

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

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.

Use these questions and reminders to help decide how and when to return to troop activities.

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 14-day quarantine period.

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

Each Troop must also email GSGST a completed and signed Release & Waiver form for each member attending in-person meetings and/or activities. Forms should be emailed to info@gsgst.org.

Troop Meeting Space. Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained are strongly recommended for meetings. 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.

Meetings may not be held in fitness centers or gyms, where a greater risk for contracting the virus may exist. Schools or churches may not permit outside groups on premises, so always check and confirm ahead of time.

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. The current suggested maximum is ten people (eight girls and two unrelated adult volunteers). However, [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. If a state allows more than ten to gather, utilize all social distancing practices and follow all preventative guidance (such as face coverings). Get clearance from your council before planning any gatherings of more than ten people.

If you have a large troop, stay connected while you wait for a safe time for everyone to gather. Large troops are wonderful, so stay together! Some ideas:

- Host virtual troop meetings (see below).
- Gather up in smaller groups—such as age-level groups, patrols, or groups of girls with a particular badge they'd like to work on.

Transportation. Individual parents drop off and pick up their own girls from meetings. Carpooling and public transportation should be avoided, where possible, to maintain social distancing.

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

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. Overnight trips are not permitted until after the home state is successfully past Phase 3 of its re-opening process. The State of Texas is currently in Phase 3 and has NOT successfully reopened. The timeframes will vary from state to state and even from county to county in some cases. As always, 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.

Personal contact. Hugs, handshakes, “high-fives,” and even activities like the friendship circle or squeeze can transmit COVID-19 from person to person. Refrain from these gestures for the time being. Create a safe way for girls and volunteers to greet and end meetings instead (like tapping elbows).

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 (1/3rd 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. Volunteers should remind girls that Girl Scouts wear face coverings (masks) not only to protect themselves but to protect others. Face coverings are a civic responsibility and a sign of caring for the community. Girls can bring their own face coverings. Have disposable masks on hand for those who need them. Volunteers can teach girls [how to handle their face coverings](#) so that the coverings are effective. Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks, due to medical conditions such as asthma. Contact your council for guidance on how best to handle these exceptional circumstances as they arise.

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.

MINIMUM STANDARD HEALTH PROTOCOLS



CHECKLIST FOR ALL YOUTH CLUB PARTICIPANTS

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All individuals age 10 and older must wear a face covering (over the nose and mouth) wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another individual not in the same household or, for those engaging in physical activities outdoors, wherever the individual is not able to maintain a safe physical distance from others not in the same household.

The following are the minimum recommended health protocols for all individuals participating in youth clubs, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, TOP Teens (of TOP Ladies of Distinction), FFA, and Girls Inc., in Texas. These minimum health protocols are not a limit on the health protocols that individuals may adopt. Individuals are encouraged to adopt additional protocols consistent with their specific needs and circumstances to help protect the health and safety of all Texans.

The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in these protocols, all of which facilitate a safe and measured reopening of Texas. The virus that causes COVID-19 is still circulating in our communities. We should continue to observe practices that protect everyone, including those who are most vulnerable.

Please note, public health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. Individuals should stay informed and take actions based on common sense and wise judgment that will protect health and support economic revitalization.

Health protocols for individuals:

- Individuals may not be in a group larger than 10 individuals. Within these groups, individuals should, to the extent possible, minimize in-person contact with others not in the individual's household. Minimizing in-person contact includes maintaining 6 feet of separation from individuals. When maintaining 6 feet of separation is not feasible, other methods should be utilized to slow the spread of COVID-19, such as washing or sanitizing hand frequently, and avoiding sharing utensils or other common objects.
- Self-screen before going into the youth club meeting for any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:

<input type="checkbox"/> Cough	<input type="checkbox"/> Sore throat
<input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of taste or smell
<input type="checkbox"/> Chills	<input type="checkbox"/> Diarrhea
<input type="checkbox"/> Repeated shaking with chills	<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
<input type="checkbox"/> Muscle pain	<input type="checkbox"/> Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19
<input type="checkbox"/> Headache	
- Wash or disinfect hands upon entering a business and after any interaction with employees, volunteers, contractors, participants, or items in the facility.
- Individuals aged 65 or older are at a higher risk of COVID-19. To the extent possible, avoid being within 6 feet with individuals aged 65 and older. Individuals aged 65 and older should stay at home as much as possible.**
- Carry hand sanitizer, and use it regularly while at the youth club meeting, especially after contact with individuals outside the household.