

# **Troop Camping Guide**

**Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee**

**Revised 2023**

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## **Before you get started you should ask: Are we ready to go camping?**

### **As an adult supervisor, you should evaluate:**

- Are your girls ready for a campout? Are *you*?
- Is the camping trip long enough for the girls to really get something out of it, but not too long (based on experience)?
- Are you familiar with *Safety Activity Checkpoints* and Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee (GSMIDTN) policies?
- Do you know the GSMIDTN procedures for approval if you're not camping at a council property?
- Are you prepared to help individual girls develop their sense of responsibility for conserving the natural world?
- Are you able and willing to both help girls and families through this experience, and to answer family questions?
- What worries you about this trip? Do you know what resources are available to you to manage this worry and get answers to your questions?

### **Girls are emotionally ready for camp when:**

- They want to go!
- They can work as part of a group and get along (even when they disagree).
- They can share, play, and work with all members of the troop.
- They can and want to help plan the trip.
- They are willing to prepare for camp and follow directions while at camp.
- They understand how to make and follow a kaper chart.
- They can clean shared spaces (bathrooms, kitchens) and keep their own immediate area neat.
- They can adapt to unknowns such as: unfamiliar places (including community bathrooms), darkness (if no electricity), woods, insects, and other small creatures and night noises.
- They enjoy being outdoors and practice good outdoor manners (such as: Leave no Trace)
- They are not afraid to be away from home overnight, and their families are prepared to let them go.
- They can manage with little or no privacy in sleeping spaces (privacy is always expected for changing and bathroom areas).
- They can compromise.
- They can function without technology.
- They can (age-appropriately) follow written or verbal instructions.
- They can obey health and safety rules.

**Girls are physically ready for camp when:**

- They have stamina and doesn't tire easily
- They have strength, skills, and coordination for the activities they want to do.
- They are strong enough to carry their sleeping bag, personal gear, bucket of water, arm load of wood, etc.
- They can follow safety rules in the cooking area, and have the ability to use kitchen tools and can operate them safely.
- They know how to dress for camp and all weather conditions
- They have been on a series of day trips and cookouts

**Things to do throughout the year to know if your troop is ready:**

- Go on progressive hikes
- Have cookouts at troop meetings
- Know and practice outdoor skills
- Explore outdoor programs
- Girl Scout's Own programs focused on camping and nature
- Practice conservation and LNT principles
- Complete outdoor badge activities

## **Timelines and Requirements for Property Reservations**

There are some requirements and timelines you need to keep in mind before you plan to make any property reservations.

- Only troop leaders can make property reservations for troop camping
- Anyone making a property reservation, including troop leaders, must have signed their Property Liability Waiver in CouncilAlignMENT and have a registered, background checked adult on their troop roster with the following:
  - CPR/FA certification in their profile
  - Online Camping Skills OR Camp Ready training
  - Camping Skills 1 and 2 training OR Outdoor Skills Training

You should also keep in mind the following general property availability schedule:

- First (full) weekend of each month: Service Unit Events/Camporees
- Second weekend of each month: Council-sponsored programs and trainings
- Third weekend of each month: Troop Camping
- Fourth and Fifth weekends of each month: open for all depending on availability
- Camp Holloway and Camp Sycamore Hills are not available from the end of May – the beginning of August due to summer camp programming.

Does this schedule mean that you can never camp on a first or second weekend? Nope! It just means that these reservations have priority. If you see availability in CouncilAlignMENT even on a “non-troop camping weekend,” you can reserve the unit. It means that the property wasn’t reserved and it’s open for everyone.

Properties open for troop camping reservations 90 days in advance and popular months (September, October, March, April, May) fill quickly!

## **Quick Council Checklist:**

*Plan for these dates when you're organizing a troop camping trip at a GSMIDTN property. Failure to do so could result in you losing your reservation or being unable to request your activities.*

- Reserve your property (90 days or less)
- Pay deposit (when you reserve your property)
- Request activities (45 days or more)
- Final payments for unit and activities (30 days or more)
- Receive gate codes/information from property manager (the week of your trip)
- Head to bed (housing roster) to registrar/property manager (the week of your trip)
- Clean unit based on property checklists (before you leave property)
- Final Attendance and property survey (completed in CouncilALIGNMENT after your camping trip, REQUIRED to get deposit back)

## **Step 1: Choose your dates and reserve your camp property.**

When choosing your dates and camp property, there are several things to consider:

- How many people do you expect to attend?
- What activities are you hoping to do?
- Where are you located and what is easiest for your troop to access?
- Where have you been camping before?

Camp Holloway, Camp Sycamore Hills and Camp Piedmont each have varying accommodations and program spaces to hold troop camping. It is also possible to go troop camping at locations such as state parks, or other Girl Scouts camps in neighboring councils. While this guide focuses primarily on procedures used to reserve GSMIDTN properties, the same basic ideas can be applied to plan troop camping trips off GSMIDTN property troop camping trips.

For more information on each property, units, and amenities, please visit the GSMIDTN properties website: <https://gsmidtn.org/camps/>

In addition, if you plan to participate in Council-led adventure activities, be aware that some are only available in specific months and at specific properties. Activities are age-specific based on *Safety Activity Checkpoints*. For more information, visit our Adventures and Activities page here: <https://gsmidtn.org/programs/adventure-and-activities/>

### **Considerations when choosing your unit:**

- Adults and children *can* share sleeping spaces as long as those adults are female, they have been registered and background checked (this is required to attend a camporee if adults are monitoring girls for more than 6 hours) and there are *at least two unrelated* adults in each space. It is not required, though it is advised when possible, that girls and adults sleep in separate spaces.
- The more adults you have, the less space you have for girls, and often the less cohesive of a troop experience. Some troops restrict adults to those strictly needed for *Safety Activity Checkpoints* ratios. Others allow parents to come for the day but not stay at night.
- Adult men are welcome at camp! *However*, they must have their own sleeping and bathroom arrangements (either their own unit, or pitched tents), and cannot enter girl living spaces unescorted. If you'd like to bring a dad or uncle who is registered adult, please contact the Manager of Camp and Adventure Programs, the Council Registrar or a property manager to discuss possibilities.
- Tagalongs, or non-Girl Scout siblings, are not permitted at troop camping on GSMIDTN property. Siblings and tagalongs are permitted at state park or similar camping trips if all families agree and non-registered participants are insured.

**To reserve a property in CouncilAlignMENT, follow these steps:**

- Login to CouncilAlignMENT.
- Click “Property Reservations”
- Select “Make a New Reservation”
- Choose:
  - “Troop Camping”
  - Desired Property
  - Desired Dates
  - Reservation type (day-only, overnight, etc)
- You’ll see a screen like this:

| Date                     | Adventurer Tent - A Side | Adventurer Tent - B Side | Courage House | Grove's Cabin | Honor House   | Independence House | Inspiration Hall | Josephine's Lodge | Josephine's Commercial Kitchen | Sisterhood House | Trail Blazer Tent - A Side (ADA handicap accessible) | Trail Blazer Tent - B Side | Check All |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------|
| Thursday, April 20, 2023 | Check In Only            | Check In Only            | Check In Only | Check In Only | Check In Only | Check In Only      | Check In Only    | Check In Only     | Check In Only                  | Check In Only    | Check In Only  | Check In Only              |           |
| Friday, April 21, 2023   | Not Available            | Not Available            | Not Available | Not Available | Not Available | Not Available      | Not Available    | Not Available     | Not Available                  | Not Available    | Not Available  | Not Available              |           |
| Saturday, April 22, 2023 | Not Available            | Not Available            | Not Available | Not Available | Not Available | Not Available      | Not Available    | Not Available     | Not Available                  | Not Available    | Not Available  | Not Available              |           |
| Sunday, April 23, 2023   | Not Available            | Not Available            | Not Available | Not Available | Not Available | Not Available      | Not Available    | Not Available     | Not Available                  | Not Available    | Not Available  | Not Available              |           |
| Monday, April 24, 2023   | Check In Only            | Check In Only            | Check In Only | Check In Only | Check In Only | Check In Only      | Check In Only    | Check In Only     | Check In Only                  | Check In Only    | Check In Only  | Check In Only              |           |
| Tuesday, April 25, 2023  | Check In Only            | Check In Only            | Check In Only | Check In Only | Check In Only | Check In Only      | Check In Only    | Check In Only     | Check In Only                  | Check In Only    | Check In Only  | Check In Only              |           |

Choose the dates to check-in and check-out on and all dates in between. For example, if you want to stay a Friday – Sunday, click Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Once you’ve chosen your dates, you’ll see a screen like this:

Confirm Reservation

Confirmation

Reservation from 4/24/2023 3:01 PM to 4/26/2023 1:00 PM

| Units   | Total \$300.00 (Including Activities if applicable)                                       | Attendance                                    | Communication Methods  |
|---|---|---|--|
| This reservation is for 2 Overnight (Council Sponsored) reservations. |   |   |  |
| Adventurer Tent - A Side  | Fee: 25.00, Deposit: 25.00, Total Fee: 50.00, Total Deposit: 25.00, Total Amount: 75.00   | Incomplete                                    | <input type="button" value="Email"/><br><input type="button" value="Text"/><br><input type="button" value="Message Notification"/> |
| Adventurer Tent - B Side  | Fee: 25.00, Deposit: 25.00, Total Fee: 50.00, Total Deposit: 25.00, Total Amount: 75.00   | Activities: Complete (Activities selected: 0) |  |
| Courage House   | Fee: 50.00, Deposit: 50.00, Total Fee: 100.00, Total Deposit: 50.00, Total Amount: 150.00 | <input type="button" value="Review"/>         |  |

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Click on “Incomplete” under Attendance, and check at least one person attending this camping trip. For overnight reservations, at least one person checked has to have signed their property liability waiver, and have First-Aid/CPR, Online Camping Skills OR Camp



Ready, and Camping Skills 1 & 2 OR Outdoor Skills. If you're having trouble or can't select a person you need for this trip, please contact Volunteer Resources (contact information at the end of this guide).

## **Step 2: Plan Your Trip**

Now that you've secured your property reservation, it's time to plan your camping trip! You'll find some considerations below as you think about the experience the girls would like to have.

### **Girl Planning:**

Girl planning and girl/adult partnership are inherent in Girl Scout programs. Girls have the opportunity to make their own decisions while benefitting from adult experience and facilitation. When they help plan an activity, they are more likely to "buy in" and wholeheartedly participate. Later, evaluating the activity is as important in the learning experience as was the planning.

Though this can be a challenge at first, it's always possible to have girls choose meals, work together to plan activities, choose adventures, choose if they'd like to work on badges, etc.

It is important to provide an environment in which "failure" can be turned into a successful learning situation. Often the stormy camping trip is a core memory that the girls laugh about afterwards and remember fondly.

Intentional planning is necessary to have a successful camping trip. It is wise to begin your planning at least 4-6 weeks prior to your campout (earlier if you're camping on GSMIDTN property and/or using council-facilitated activities).

### **How to involve girls in planning:**

- Have a brainstorming session: let the ideas flow! There will be time later to modify plans that won't logistically work
- Use a check list: provide a list of possible activities, and let the troop narrow down the list by choosing activities that appeal to them.
- Try some activities, if possible: they'll tell you which ones they like.
- Make an Outdoor Fun suggestion box: allow the girls to put some ideas in the box throughout the year at troop meetings. This helps you understand group preferences and each girl's interests.
- Investigate: have the girls research places to go and what is offered, food and activity prices. Gather resource books and flyers if applicable.
- Make a game of it: play "I'm going camping and I need to take..."

### **Activities:**

GSMIDTN properties have multiple activity options. You can choose to request activities provided by our facilitators OR to plan your own activities. Most troops do a combination of both, and some choose not to use facilitated activities at all.

### *Troop Hosted Activities*

If planning your own activities, you can host them in any space you have reserved, or in pavilions. You are responsible for all the materials, instruction and clean up. Be sure to adhere to the *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for rules regarding self-provided activities (such as hiking).

Troop camping is a great time to finish up badge work, have busy crafts (like friendship bracelets, and boondoggles), and plan more adventurous meals cooked outdoors! Whatever you plan, be flexible if you're going to also request activities facilitated by GSMIDTN (see below). Activities that are portable, or that you can fit in between adventures are best. *Be sure to also schedule downtime!* Many girls request to go back and hang out in the unit more than leaders expect - that is an adventure in itself.

#### Tips and Tricks:

- Bring a back up activity box in case of rain or boredom. Things like friendship bracelets, board games, etc. are great, as are “no gear” games like talent or fashion shows, charades, etc.
- It's ok to free time! The girls will help you fill that time when you're at camp – don't worry about having every second scheduled.

#### *Council Provided Activities:*

To see which activities are available, please visit <https://gsmidtn.org/programs/adventure-and-activities/>

No later than 45 days prior to your camping trip (but as soon as possible), you must enter the number of people per activity requested. Some tips for submitting your request:

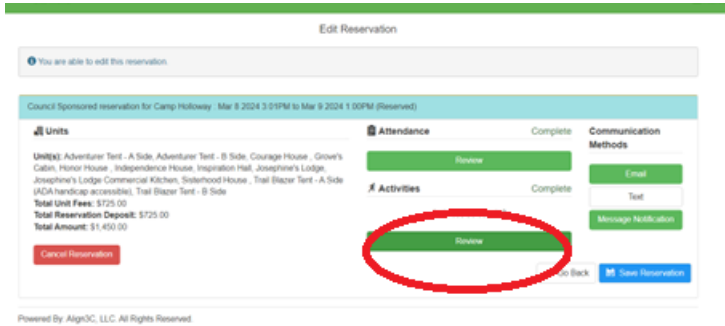
- We recommend no more than three activities per troop, and encourage troops to only choose two. In our experience, this allows for side adventures, easier meals, and not feeling rushed.
- Generally, adults do not participate in adventure activities. They *can* but we prioritize girl participation first.
- Troops should choose activities together – we cannot honor individual schedules or choices. This might require compromising on activity choices and is a great exercise in negotiation and including the whole group.
- Numbers should be finalized no later than 45 days out, but the earlier the better. Activities are scheduled based *on full-availability*. You should plan to be flexible with your day which might include an early arrival (you can come to camp before you check-in to your unit), staying later, and having lunch on the go. Please

discuss mealtimes and any hard stop times needed for your troop with the adventure specialist, and understand that these may limit your activity choices.

- Remember – requests are dependent on staffing, property conditions, and the number of requests per weekend.

There are two ways to add adventure activities to your reservation.

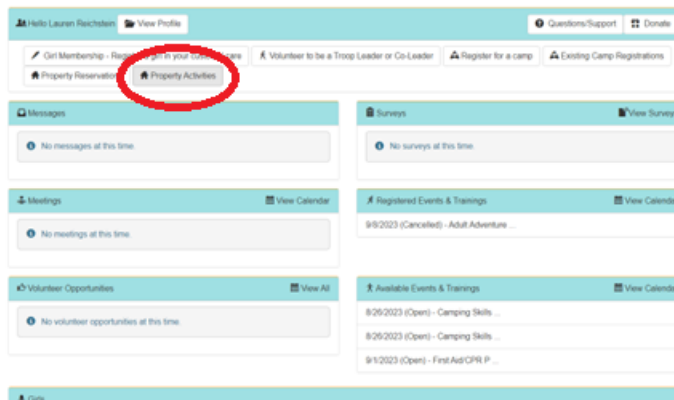
- Go into your original reservation and click “Review” Under activities:



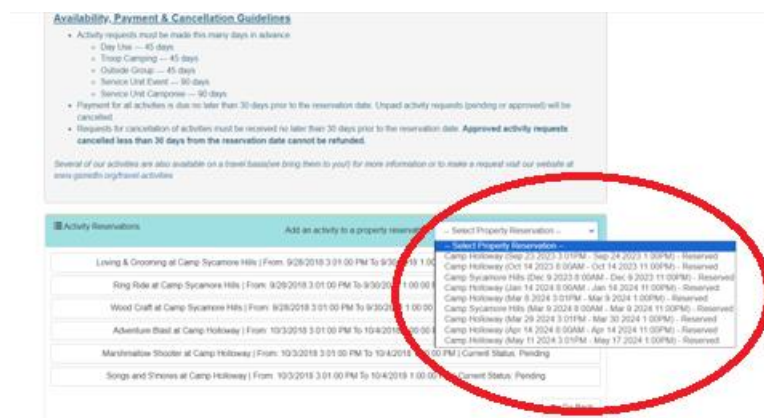
Click the red X next to the activity that you’d like to add. It will turn into a green check mark. Add the number of girls and adults who will be attending that activity. Then click save at the bottom of the screen.

| Select | Activity                | Girl Count | Adult Count | Grades Eligible   | Fee Per Person | Minimum | Description   |
|--------|-------------------------|------------|-------------|---|----------------|---------|---|
| X      | Archery                 | 0          | 0           | 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th                    | 1.00           | 0       | Aim for the target and learn basic archery technique. Proper stance, holding the bow, nock and fire an arrow.   |
| X      | Pe Iron Outdoor Cooking | 0          | 0           | 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, Kindergarten, 1st | 6.00           | 0       | Step into the world of outdoor cooking and make your very own delicious pie iron meal. Choose from pie iron pizzas, grilled cheese, or chicken pesto pockets.   |
| X      | Canvas Creations        | 0          | 0           | Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th | 4.00           | 0       | Create your own DIY masterpiece. We provide girls with an 8 x 10" canvas board, paints, glitter, ribbons, stickers, buttons and much more. Enjoy exploring your artistic side and take home great ideas for your next masterpiece.  |
| X      | Knife Safety            | 0          | 0           | 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th                    | 1.00           | 0       | Learn all the essential safety tips for handling a knife at camp and be better prepared for your next camping adventure. Practice your knife skills with a soap carving project.  |
| X      | Knot - so - Fast        | 0          | 0           | 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th                    | 2.00           | 0       | Knots for the knot challenged. Is that a granny knot? A facilitator will lead the group through basic knots. If you are not tied up in the end, the girls will know a couple of knots and why they are useful and make a knot craft to take home.   |
| X      | Lego Robotics           | 0          | 0           | 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th                    | 2.00           | 0       | Enjoy building things out of Lego bricks? Ever wish those things could move or make sounds? We have Lego Robotic kits that let you create lions that stand up and roar, alligators that snap their jaws shut when they sense movement and self propelled legs. This program can be extended to make multiple robots and challenges. |
| X      | Letterboxing            | 0          | 0           | 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th                    | 1.00           | 0       | Letterboxing is an intriguing outdoor "treasure hunt" activity. Participants will make small hand carved stamps then go out for the hunt. Clues are given for you to figure out where the other letterboxes on camp are located. Then you exchange your stamp print and the stamp in the letterbox.                                 |

2. Click on the “Property Activity” button on your CouncilAlignMEnt home screen:



Then select the reservation that you’d like to add activities for. All of your active reservations will be in the drop down menu. Be sure to select the correct one!



Now, choose each activity and enter the needed information. Hit save after each entry.

Add Activity

Add Activity

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>GirlCount *</b><br/><input type="text" value="0"/></p> <p><b>AdultCount *</b><br/><input type="text" value="0"/></p> <p><b>PropertyActivityID *</b><br/><input type="text" value="Pony Ready"/></p> | <p><b>Communication Options</b></p> <p>Email <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Text <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Message Notification <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Voice <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
|---|--|

Activity Info

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Minimum</b>   | <b>Fee Per Person</b>        |
| 3  | \$10.00                      |
| <b>Grades Eligible</b>   | <b>Is Travel</b>             |
|  | No                           |
| <b>Description</b>   | <b>Physical Restrictions</b> |
| This one-hour non-riding program allows participants to advance their grooming skills and learn to lead a horse or pony. Girl Scout Brownies will earn the Pony Ready badge. |                              |

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Congratulations! You have successfully made activity requests! The adventure specialist will be in touch with you about approval (or denial) of your activities, as well as scheduling.

## Meals and Snacks:

While involving girls in the meal planning process, guide them to select meals that are quick and easy to prepare. Avoid dishes that are complicated or involve long preparation or cooking time on your first trip. Meals that take too long to prepare cut down on the time allowed for activities.

As your troop (and you) gains experience, encourage them to try more complicated dishes or cooking methods. The exception to this would be if the girls are working toward recognition in cooking and needed a lot of kitchen time.

It is *neither responsibility nor the expectation* for the adults to cook meals for the girls. As part of the Girl Scout program, girls should help in the kitchen according to their capabilities and level of experience.

In order to plan a menu, your troop should answer to the following questions for each meal:

- What food preferences or dietary restrictions need to be considered?
- What is the purpose of this trip?
- How much time will we have for cooking this meal?
- Will we be cooking indoors or out?
- Will we be using familiar cooking techniques, or do we want to try out a new method?
- What kind of stove and type of fuel or fire will we be using?
- What kind and how much cooking equipment will we have available?
- Will each patrol cook for itself or will one patrol cook for all?

- Are there any concerns about spoilage, weight, cost, or season of the year that have to be considered?
- What is our budget?

Here are some of the steps to guide your troop through:

1. Decide what to eat and consider:
  - Preparation time (both to prepare and cook)
  - Dietary needs and restrictions
  - Special equipment needed
  - Budget
  - Ease of transportation and storage
2. Make lists for both food and any needed equipment. Be sure to include spices and things like can openers, knives, etc. Be aware that active children will eat more than they usually do, so plan for plenty, but not so much that an excessive amount of food is wasted. Be sure all of the girls are involved in planning and making the shopping lists.
3. Go shopping! Take the troop with you and divide lists among each patrol. Teach them to comparison shop.
4. Organize and pack food for transportation to site: Plan for safe storage of food until you arrive at camp (hint: freeze water in ½ gallon milk containers to use in coolers in lieu of bagged ice). If you are cooking in patrols you might consider packing the food according to patrol menus. Food that may “leak” should be placed in Ziploc bags to avoid contaminating everything else. Be aware of food safety rules while storing food.

## **Tips and Tricks:**

- “Build your own” options (tacos, baked potatoes, spaghetti with sauces on the side) are an easy way to accommodate dietary needs without making many separate meals. This is also helpful for picky eaters!
- Ordering pizza is always an option (and not just pizza – all three properties are close enough for delivery from various restaurants), though it’s not the cheapest option.
- Encourage inexpensive one pot meals (spaghetti, tacos, etc.) in the beginning, and then move on to more advanced cooking.
- Keep ingredients simple and avoid complicated recipes.
- Limit juice and soda at camp – encourage lots of water. Girls often don’t realize they’re dehydrated until they don’t feel well.
- Do not bring gum to camp.
- Plan a substantial breakfast or your troop will be hungry before the morning is over. Cereal and milk are a good idea for a morning when you’re preparing to leave, but not when a full morning of activities is planned.
- Use canned vegetables rather than fresh to save on prep and cooking time.
- Avoid cooking at every meal. Plan a no cook lunch when you have a lot of activities planned.
- Similarly, plan your first meal at camp to be a sack lunch, “charcuterie” etc.. This will eliminate the need to start cooking soon after you have arrived.
- Pack extra bread and sandwich supplies, or cereal and milk. If someone doesn’t eat any given meal, there is an emergency, or you can’t cook for some reason, you have a back up. While you want to encourage girls to eat the food they prepared, remember that camping is a new experience, and some girls will want something familiar in a new situation.
- Please consider potential food allergies of other troops attending if you plan to take food items outside your cabin.
- Be sure to include enough food for leaders in the food plan.
- Use toasting sticks (rather than coat hangers) for toasting marshmallows. Some coat hangers paint may contain lead. Please do not cut “green” sticks at camp.



# Sample Menu Planning Sheet

|                  | <b>Prep</b> | <b>Saturday</b> | <b>Sunday</b> | <b><i>Shopping List</i></b> |
|------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
|                  |             |                 |               |                             |
| <b>Breakfast</b> |             |                 |               |                             |
| <b>Lunch</b>     |             |                 |               |                             |
| <b>Dinner</b>    |             |                 |               |                             |
| <b>Snacks</b>    |             |                 |               |                             |

### **Step 3: Pay your balance**

Final payments are due for troop camping no later than 30 days prior to your date. This is when your schedule will begin to be finalized (you will not receive a schedule unless you have paid your balance, unless you've been told otherwise by the adventure specialist). It's essential that you have an accurate count so that the adventure specialist can plan for your visit to camp and ensure your activities are properly staffed.

Payment will include: fees for all of your reserved housing, and approved activities.

### **Step 4: Go Camping!**

#### **Communication prior to your camping date:**

##### *Communication with families/troops*

It is important to communicate with families who have girls attending. General information should be provided by the troop. This includes:

- Required forms
- Property Liability Waiver information
- Meals
- Accommodations information
- Activities
- Suggested packing list (see troop camping packing list)
- Arrival and departure times

##### *Communication with Property Manager*

When you make your reservation, you should receive communication from CouncilAlignMENT with general information for all three properties.

You should receive timely communication from the property manager the week that you're scheduled to come to camp with emergency contact information and any needed gate or building codes.

Provide a detailed "head-to-bed" to the council registrar no later than a week prior to your event with the following information for each person attending organized by unit.

- Name
- Property Liability Waiver Y/N

### *Communication with Adventure Specialist*

The Adventure Specialist will be in regular communication with you regarding your schedule when you submit your activity requests.

You can expect a final schedule approximately two weeks prior to your troop camping trip.

### **Attendee Requirements:**

- All Troops need one designated First Aid Person, and one person who has taken Camping Skills 1 & 2 OR Outdoor Skills.
- All girl attendees on GSMIDTN property must be registered members.
- All adult overnight attendees must be registered and have a clear background check.

### **Forms:**

Everyone, including adults, are required to have:

- Health History and Permission Form
- Signed Liability Waiver in CouncilAlignMENT

### **Check-In:**

Coordinate with your property manager on your arrival time. Once you have arrived and confirmed that the property manager has everything they need, you're the person in-charge on property for your troop.

When girls arrive, it is important that:

- You check to be sure that everyone has their required paperwork
- You know who has dietary needs and restrictions
- Medication, if applicable, is in the care of the designated first aider. Girls should not keep medication on them unless it's a rescue medication (i.e., inhaler or Epi-Pen)

As families arrive and drop off children, please make sure that they are not left unattended. Families must connect with a designated adult staying on property - the property manager and council-staff are not able to check-in troop members and are not responsible for their care.

## **Check-Out:**

As your camping trip winds down, it's important to assign Kapers to each girl when cleaning your unit. There is a check-list for what should be completed in each unit. However, this is a good guide for units and buildings:

- All belongings, food, snacks, craft supplies, etc. removed from the building
- Mattresses moved to designated locations
- Bathrooms have been cleaned (toilets, showers, mirrors and counters wiped down)
- Fire-pit is cleaned out (if used)
- All trash taken to the dumpster (or off property if Camp Piedmont)
- Entire unit swept and mopped (if applicable)

Coordinate with the property manager to ensure that everything is clean, and that you will receive your deposit back based on the condition you left your unit in. If areas used are not clean, your deposit will be retained.

Be sure that you enter final attendance for your camping trip CouncilAlignMENT, AND that you fill out the property survey. Your deposit cannot be returned to you unless this step has been completed. You can do that by logging into CouncilAlignMENT and going into your property reservation.

## Risk Management

Taking your troop camping involves more risk than a simple troop meeting. These risks can be mitigated with planning, awareness, and education.

### *Natural Hazards:*

Venomous Snakes: Water Moccasins, Rattlesnakes, and Copperheads

If you see any snakes out hiking or otherwise out of the main living and program areas, leave them alone!

If a venomous snake is in a living or program areas, wait to see if it goes away – usually they aren't interested in humans, let alone confronting them. Remember – they were here first!

Snakes are a natural part of our environment. Teach your troop to respect them without an exaggerated fear of them. If you are afraid of them, do not transfer your fears to your girls.

Cottonmouth/Water moccasin:



<https://www.tn.gov/twra/wildlife/reptiles/snakes/cottonmouth.html>

Copperhead:



<https://www.tn.gov/twra/wildlife/reptiles/snakes/copperhead.html>

Rattlesnakes:



<https://www.tn.gov/twra/wildlife/reptiles/snakes/timber-rattlesnake.html>



<https://www.tn.gov/twra/wildlife/reptiles/snakes/pygmy-rattlesnake.html>

For more information on other, non-venomous snakes in Tennessee, please visit the Tennessee Wildlife and Resources Agency's website:

<https://www.tn.gov/twra/wildlife/reptiles/snakes.html>

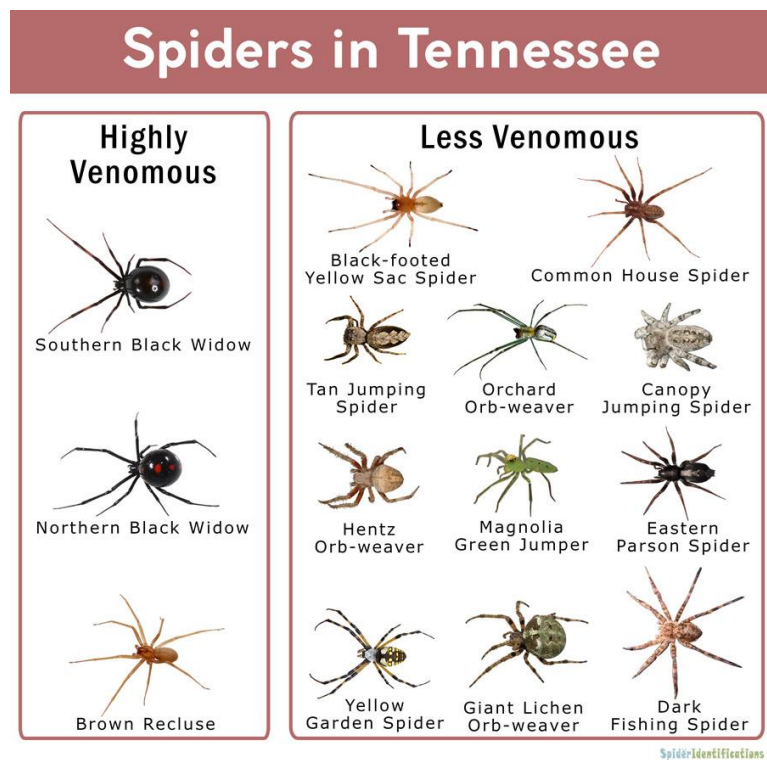


## Poisonous Insects and Spiders

**Black Widows:** Identify by red hourglass on abdomen. Look for black widows particularly in outhouses and woodpiles.

**Brown Recluse:** A rather small harmless looking spider that is grayish, pinkish, brown in color with a fiddle shape on its back. Brown recluse spiders are often found in beds, clothing, and dusty corners. Be sure tents are swept regularly and that beds and clothing are checked before getting into them.

*In the event of a spider black widow or brown recluse spider bite, keep the bite area lower than the heart, keep the person quiet, apply ice or cold water, and contact the person's emergency contact. It is likely that they will need medical care.*



<https://spideridentifications.com/spiders-in-us/spiders-in-tennessee>

**Scorpions:** The local scorpions are not dangerous. Their bite is normally no worse than a bee sting. If a scorpion stings a child, be sure to check their health form for allergies to insect stings and observe closely for any sting of unusual swelling or redness, or nausea. Scorpions are usually found on clothing in trunks.


**Bees and Wasps:** Check tents and outbuildings regularly for nests and notify the Site Manager if found. Know which campers are allergic to bees, wasps, etc.

## Plants

Poison Ivy: Check living and program areas for excessive amounts of poison ivy and notify the Site Manager for its removal. Poison Ivy has three leaves and can be a bush, vine, or individual plant.


### Poison Ivy, Poison Oak and Poison Sumac

To identify, look at their appearance:




**Poison ivy** has three leaflets on each leaf and grows as a bush or vine.

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**Poison oak** has three leaflets on each leaf, with rounded tips, and grows like a shrub or vine.

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**Poison sumac** leaves have clusters of seven to 13 leaflets arranged in pairs and grows as a tree.

 Cleveland Clinic

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/10655-poison-plants-poison-ivy--poison-oak--poison-sumac>

Stinging Nettle: This plant is not dangerous but will sting and occasionally cause a rash. This is prevalent around damp areas.

Mushrooms: Do not touch, pick or eat mushrooms at camp.



## Exposed Roots

Many units have exposed roots in heavily travelled areas. Leaders should check the area for exposed roots and point these out to their girls. Closed toed shoes should be worn when hiking to prevent stubbed toes.

## Dead Trees

Because dead trees harbor so much wildlife, we don't remove them unless absolutely necessary. However, if you have a tree or dead limbs in your unit or program area which are in danger of falling, please notify the Site Manager.

## *Human Made Hazards*

### Pool

The following rules are strictly enforced:

Anytime someone swims, there must be a lifeguard present for every twenty-five (25) persons in the pool, and an overall ratio of one (1) watcher present for every ten (10) persons in the pool.

The pool must be reserved ahead of time for your troop. There are fees associated with using the pool.

No-one is permitted inside the pool fence unless accompanied by a GSMIDTN approved lifeguard.

The pool area is locked when not in use.

Obey all of the rules posted in the pool area.

### Program Areas

No child or adult is allowed in any program area without the supervision of a GSMIDTN program facilitator.

Program sites are as follows:

- Swimming Pool
- Tree Climbing
- Archery Range
- Ropes Course
- Canoe Dock
- Climbing/Rappel Tower
- Rappel Bluff
- High Ropes
- Team Adventure
- Obstacle Course

A temporary program site may be created and must be treated the same.

## **Emergency Procedures**

### *Fire:*

#### Fire Precautions:

- Know where the nearest fire extinguisher is located.
- Know fire escapes in your unit and discuss it with your troop
- Do NOT remove batteries from smoke detectors – contact the site manager if the batteries are dying and causing the detector to beep
- Build fires in designated fire rings or fireplaces only.
- Extinguish all fires completely and carefully – look for any glowing embers.
- No flammable liquids may be stored in cabins or tents.

#### If there is a fire:

- Put out the fire using water or a fire extinguisher
- If using a fire extinguisher, pull the pin and squeeze the handle. Use the hose to “sweep the base” of the fire (aim low, not at the top of the flames).
- If the fire cannot be contained, call 911 and notify the property manager IMMEDIATELY.
- Gather entire group and evacuate to location on camp away from the fire.

### *Severe Weather:*

- Thunder, lightning, heavy wind: stay indoors
- Thunderstorm warning: seek shelter indoors and stay away from windows
- Tornado warning:
  - Seek shelter in a building/room without windows. Shower houses and bathrooms work best.
  - Sit with your back against an interior wall and cover your head.
  - Use towels, mattresses, etc. to cover your head.
- Flood warning:
  - Site manager will be in contact with your troop regarding the safest location for you.
  - Do not cross streams or flowing water unless directed

*All camps have evacuation locations posted in each unit.*

### *Injury:*

- Minor Injury:
  - Treat the injured person and provide first-aid.
  - Notify parents/guardians if they are not present.
- Severe Injury:
  - Seek medical treatment (keep all paperwork for insurance claims)
  - If you call 911, provide the camp address. Notify the property manager IMMEDIATELY
  - Afterward, write an incident report and submit with insurance claim if applicable

### *Intruder:*

- If a person you don't recognize or who is acting suspiciously or erratically is spotted on camp property, notify the property manager immediately. They will verify the identity of that person.
- If you have contacted the property manager and the unidentified person is acting in a threatening manner and/or has a weapon, call 911, notify the property manager AND:
  - Depending on the location of the intruder, seek shelter in a nearby building, lock the doors, and stay away from windows.
  - If you cannot get to a building take your group to an outdoor location where it's easy to hide (such as the woods) and scatter.
- After the incident is under control, verify that your entire group is present and contact parents/guardians

### *Missing Person:*

- Gather your troop together in one spot, and check every known location of the missing person including your unit, program areas, and bathrooms.
- If you cannot find your person after a quick search:
  - Notify the Site Manager who can assist in the search if they are on property.
  - Notify the family/guardians of the missing person
- If necessary, the site manager can assist in calling local law enforcement to continue the search process.

### *Calling EMS/911:*

- If you call 911, notify the property manager IMMEDIATELY with:
  - Name of who called and the situation
  - Where you're located on camp
- If the property manager is on site, they will meet emergency personnel at the gate and escort them to where you are.
- If the property manager is not on site, an available adult should proceed to the gate to escort emergency services to your location.
- In the event of any injury or 911 calls, you should fill out an incident report form. These are required for Mutual of Omaha insurance claims.

## **General Camping and Outdoor Program Information:**

Lauren “Flip Flop” Reichstein  
*Manager of Camp and Adventure Programs*  
(615) 460 – 0212  
[LReichstein@gsmidtn.org](mailto:LReichstein@gsmidtn.org)

## **Outdoor Training Information**

Hailey “Cappuchinno” Strother  
*Volunteer Resource Specialist*  
(615) 460 – 0252  
[HStrother@gsmidtn.org](mailto:HStrother@gsmidtn.org)

## **Adventure activity information and scheduling:**

Heather “Airborne” Masigat  
*Adventure Specialist*  
(615) 460 – 0213  
[HMasigat@gsmidtn.org](mailto:HMasigat@gsmidtn.org)

## **Horse activity information and scheduling:**

Ashley “Abu” Gary  
*Manager of Equestrian Programs*  
(615) 947-3214  
[AGary@gsmidtn.org](mailto:AGary@gsmidtn.org)

## **For property information:**

Meredith “Sheldon” Hines  
*Camp Holloway Property Manager*  
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