



Requirements to Hold Girl Scout Meetings or Activities in the Home

The safety and protection of girls and adults is the top priority of Girl Scouts of Utah. Girls benefit from a safe environment that allows them to be at their best while developing critical leadership-building skills. The following requirements must be completed before an approved volunteer can hold regularly scheduled meetings and/or activities in a private home.

Volunteers should complete council training: Hosting Girl Scout Meetings in the Home

Volunteers agree to the following requirements, outlined below, as part of hosting meetings in the home of a council approved GSU volunteer:

- ✓ The home must be the home of a registered, council-approved volunteer.
 - Council-approved volunteers are registered members with a current background check on record.
- ✓ During all Girl Scout activities, two (2) council-approved volunteers (unrelated by blood, marriage, or living in the same household), one of whom must be female, must be always present during the troop meeting.
- ✓ Volunteer to girl ratios must always be met. Consult *Volunteer Essentials* and *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for specific ratio information.
- ✓ No registered sex offender can live in or be present in the home.
- ✓ Homeowners should consider any personal insurance implications.
- ✓ Every member of the troop has a signed permission form on file with the troop.
- ✓ COVID-19 guidelines must be followed.

Meeting space must fit all safety requirements as noted below:

- ✓ An emergency evacuation plan must be created (with all exit routes listed) and kept on file with the volunteer who is hosting the meeting/activity. Emergency evacuation should be practiced by girls and volunteers once a year or as new members join the troop.
- ✓ The space permits the troop to focus without distractions from other household members.
- ✓ Inspect the meeting space prior to each meeting for physical hazards and overall safety precautions.
- ✓ Ensure that meeting space has been appropriately cleaned and sanitized and that hygiene and risk mitigation is followed.
- ✓ Set up the meeting area prior to the arrival of the girls so that you are ready to greet and supervise them when they arrive.
- ✓ Check all equipment for safety prior to use by the girls; review *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for guidelines for activity-specific safety equipment guidelines.
- ✓ Teach girls to use the buddy system to keep each other safe.
- ✓ Keep girls away from restricted areas or known hazards.
- ✓ Enforce rules about where the girls are allowed to run and play games.
- ✓ GSU Emergency Information card is easily accessible by all leaders.
- ✓ Additional Girl Scout insurance is in place for any activity or meeting that includes non-members.

- ✓ A complete first aid kit is on-site and easily accessible by all leaders during meetings and activities.
- ✓ Weapons must be completely out of view and stored in a locked space.
- ✓ Medication, dangerous cleaning products, or any poisonous substance must be stored in a secure space out of sight, preferably locked.
- ✓ Pets must be kept separate from and secured away girls while present in the home. Leaders should notify families of any animals (particularly cats and dogs) on the premises to avoid allergic reactions.
- ✓ No smoking or drinking alcoholic beverages in the presence of girls during meetings or activities.
- ✓ Home should have reasonable accommodation for those with disabilities. If the home cannot provide accommodation as needed, you may need to consider alternative meeting spaces.
- ✓ The presence of younger or older siblings of the girls or children of leaders who are not of the appropriate age to participate in the group's activities (also known as 'tagalongs') is discouraged.
 - 'Tagalongs' can distract girls from their planned activities and distract leaders from providing the proper supervision.
 - Alternative adult supervision must be assigned if 'tagalongs' are present. 'Tagalongs' should be kept separate from troop meeting space.

Backyard Meetings

To ensure that the yards are completely safe for children, follow these additional requirements:

- Pools are fenced, and recreational apparatus that are deemed unsafe for girls, such as outdoor trampolines, equipment, and tools are safely sectioned off.
- Ensure that volunteers can see the girls and always monitor their whereabouts during an outdoor meeting or activity.
- Make sure that pets are kept separate and secured away from the girls while in an outdoor setting.
- Remember to maintain the use of the buddy system for errands and bathroom breaks.

Activities outside the Usual Meeting Space

To ensure safety compliance during other troop activities, follow these additional requirements:

- Follow all requirements of *Safety Activity Checkpoints* when coordinating activities outside the usual troop meeting space.
- Parent/Guardian Permission Form must be completed for each girl participating in the activity.
- Minimum of one (1) volunteer must have First Aid/CPR/AED Certification and must be present during the activity.
- Call ahead to the facility or vendor to confirm they can accommodate all required safety and risk mitigation requirements of the council.