

## Returning to In-Person Troop Meetings and Activities COVID-19 Guidance for Volunteers

Updated 3/1/2022

Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas may modify this guidance from time to time as circumstances change.

COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community. Take all reasonable precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, volunteers, and families.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to change as infection rates rise and fall in different areas. There may be regional differences or developments since this guidance was published. Continue to follow local and [national](#) directives. Discuss plans with families.

**Pre-screening and Symptoms Check.** Prior to in-person troop meetings and activities, all participants should be screened to ensure they are healthy and that they have had not experienced symptoms that are associated with COVID-19 in the previous 72 hours, that they have not knowingly been in contact with someone that has exhibited symptoms or has been confirmed positive with COVID-19 and that they have not been to high risk geographical regions particularly those regions that require a 10-day quarantine period.

Troop Leaders should retain the Attendee Covid-19 Pre-Screening Questionnaire prior to each meeting.

Each parent must also fill out the GSGST Event/ Meeting/ Overnight Waiver of Liability form before participating in in-person Girl Scout events: <https://form.jotform.com/210974502260146>

### **Troop Meeting Space.**

Get advance permission from the property owner or the jurisdiction that provides the location.

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

- Is the space cleaned, and touch surfaces (i.e., tabletops, light switches, chairs, etc.) sanitized, at least daily?
- 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, consider whether you can supplement any practices that are less ideal. For example, if you will arrive after another user group, plan to bring sanitizing wipes to get the space ready for your troop. Another example: if faucets are manual, take some time to show girls how to shut them off with a paper towel. Use paper towels for doorknobs whenever possible.

**Troop Meetings in the home.** GSUSA suggests no meetings in the home out of concern that there would be greater risk of exposure to other family members. The recommendation is to stay away from in-home meetings.

**Troop Meeting Size.** [Check your local restrictions](#) for small gatherings. If more restrictive, follow the local restriction. Restrictions vary greatly from state to state, county to county, and even from town to town--and frequently change.

**Transportation.** GSGST cautions that parents should be very careful with carpool decisions. Individual parent/household drop-off and pick-up are encouraged.

**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 do so. GSUSA recommends maintaining a virtual to in-person ratio of at least 20/80, which means to maintain virtual troop meetings at least 20% of the time to keep tech skills and virtual meeting habits fresh. Use the Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Meetings, to guide your meeting plans: [Virtual Troop Meetings](#). [GSGST Virtual Events](#)

Other helpful resources can be found here: [www.gsgst.org](http://www.gsgst.org)

**Day trips and activities.** In conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints, follow the same guidance as Troop Meetings and Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance in this document. 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 wipe down equipment in between uses, similar to equipment at the gym. Make whatever appropriate accommodations that are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

### **Travel and overnight stays.**

Contact your council for prior approval before planning any overnight stays and follow guidance in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

[GSGST Trip & Overnight Form](#)

**Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation.** Follow the resources developed by credible public health sources such as [CDC](#) or your local public health department. Share these with girls and volunteers and ensure that they are practiced during meetings and activities. Place signs in the meeting or activity space to remind girls and volunteers to engage in everyday [preventive](#) actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Signs 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.
- Volunteers, girls and parents should be reminded to make sure temperatures are taken prior to group interaction to confirm the individual is not running a fever and temperature is 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.

**First Aid Supplies.** Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items including hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), tissues, disposable facemasks, and disinfectants. Trash baskets or bags should be supplied for meeting and activity spaces, if not already available. Make sure that the trash baskets (or bags) are easily accessible for girls. Disposable or no-contact thermometers may be added to supplies if available and not cost-prohibitive, however, parents should be checking temperatures and allowing their girl(s) to join group activities only when temperatures are normal.

**First Aid / CPR Training.** Keep skills up-to-date for any emergency. First Aid/CPR/AED

<https://www.redcross.org/>

<https://www.heart.org/>

**Disinfectants and Disinfecting.** [Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces](#) and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., table tops, 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 (1/3<sup>rd</sup> 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.**

Face Coverings/Masks are required in groups where there is an individual with a medical need or a high-risk individual. Our Girl Scout Promise drives us to provide experiences where *all* girls are confident they belong. With this, we ask that members of a group in this situation help support these members and wear a mask for the duration of the activity. Participants are expected to recognize that due to confidentiality, the details for the requirement of masks in the troop/group will not be publicly shared. Mask status may change.

### **Event coordinators, troop leaders, program partners/vendors, and Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas may still make the decision to require masks for specific activities.**

When participating in Girl Scout activities, Girl Scout troops must wear masks for indoor activities or meetings if their local school district requires masks indoors.

Members must follow the recommended and required mask and safety guidelines of program partners/vendors when participating in program partner/vendor programming.

**Reporting and communicating a positive COVID 19 test.** In the event of a COVID-19 positive test result, do NOT contact the parents or troop members. Promptly contact your council in this situation. A **council staff member** and NOT volunteers, will be responsible for:

- Confirming and tracing the positive tester,
- Contacting the parents of anyone who may have been exposed (or other volunteers),
- Notifying a facility or homeowner where a troop has met, and
- Alerting the state department of health.

**Let other volunteers know that council staff, NOT volunteers,** will notify parents and others about a positive test result and that the **tester's identity is confidential**. Remember that girl and volunteer health information is private and strictly confidential and should be only shared on a need to know basis with a council staff member.