

# GIRL SCOUTS OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE MALE PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Today there are many adult men involved in Girl Scouting. They serve in many capacities from board members to employees to volunteers, at both the national and local council level. Men also are volunteering more in the troop setting. These are some volunteer positions suitable for men: co-leader, troop committee member, troop cookie manager and designated camping parent.

Many Girl Scout activities can create opportunities for male mentors (fathers, grandfathers, uncles, etc.) and girls to spend time together. But, there are challenges to male participation in an all girl organization. Men have a place in Girl Scouts, but should not replace the leading role of women in Girl Scouting. Men can add value to the Girl Scout experience and can work with girls in a capacity that helps girls to grow. It is important to create fun and educational ways for girls to spend more time with the important men in their lives without creating an awkward situation. It takes a lot of cooperation and understanding on everyone's part to ensure a positive experience for everyone involved.

## **USE THESE GUIDELINES WHEN AT MEETINGS AND/OR GATHERINGS:**

- Men should never be alone with the girls.
- Men need to be in the company of an adult female (who is not their spouse) at all times.

The presence of a man (or men) when you're participating in an overnight event requires careful planning. There are some simple rules that must be followed that will make both male and female, young and mature feel more comfortable while protecting everyone. Keep in mind that there should always be two adult females present at all times. Not only is this a safety factor in case of emergency, but it protects an adult from being wrongly accused of abuse and ensures that the girls are safe.

## **USE THESE GUIDELINES WHEN YOU'RE PARTICIPATING IN AN OVERNIGHT EVENT:**

- If a male (or males) will be attending an overnight event, inform both the girls and their parents at the onset of planning. Discuss the male participation guidelines with everyone involved.
- You must notify the camp reservation specialist of any male participants when making a reservation for a campsite through the Council.
- When tent camping, males need to sleep in a separate, male-only tent. Adult females also must sleep in a tent designated for them and not sleep in the tents with the girls.
- If no tent is available, the male must sleep in an automobile or separate himself as far as possible from the females.
- Always wear appropriate clothing when sleeping. This is true for girls and adult females as well as males. What's good at home may be totally inappropriate at camp.
- When changing clothes, men must use a male designated bathroom.
- Males must use a separate bathroom facility. (If you're at Camp Sycamore Hills, there is a men's bathroom/shower available in the main showerhouse near the pool.)
- Remember that males need privacy as much as girls and adult females. If you talk with the girls and set some ground rules in advance, it will save everyone from being embarrassed or upset when you reach camp.
- At no time is a girl to be left in the company of one adult, male or female, but this is especially important for men. This is for the adult's protection as well as the girls'. Safety is always the best course to follow. This does not mean that anyone thinks that the men are going to harm the girls, however, all it takes is one accusation (even an innocent one) to destroy a person's life, girl or adult.
- Males must always be accompanied by a female adult who is not their spouse. Males don't need this chaperone when they're sleeping. A male cannot sleep in a tent with his spouse.
- Boys under 18 years of age (aka tag-alongs) cannot camp with the troop under any circumstances. Girls under 18 years of age who are not registered Girl Scouts (also considered tag-alongs) cannot camp with the troop.
- Insurance needs to be purchased for any adult (male or female) who is not a registered Girl Scout. Contact the Council's customer service center to purchase this insurance for additional adult participants.
- Remember the girls' feelings are always to be considered first!

These rules are meant to keep everyone safe. The goal is to make everyone comfortable with the situation. Remember that a man is the minority in this case and is going to feel somewhat out of place. Use good sense when traveling with males and you will have a pleasant trip with your girls!