

Returning to In-Person Troop Meetings and Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Volunteers

Edition date: 7/01/2020

This guidance is being provided as of the Edition Date above (when a vaccine has not been made readily available). Girl Scouts of Central & Southern NJ may modify this guidance from time to time as circumstances change.

GSCSNJ troops can resume outdoor activities as of June 22, 2020. Due to recent changes in the current environment, GSCSNJ is strongly recommending that troops do not resume indoor activities until further notice. COVID-19 risk is fluid, and the guidance provided does not supersede more recent government guidance or restrictions.

COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community. Take all reasonable precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, volunteers, and families.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to change as infection rates rise and fall in different areas. There may be regional differences or developments since this guidance was published. Continue to follow local and national directives. Discuss plans with families.

Troop Meeting Size: All attendees at the gathering must wear face coverings, unless for a medical reason. Individuals must always remain six feet apart, and physical items may not be shared by multiple attendees of the same gathering unless sanitized before and after uses.

The current suggested guidelines for outdoor activity is limited to 100 participants. Attendees are required to be six feet apart. Individuals should always wear face coverings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, and individuals who are in vehicles shall not count towards the gathering limit.

Troop Meeting Space: Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained are strongly recommended for meetings. Get advance permission from the property owner or the jurisdiction that provides the location.

For meetings held at outdoor public facilities, contact the facility ahead of time and ask:

- Is the space cleaned and touch surfaces (i.e., tabletops, benches, chairs, etc.) sanitized, at least daily?
- Who else uses the space (how often, what size is the group)? Is the space cleaned between groups?
- What type of faucets/soap dispensers are available in the restroom (sensory or manual)?

Then, consider whether you can supplement any less ideal practices. For example, if you will arrive after another user group, plan to bring sanitizing wipes to get the space ready for your troop. Another example: if faucets are manual, take some time to show girls how to shut them off with a paper towel. Use paper towels for doorknobs whenever possible.

Schools or churches may not permit outside groups on-premises, so always check and confirm ahead of time.

Transportation: Individual parents drop off and pick up their own girls from meetings. Carpooling and public transportation should be avoided, where possible, to maintain social distancing.

Virtual Meetings: Meeting options may need to be flexible based on the fluid nature of COVID-19 risk. Troops that are able to run online meetings as needed (or wanted) should do so. GSUSA recommends maintaining a virtual to in-person ratio of at least 20/80, which means to maintain virtual troop meetings at least 20% of the time to keep tech skills and virtual meeting habits fresh. Use the Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Meetings to guide your meeting plans.

Day Trips and Activities: In conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints, follow the same guidelines as Troop Meetings and Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance in this document. Call ahead to the facility or vendor to confirm that they are following CDC and state health department guidelines. If an activity or sporting equipment is being provided, ask the provider if they wipe down equipment in between uses, similar to equipment at the gym. Make whatever necessary and appropriate accommodations are needed. For example, bring extra sanitizer if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

Travel and Overnight Stays: Overnight trips are not permitted until after New Jersey is successfully past Phase 3 of its re-opening process. This timeframe may vary county to county in some cases. As always, contact GSCSNJ for prior approval before planning any overnight stays and follow the guidance in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation: Follow the resources developed by credible public health sources such as CDC and the New Jersey Health Department. Share these with girls and volunteers and ensure that they are practiced during meetings and activities. Remind everyone in the meeting or activity space to engage in everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Reminders should include:

- Stay home if you are sick
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash and wash or sanitize your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Wash hands if you do touch.
- Volunteers, girls, and parents should be reminded to take temperatures before group interactions to confirm the individual is not running a fever and temperature is a normal 98.6 degrees. Individuals with fever or a temperature higher than 98.6 degrees should skip the in-person gathering until their temperature is normal.

Personal Contact: Hugs, handshakes, “high-fives,” and even activities like the friendship circle or squeeze can transmit COVID-19 from person to person. Refrain from these gestures for the time being. Create a safe way for girls and volunteers to greet and end meetings instead (like tapping elbows).

First Aid Supplies: Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items, including hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), tissues, disposable facemasks, and disinfectants. Trash baskets or bags should be supplied for meeting and activity spaces, if not already available. Make sure that the trash baskets (or bags) are easily accessible for girls. Disposable or no-contact thermometers may be added to supplies if available and not cost-prohibitive; however, parents should be checking temperatures and allowing their girl(s) to join group activities only when temperatures are normal.

First Aid / CPR Training: Keep skills up-to-date for any emergency. Contact your certification agency (i.e. American Red Cross, American Heart Association, etc.) about alternative methods of training that may be available during this time.

Disinfectants and Disinfecting: Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., tabletops, markers, scissors, etc.). Use a household cleaner, or see the EPA's list of effective cleaners approved for use against COVID-19. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

Household bleach is effective against COVID-19 for up to 24 hours when properly diluted. Check that the bleach is not expired and determine if it can be used on a given surface. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

To prepare a bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Face Coverings: Face masks should be worn by both volunteers and girls. Volunteers should remind girls that Girl Scouts wear face coverings (masks) not only to protect themselves but to protect others. Face coverings are a civic responsibility and a sign of caring for the community.

Girls and volunteers should bring their own face coverings. Have disposable masks on hand for those who need them. Volunteers should wear face coverings when interacting with the girls, facility owners, parents, or outside community members. Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks due to medical conditions such as asthma. Contact Customer Care at **856-795-1560** or **customer care@gscsnj.org** for guidance on how best to handle these exceptional circumstances as they arise.