

## GUIDE FOR TRAVELING TROOPS

This booklet, Volunteer Essentials, Safety Activity Checkpoints, and the Intent to Travel Packet will help you plan a successful trip. The timeline below outlines key steps in your trip planning which **MUST** be met for your trip to be approved by Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee (GSMIDTN). Remember, trips which are **NOT** approved **MAY NOT BE** covered by Girl Scout Insurance.

- Read Volunteer Essentials, Appendix: For Travel Volunteers
- Refer to appropriate Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Complete the Intent to Travel Packet

### TRIPS IN THE GIRL SCOUTING PROGRAM

#### What is a trip in Girl Scouting?

- A means through which Girl Scouts can experience the fun, learning and adventure of Girl Scouting.
- A method of enriching on-going troop programs.
- A method of teaching Girl Scouts the skills of planning, budgeting, and evaluation in progressive steps.

Every trip should have a purpose. A trip without a purpose is not quality Girl Scout program. For a troop of young Girl Scouts or a troop inexperienced in planning trips the purpose might be as elementary as “to ride a train”, “to explore the museum” or “to spend time outdoors”. For an older, experienced troop the purpose might be to “to explore the history of our country at a minimum cost” or “to put into practice the camping skills we have learned.”

**The important thing to remember is that any group can take a trip. A Girl Scout trip is a learning experience. *Every trip can help teach Girl Scouts just a little bit more about the skills they will use for life.***

### CHECK LIST for QUALITY TRIP PROGRAMMING

- ☐ The trip incorporates the values, benefits, and outcomes of the Girl Scout Program such as: Girl Scouts learn something about getting along with others, they learn about sharing and compromise, they learn to behave thoughtfully, they learn from prior experiences. The trip corresponds with on-going program: It relates to activities you are already doing; Girl Scouts can apply what they have learned; the trip has an identified purpose.
- ☐ Girl Scouts are involved in the planning: Girl Scouts have some input into where you go, why you are going and what you will do when you get there.
- ☐ Girl Scouts learn something from the process: How to pack, how to take care of themselves, how to take care of their belongings, how to work as a team, how to budget, how to make reservations.
- ☐ Girl Scouts learn something from the trip itself: How to cook over a fire, the significance of a historical area, how to ride a horse.

## CHECK LIST for QUALITY TRIP PROGRAMMING, CONT.

- ☐ Outcomes are important to parents and including progress on them is an important reminder of why Girl Scouts should stay in Girl Scouts. These are the five benefits we promise Girl Scouts.
  1. **Sense of Self:** Girl Scouts have confidence in themselves and their abilities and form positive identities.
  2. **Positive Values:** Girl Scouts act ethically, honestly, responsibly, and how concern for others.
  3. **Healthy Relationships:** Girl Scouts develop and maintain healthy relations by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.
  4. **Challenge Seeking:** Girl Scouts learn to take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail and learn from mistakes.
  5. **Community Problem Solving:** Girl Scouts desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community and create “action plans” to solve them.

## PROGRESSION and READINESS

Trips in Girl Scouting should follow a progression which helps ensure that Girl Scouts are fully prepared for their big adventures. There are lots of things to consider including:

- Age of the Girl Scouts
- Time
- Money
- Prior trip experience

Please refer to [The Progression of Trips](#) and Progression By Grade Level in Volunteer Essentials. Remember that approval may not be granted to those trips which do NOT meet the suggested progression guidelines. This will result in the troop leader being personally liable for injuries or illnesses that may occur on the trip, should they continue without council approval.

## ARE YOU READY?

The [Girl Scout/Troop Readiness Checklist](#) should be filled out for each girl. As Girl Scouts answer these questions, they begin the trip-planning process.

Look at your whole troop. Where are they in relation to these points? Remember, no group is perfect. There will be things you need to work on based on the assessment.

You may determine that you need to plan a shorter trip for your Girl Scouts now and save that longer ambitious trip for a few years down the road. Ongoing, long range trip planning, using a progression in the travel distance and complexity of the trip is a great retention tool. Girl Scout international travel for older Girl Scouts can be a unique, and often their only opportunity for first-hand international experiences.

## THE PARENT PARTNERSHIP

Involving parents can be the key to the success of your trip. Your troop should include parents in all stages of the trip process. Before you and your troop get too far into your trip plans, you need to be sure that the parents approve of the trip and will support the Girl Scouts' efforts. Since your trip may require a significant commitment, it is crucial to get the Girl Scouts parents on board. Schedule a parent meeting, require all families to send at least one parent and cover the following:

- Where, when, and how of the trip
- Girl readiness
- Benefits of the trip, how the trip fits into the Girl Scout Program, and outcomes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience
- Leader and girl preparation
- Trip cost estimate
- Money earning
- Planning time frame
- Leaders' expectations of parents:
  - Long term commitment
  - Ideas and HELP with money earning activities.
  - Support for their Girl Scout's participation in planning sessions and money earning projects
  - Chaperones, if needed (see adult participation guidelines in *Volunteer Essentials*)
  - Time for parent questions and concerns
  - Set up a communication system to keep parents up to date

If you have planned a good trip, you may discover that all the parents want to go too. Try to discourage this. The purpose of the trip should be to allow your Girl Scouts to grow and develop their independence. If everyone's family goes, this just becomes large group family trip. If you think you need this many adults, you may need to reevaluate your troops readiness.

## GIRL SCOUT/GROUP READINESS CHECKLIST

It is important to measure the readiness of the group and the individuals before you begin planning the trip. Have the members of the trip group complete this checklist.

Readiness Factors	NOT REALLY	SOME- TIMES	MOST OF THE TIME
Can stay away from home for length of trip.			
Does not need to call home each night.			
Can be comfortable with trip leader.			
Can handle being homesick.			
Is cooperative.			
Shows respect for others' ideas, choices, and thoughts.			
Is willing to share.			
Can be a follower as well as a leader.			
Is willing to learn.			
Shows interest in new and different things.			
Wants to find out about places to be visited.			
Can be responsible.			
Can work by herself when asked.			
Does not always have to be told what to do (can take initiative)			
Can act in a manner appropriate to the situation.			
Can commit to the planning time and the number of Money-Earning projects necessary.			
Has a sense of humor.			
Is sensitive to others' moods and her own.			
Is friendly.			
Lives by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.			
Is in good health.			

## PLANNING YOUR TRIP

Working together as a group is very important in planning an extended trip. The troop needs to discuss and make decisions about goals for the trip. The troop will benefit greatly from activities that increase their ability to work together. Remember the Girl Scouts will be more excited about the trip if they do most of the planning. Include the following items in your Trip Planning Checklist.

The answers to these questions start the trip planning process. From there you can progress to making more detailed decisions.

- Why are we going?
- Where will we go?
- When will we go?
- How will we get there?
- What will we do there?
- How much will it cost?

## WHY ARE WE GOING?

A trip is a chance to broaden the Girl Scouts' horizons and learn about different people. While a trip should be fun, it should also fit into your ongoing troop program goals.

- The trip should incorporate the values, benefits, and outcomes of the Girl Scout Program
- The trip should relate to activities you are already doing and allow Girl Scouts to use skills they have learned
- The Girl Scouts are key planners of the trip
- The Girl Scouts learn from the planning process
- The Girl Scouts learn from the trip itself

## WHERE ARE WE GOING? WHEN WILL WE GO?

The following resources could be useful:

- The Library: You can look at travel books, out of town newspapers and magazines to get ideas
- Local Chamber of Commerce or Visitors Bureau: Have the Girl Scouts write to them and get visitor information
- The Internet: With adult supervision and after signing the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge <http://www.girlscouts.org/en/help/help/internet-safety-pledge.html>, you can look up your destination on the Internet
  - If you don't have an excellent filtering system, it might be best to look up the sites and bookmark them for your Girl Scouts in advance
- Travel Agencies/Tour Groups: If your trip will require complicated arrangements or air travel, you may want to work with a travel agency to help you plan
  - Make sure you understand any fees charged by the agency for their help
  - Consider having the Girl Scouts invite one of their representatives to a troop meeting to discuss trip planning as it relates to their services

Once you have gathered the data, your next step should be narrowing down your choice. One helpful way to start is to look at the costs involved. While your Seniors and Ambassadors may be looking at trips to either Los Angeles or Atlanta, once they see the costs they can decide if they want to make the extra commitment to Los Angeles. Make sure all the Girl Scouts are involved in picking your destination and that everyone gets a vote!

## SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Many Girl Scout of Middle Tennessee troops visit Savannah, Georgia, the Birthplace of Juliette Gordon Low. If you have not already done so, you must make arrangements to visit the Birthplace at least a year in advance.

The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace Girl Scouts of the USA

10 East Oglethorpe Avenue

Savannah, GA 31401-3707

Phone: (912) 233-4501 Fax: (912) 233-4659

<http://www.juliettegordonlowbirthplace.org/>

## WHAT WILL WE DO THERE?

Once you have made your preliminary plan above, it is time to start making detailed plans. This is a good time to help the Girl Scouts use this trip to learn new things.

As you plan your trip activities, please be sure to refer to *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for your activities. If your trip will involve activities that require special training or certifications, you need to start early!

Include the following in your detail planning:

- What can we see and do at our destination?
- How much time will we need?
- What are the costs associated with the things we want to do?
- Check to make sure the places you want to visit will be open during your trip
- Prepare a tentative trip itinerary
  - Your troops final itinerary must be as detailed as possible; this helps the Girl Scouts learn how to develop an itinerary, as well as providing a point of reference for your emergency contact

## HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

Help your Girl Scouts develop a realistic budget, as you plan your costs, be sure to include the following:

**Transportation:** How will we get there? Be sure to include the costs of any charter or rental vehicle. Keep all costs in mind. For example, if you drive you must buy gas. How will we get around while we are there? If you are going to a city where you plan to use the subway, how much does that cost? Will you need to take taxis? If your trip will involve volunteer drivers, please have them read the Message to Volunteer Drivers form and sign the agreement on Transporting Girl Scouts. These forms are in the forms section of this manual.

- **Chartered Buses:** Check with GSMIDTN for more information on responsible transportation providers and give this list to travel volunteers during the planning stage. Be sure all chartered vehicles traveling on public roads are equipped with:
  - First-aid kits
  - Fire extinguishers
  - Emergency-warning reflectors
  - A cell phone or some other kind of communication device

## HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST? CONT.

**Sleeping:** Where will we stay? What options are there in our destination? Once you decide on a place figure out the total cost.

**Hotels:** Most hotels will only allow 4 or 5 in a room for fire safety reasons. *Safety Activity Checkpoints* states:

- Each participant has her own bed or sleeping space
- Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if Girl Scouts are to share a bed
- Sleep sacks are compact, lightweight, unfurl like a sleeping bag and easily slip into a suitcase when folded. Sleeping bags may also be used but take up more space.
- Adults and Girl Scouts never share a bed
- It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area with the Girl Scouts
- If an adult female does share the sleeping area, there should always be two unrelated adults present

**Food:** Attempt to set a realistic budget in this area. Think about the type of meals that you want to eat and do some research. Look at menus of comparable restaurants in your hometown and do online research by downloading menus. Is your budget realistic?

Food should be included in the money earning plans. Do not plan on Girl Scouts bringing money from home for this. What if one girl's parents can't give her enough money?

**Sightseeing/Activity Fees:** Many of the functions you want to do will have costs associated with them. Contact the locations and ask for the costs. Always ask if there are any group or Girl Scout group rates or discounts. If you are planning far in advance, be sure to include a little extra for price increases!

**Insurance Coverage:** Trips of three or more nights, or trips with certain types of activities may require additional coverage. A GSMIDTN staff member will be in touch once we receive final trip paperwork should your trip need insurance. For more information about insurance and costs refer to *Volunteer Essentials*.

**Emergency Money:** Include an extra amount in your budget for emergencies. If you don't need it, you can always find a way to spend it.

**Money Earning:** Your trip will probably cost more money than you have in your treasury when you start planning the trip. The major money-earning activities for your troop are the Fall Product and Cookie programs. For more information on money-earning projects, go to [www.gsmidtn.org](http://www.gsmidtn.org), Troop Resources. Should your troop decide they need additional funds, leaders must complete a Permission to Conduct a Money- Earning Project form in advance.

## HEALTH and SAFETY

Throughout the trip planning process, *Safety Activity Checkpoints* should be used as a resource. The following important checkpoints need to be included in the trip preparations.

### Training Requirements

A registered adult (troop leader, troop committee member, parent...) with the proper training must be present for the duration of the trip.

- Girl Scouting 101 and Youth Protection is required for all leaders
- First Aid CPR AED
- Outdoor Skills or online outdoor/overnight online training (Camp Prep, Camp Ready and Camp Information and Procedures)
- Specific Outdoor Training for advanced outdoor adventure trips such as back packing.

### HEALTH

- **Girl and Adult Health History Form** (found at [www.gsmidt.org](http://www.gsmidt.org))
- **Medical Examination:** A medical examination is completed for trips lasting more than three nights. The examination is completed by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, or registered nurse within the preceding 24 months unless a health issue is present.
- First Aid Kit
- **Medications** (The leader should be aware of all medications the Girl Scouts take on a regular basis and all medications should be given to an adult for the duration of the trip)

### Dealing with illness or accidents

Before leaving on the trip, the group leaders need to have a plan in the event an emergency should require hospitalization or the return of a participant to their home. In such a case, the parent should be contacted immediately, and the parent should work with the leader to determine the action to be followed. Be prepared to deal with diarrhea, constipation, colds, blisters, stomachaches, etc. *If you plan to use over the counter medications for these, you **MUST have written parental approval in advance!*** If a group member has a minor accident, take care of the injury immediately. Contact the parent and make a joint decision on any further actions. For more information on emergency procedures refer to *Volunteer Essentials*.

### Special Health Considerations

The designated first aider needs to be aware of each participant's health status. If one of your Girl Scouts has a health condition which requires special consideration, be sure that the first aider has a clear understanding of the participant's health status.

If Girl Scouts are taking medication, the first aider should make the decision about who will be designated to dispense the medication. All medications should be kept in its original bottle.



## **SAFETY**

### **Security precautions**

Traveling as a Girl Scout group has many advantages. People recognize and treat Girl Scouts with respect. However, there are some things that should be done to ensure the safety of the group:

- Conduct yourself appropriately
- Use the buddy system
- Know where all group members are always, including which Girl Scouts/ adults are in which vehicles, which room numbers and other trip details
- Do NOT give out names, phone numbers or lodging information
- Do NOT wear name tags or other personal identification in public places
- Find the fire exits in your lodging
- When going to theme parks or other venues with large numbers of people in attendance, review the following Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Adventure and Theme Parks
- Parades and Large Group Gatherings
- Have a plan in case you get separated

### **Emergency Contact System**

Your troop should have an emergency contact system. One or two adults should be designated as the primary contact person. It is their responsibility to notify other parents when necessary. The contact persons should be kept informed of your status throughout the trip. On long trips, be sure to check in with your contact person. Keep this person informed of where you are and any changes to your itinerary.

All parents and the Girl Scout office must have a copy of a detailed trip itinerary. This itinerary should include the names, addresses, and phone numbers where the group will be staying. Be sure to get the direct line, which can be used to contact the Girl Scouts. Do not give out the 1-800 reservation numbers as this number cannot normally be used for making direct contact with the property.

## ORGANIZING YOUR INFORMATION

The key is keeping your information organized and accessible. A good method is a notebook with tab dividers. The following are suggested tabs for your notebook:

Roster Section: List all troop members (Girl Scouts and adults) on a chart like the Troop/Group Attendance Record found on the GSMIDTN website. Across the top, label everything they will need to turn in and mark items off as received. (Permission slips, health forms, etc.)

List of “necessary details” that can be checked off as you complete them. (Turn in Intent to Travel Packet, make reservations, etc.)

Payment Schedule Section: Include a copy of the detailed trip budget here. Also, if the trip is costly, you may need to keep track of the money earning activities.

Parent Section: In this section, keep copies of all newsletters, notes to parents, signed permission slips etc. It is wise to have documentation of all precautions you have taken in case a problem arises.

Correspondence: Keep copies of any confirmations you receive.

Itinerary: Make a detailed itinerary. As you begin making final arrangements and confirmations there may be some minor changes in times, prices, etc. Make note of these changes and send them to the parents and to the Volunteer Travel Coordinator at the council office prior to your departure. It is vital that you develop a reasonable itinerary, share it with the council office and stick to it as much as possible. It is also vital that the council knows how to contact you in an emergency.

## GIRL SCOUT COURTESY

Call or write ahead to make reservations. Wherever you go, it is nice to let people know that a troop is coming, how many there will be, and what you would like to accomplish.

- If you must cancel or arrive late, call and let your destination know
- Be prompt. Arrive and depart on time
- Pay attention to your surroundings
- Keep noise to a minimum
- Ask permission touch fragile items or display items
- Remember that you are not the only guest at the facility
- Girl Scouts always leave a place cleaner than they found it
- Be sensitive to others’ needs, habits, and customs
- Teach Girl Scouts not to point or giggle when you see someone or something that looks different to you
- Remember always to say, “Thank you!”
- The Girl Scouts, their parent, and all adults participating in your trip should sign the girl or adult agreement located in the form section of this manual