

This guidance is being provided as of the Edition Date above (when a vaccine has not been made readily available). Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland (GSMH) can modify this guidance, from time to time as circumstances change.

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, state, and [national](#) directives. Discuss plans with families.

Restrictions vary greatly from state to state, county to county, and even from town to town—and frequently change. GSMH requires following the most restrictive guidelines as the health and safety of our members is our top priority. For example, if your local guidelines do not require masks in public, GSMH does. Therefore, masks must be worn during Service Unit and troop meetings and activities.

**Troop/Service Unit Meeting Space.** As of August 1, we will be entering Phase 1 of our reopening. Troops and Service Units may begin meeting in-person in **outdoor settings only** where social distancing can be maintained.

**Troop/Service Unit Meetings in the Home.** If your only option is to meet at home, you should hold your meetings outside in your yard or driveway. GSMH prohibits meetings inside the home out of concern that there would be greater risk of exposure to other family members. We should stay away from in-home meetings for the time being.

**Troop/Service Unit Meeting Size.** The current suggested maximum is fourteen people (twelve girls and two unrelated adult volunteers for a troop). Please restrict meetings to adult and girl members only. However, [check your local restrictions](#) for small gatherings. If more restrictive, follow the local restriction. Restrictions vary greatly from state to state, county to county, and even from town to town—and frequently change. If a state allows more than fourteen to gather, follow the more restrictive GSMH guideline.

If you have a large troop, stay connected while you wait for a safe time for everyone to gather. Large troops are wonderful, so stay together! Some ideas:

- Host virtual troop meetings (see below).
- Gather up in smaller groups—such as age-level groups, patrols, or groups of girls with a particular badge they'd like to work on.
- Contact your Troop/SU Support Specialist or New Leader Specialist for more ideas!

**Transportation to Meetings.** 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 can 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: [Virtual Troop Meetings](#).

Other helpful resources can be found [here](#). Volunteers can also contact your Troop/SU Support Specialist or New Leader Specialist for help.

**Day Activities.** In conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints, follow the same guidance as Troop Meetings and Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance in this document. In-person activities may begin August 1 in **outdoor settings only**. Call ahead to the facility or vendor to confirm that they are following CDC and state health department guidelines. If 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 appropriate accommodations that are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

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

**Travel and Overnight Stays.** Although we are cautiously allowing troops to begin meeting in August, we will not be approving Troop Travel Applications or overnight stays until further notice. As always, contact GSMH for prior approval before planning any overnight stays and follow guidance in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

**Volunteer Training.** Volunteer training will continue virtually through gsLearn and other approved virtual methods. Complete a [Volunteer Training and Support Request](#) to request a training for your troop or service unit.

**Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation.** Follow the [resources developed by credible public health sources such as CDC](#) or your local public health department. Share these with girls and volunteers and ensure that they are practiced during meetings and activities. Place signs in the meeting or activity space to remind girls and volunteers to engage in [everyday preventive actions](#) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Signs should include:

- Stay home if you or a member of your immediate family is 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 using 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 make sure temperatures are taken prior to group interaction to confirm the individual is not running a fever and temperature

is a normal 98.6 degrees. Members with fever or temperature higher than 98.6 should avoid in-person gatherings until their temperature is normal.

**Attendance.** Record attendance of all girl and adult members at the meeting or activity. Include date, time, location, and full name.

**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.

**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. Talk with GSMH 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., table tops, 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 (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

See the [CDC's website](#) for more on cleaning and disinfecting community facilities.

**Face Coverings.** Volunteers should remind girls that Girl Scouts wearing face coverings (masks) not only protects themselves but protects others. Face coverings are a civic responsibility and a sign of caring for the community. Face coverings must be worn during all in-person meetings and activities. Girls and adults can bring their own face coverings. Have disposable masks on hand for those who need them. Volunteers can teach girls [how to handle their face coverings](#) so that the coverings are effective. Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks, due to medical conditions such as asthma. Contact GSMH for guidance on how best to handle exceptions as they arise.

**Reporting and Communicating a Positive COVID-19 Test.** In the event of a COVID-19 positive test result, do NOT contact the parents or troop members. Promptly contact GSMH in this situation. A **GSMH staff member** will be responsible for working with the local health department to follow the appropriate steps.

**Let other volunteers know that the tester's identity is confidential.** Remember that girl and volunteer health information is private and strictly confidential and should be only shared on a need to know basis with a council staff member. A **GSMH staff member** will be responsible for working with the local health department to follow the appropriate steps