
- If a fire alarm goes off, get out as quickly as possible. Don't stop to pack your suitcase.
- In case of a fire, before leaving your room, feel the door: If it is warm, do not open it. Stay in your room and stuff towels around the door. Call the hotel operator immediately. If the door is cool, proceed slowly out the door, looking for flames or smoke. Repeat these instructions for any door you encounter.
- Contact the front desk to make sure girls' rooms are cleared of any minibars or refrigerators. Also be sure the hotel doesn't provide access to inappropriate movies on TVs.

Financing Your Trip

Refer to Money-Earning Basics in **GSSI's New Leader Guide 2023-2024** under **Volunteer Resource Guides** for more information on financing your trip. Remember to complete an **Application for Money Earning** for earning money and to include and **Extended Trip Itinerary and Budget** when completing your **Special Activities Application** all found on our website www.girlscouts-gssi.org.

In the Event of an Emergency

- Call for appropriate help (911, police, fire or medical). Always notify police about motor vehicle accidents, serious accidents, or fatalities.
- Administer first aid.
- During business hours, Mon-Fri, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm CST, call 812-421-4970. After business hours, call 812-484-6806.
- Council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance at the scene, if needed, and will notify parents/guardians as appropriate.
- Move non-injured persons away from the scene as appropriate. Keep other girls safe and occupied.
- Assign a responsible adult to remain at the scene.
- Permit no one to disturb victim or surroundings until appropriate authority assumes responsibility.
- Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, your council, and authorities.
- If alerting parents/guardians of a situation, updates, pickups, or program changes due to an incident, utilize the off-site adult designated with Activity Roster to make calls while the on-site adults handle the immediate situation.
- Media: Do not notify or make statements to them. Refer all inquiries to Girl Scouts of Southwest Indiana council.
- Submit an **Incident Report** form according to the instructions on the form to GSSI within 24 hours.