

New volunteer conference calls

Nov. 20 – Trip and travel safety

Do we have to have a first aid/CPR certified volunteer at our meetings?

In general, if you are having an indoor troop meeting at your regular meeting place with little to no physical or potentially dangerous activity (such as candle making, cooking, sports or games, etc.) you do not have to have a currently certified adult present. However, any time you meet away from your regular meeting location you must have a currently certified first aid/CPR adult present.

What insurance coverage is provided by the Girl Scout membership?

Every currently registered girl or adult volunteer is covered by a secondary pay medical plan administered by Mutual of Omaha. It is free and a benefit of current membership. The council also maintains general liability coverage for approved Girl Scout activities.

If I drive girls do I have to become a member if I have my own auto insurance?

Council Guide for Volunteers, pg. 72 states: “All adults who work directly with girls must complete a volunteer application and a release for a criminal background check before being allowed to travel with girls. This applies to all adult volunteers, even if they are not registered members.”

What kind of safety plans should be in place for our meetings?

Girl Scout Standard #3 in *Safety-Wise* in summary states: “At all times, the health, safety, and security of girls are paramount. All activities are planned and carried out so as to safeguard the health, safety and general well-being of girls and adults. Girls and adults should follow proper safety practices at all times.”

Additionally check the *Council Guide for Volunteers*, page 69 for more discussion related to risk management.

What do we need to do if we are going to visit a facility less than an hour away?

In general, if a troop is going on a trip that is less than six hours long in total, the only required documentation is noting it in the trip log. However if the trip includes any of the following activities, a Trip Application must be completed and turned in at least one month in advance: archery, backpacking, camping, challenge course, horse related activities, riflery/gun safety, rafting, boating, tubing, swimming or down hill skiing.

What do we do with health history forms?

Current year health history should be kept in a secure location at every troop meeting and gathering girls. Generally the troop first aid/CPR adult will keep them, however the troop leader may be the one to keep them. The key is keeping the information on the forms confidential to only those who need to know. If a girl or adult is injured, complete an Incident Accident Report form and return it to the Atlanta Service Center, include a copy of the Health History for that person. At the beginning of each new Girl Scout year, the old forms should be destroyed (shredding works great) and new ones filled out. It is a

good idea to have the parent or guardian review the form before each trip to be sure that nothing has changed, such as medications, etc.

Can my girls go camping in the leader's back yard?

Absolutely! That is the most appropriate "first camping" trip a troop could take together. This is a traditional first step in the progressive approach to overnight experiences with girls. It gives the girls a chance to get to know one another in a different environment and also allows the leaders the opportunity to observe girl and adult interaction in the outdoor dynamic. The leader must complete basic outdoor training before the overnight and proper permission must be obtained from the parents.

My girls wish to participate in the holiday parade; they are Girl Scout Brownies, can they?

As long as all council procedures for trips are followed, there is no reason why a group of Girl Scout Brownies cannot participate in a parade. Check out pages 132 & 133 in *Safety-Wise* for the activity checkpoints related to this type of activity.

I have an older girl troop. Some of the girls can drive, is it ok for them to drive themselves to outings?

If the troop is traveling as a group the girls should use the same transportation as everyone else (for example car pool with adults or bus, etc). However if it is an individual event or if she is traveling to a regular meeting place, she may drive herself, but should not drive other girls.

Some of the girls have smaller siblings that wish to go with us on a trip. They are two young to join, can they participate and do they fill out a membership form anyway?

In order to join the Girl Scouts a girl must be at least five years old and in kindergarten. Unregistered children and adults are called "tag-a-longs" and depending on the proposed activity, it may not be appropriate for them to accompany the troop on a trip. See the *Council Guide for Volunteers*, pages 37 & 76 for information related to tag-a-longs.

We are planning a troop pool party, Can one of my girls brother be a lifeguard if he is certified?

Safety-Wise, page 120 outlines guidelines for swimming and depending on the situation and the gentleman's age, it may be appropriate. If swimming in a backyard pool: "There is one lifeguard for one to 10 swimmers. The lifeguard is at least 16 years old and has American Red Cross Lifeguard Training certification or the equivalent. An adult trained in water rescues skills is also present. American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue is recommended for this adult and for watchers."

Neither *Safety-Wise* nor council procedures prohibit a male from being in a leadership role or serving as a required certified and trained person for the troop as long as there are also a minimum of two unrelated female adults present at the same time.

Where can I find trip ideas that are close to our meeting place?

The Program Events Calendar and the More Troop Activities section of the council Web site are excellent! *Atlanta Parent*, the free newspaper has lots of trip ideas as well. Many if not most of the Try-Its, badges, interest projects and new Journey activities either include or suggest trips

What kind of involvement should girls have in planning trips?

The "Planning Trips With Girl Scouts" section of *Safety-Wise* (pp. 44-59) should be the prime resource for helping girls plan trips - lots of practical advice and program helps. Also, pages 30-31, "Supervision of Girls" has details on working with chaperones.

What about going on extended trips like overnight?

A troop should have successfully completed several day trips, starting out with short, close to the meeting place trips and leading into progressively longer trips before planning an overnight trip. Leaders or other adults who will work with the girls must take basic cabin camping or platform tent camping before planning an overnight. The first overnight should be close to home and one night only. If this is successful, longer overnights can be planned.

Participant's Q & A

Do we have to have two adults no matter the number of girls going on a trip?

There must be at least two adults accompanying the girls on a trip. For the appropriate number of additional adults, please refer to page 609 of *Safety-Wise*.

What is the duration of Cabin Camping class?

Three hours.

Can Girl Scout Daisies participate in a parade?

Yes, however there are specific safety guidelines to follow. Please refer to pages 132 to 133 in *Safety-Wise*.

How may I confirm if I am a registered member?

Please contact Valery Smalls at vsmalls@girlscoutsofgreateratlanta.org.

When do trip applications need to be submitted?

Anytime a troop is planning to go outside their normal meeting space for more than six hours. The form may be found on line and submitted directly from the Web site.

When are permission slips needed?

Parents must complete a permission slip for each event that takes a girl away from the original meeting place and if the parent is not going to accompany the girl to such an event.