



Guidelines for Returning to In-person Service Unit Meetings and Events

Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Volunteers

Effective Date: October 23, 2020

This guidance is to be followed in conjunction with the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland (GSCM) Guidelines for Returning to In-person Troop/Group Meetings and Activities which is found on the GSCM Volunteer Resource webpage [here](#).

GSCM is strictly enforcing these guidelines: Girl Scout member and volunteer cooperation is expected in order to keep all girls, families, volunteers and staff safe while attending in-person Girl Scout meetings, activities, and events. If guidelines are not followed, GSCM will be forced to discontinue in-person Girl Scout activities and resume virtual only Girl Scout activities.

Guideline Acknowledgement—Receipt Confirmation Required: Prior to planning and facilitating any in-person Service Unit meetings and events, Service Unit Managers and Service Unit Volunteers responsible for leading the meeting/event, must confirm receipt and acknowledgement of these guidelines. Please confirm receipt via this [link](#). Volunteers will be asked to state their name, Service Unit number, and acknowledge that they have received, read, understand and will abide by these interim COVID-19 guidelines.

Return to In-person Service Unit Meetings and Events: At the end of August, we began a phased approach in permitting Girl Scout troops/groups, who were ready and comfortable doing so, to return to in-person Girl Scout meetings and day trips. Although our focus was on allowing troops/groups to get back together, we were not, at that time, approving large group or service unit gatherings such as programs, events, meetings or trainings.

With that said, we are preparing for the next phase in our approach to return to in-person Girl Scout Activities. **We will resume in-person Girl Scout Service Unit meetings and events on October 23, 2020, with the stipulation that if COVID-19 risk factors increase, this move to in-person Service Unit meetings and events may change.**

We recognize that our members and volunteers are at varying levels of readiness in regard to their comfort level in attending and/or facilitating in-person Girl Scout activities, whether or not they are held indoors or outdoors. Therefore, before a Service Unit decides to resume in-person meetings or activities, they need to assess the readiness, preparedness and comfort level of the members in their Service Unit against the *GSCM Service Unit Return to In-person Girl Scout Activities Readiness Checklist*. Furthermore, Service Units must abide by the *GSCM Interim COVID-19 Guidelines for Returning to In-person Troop/Group Meetings and Activities* and *GSCM Interim COVID-19 Guidelines for Returning to In-person Service Unit Meetings and Events*

Service Unit Meetings: In addition to adhering to all *Interim COVID-19 Guidelines for Returning to In-person Troop/Group Meetings and Activities*, Service Units need to follow these additional guidelines in holding in-person Service Unit Meetings:

- Because COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community, volunteers should take all precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, themselves, families and volunteers. **Therefore, we continue to recommend initial meetings and events be held virtually and/or in outdoor settings.**
- Meetings and event options need to be flexible based on the fluid nature of COVID-19 risk. Service Units that are able to run online/virtual meetings as needed (or wanted) should continue to do so.
- **Additionally, Service Units may not hold meetings in homes, be it indoors or outdoors, out of concern that the risk of COVID-19 exposure is too great to Girl Scout members and families.**

Service Unit Events: In addition to adhering to all *GSCM Interim COVID-19 Guidelines for Returning to In-person Troop/Group Meetings and Activities*, Service Units must follow these additional guidelines when holding Service Unit Events.

It is strongly recommend to meet outdoors as opposed to indoors, and only when social distancing can be maintained. Service Unit events may not be held **in homes, be it indoors or outdoors, out of concern that the risk of COVID-19 exposure is too great to Girl Scout members and families.**

In addition to these GSCM guidelines, follow the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for [Large Gatherings and Community Events](#), as well as the event/gathering guidelines from the State of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Health.

Outdoor Events

- Service Units may hold outdoor events provided, however, that the total number of persons in an outdoor setting at any one time shall not exceed the lessor of 25% of the outdoor venue's maximum occupancy, or 75 persons.
- Service Units must obtain prior approval and provide an event plan to GSCM before planning and holding any gatherings; **submit request and plan to membercare@gscm.org at least 30 days prior to the event.**
- Follow proper girl-to-adult ratios as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*.

Indoor Events

- Service Units may hold indoor events provided, however, that the total number of persons in an indoor establishment at any one time shall not exceed the lessor of 25% of the indoor establishment's maximum occupancy, or 50 persons (defined below).
- Service Units must obtain prior approval and provide an event plan to GSCM before planning and holding any gatherings; **submit request and plan to membercare@gscm.org at least 30 days prior to the event.**
- Follow proper girl-to-adult ratios as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*.

Required In-person Girl Scout In-person Activities Permissions and Waiver: Any Girl Scout or adult participating in ANY and ALL Girl Scout activities which are in-person, be it activities at the local troop/group or Service Unit level or a GSCM program/event, will complete **all three of the following required participation forms prior to participation:**

- [Updated GSCM Parent/Guardian Permission for Girl Scout Activities, Events and Trips](#)
- [Updated Girl and Adult Health Record](#)
- [GSCM Assumption of Risk, Release and Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19](#)

**Note: For Girl Scout troop/group activities and Service Unit activities, the troop/group leader is responsible for obtaining and maintaining these forms with troop/group records*

Symptoms and Temperature Screening: Prior to participation in any in-person Service Unit events and activities, all participants (both girl and adult) should be screened and have their temperature taken prior to admittance to the event/activity. A Service Unit volunteer should be designated to conduct a symptoms screening and take the temperature of each attendee upon arrival to the event/activity. Participants experiencing a fever or temperature higher than 100 degrees should not attend the meeting/event. Additionally, the designated Service Unit Event volunteer should ask the following questions of each girl and adult attendee upon arrival to the meeting/activity:

- Does your Girl Scout currently have a fever or had a fever in the last seven (7) days?
- During the previous fourteen (14) days, have you and/or your Girl Scout come in contact with anyone who had been exposed or has tested positive for COVID-19?
- Have you recently traveled to a state that is listed on the [State of Maryland Out of State Travel and Public Travel Advisory](#)?
- Is your Girl Scout/you presenting any symptoms of illness?

If the answer is 'yes' to any of the above questions, the girl/adult is not permitted to participate/stay for the event/activity or participate in a Girl Scout activity until they are either cleared by a medical professional, it has been 72 hours since signs or symptoms (without the use of fever reducing medication), or it has been fourteen (14) days since the last date of a confirmed exposure to COVID-19. Reference: [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) Symptoms of Coronavirus.](#)

Additional Event Safety Protocols

- Participant arrival and departure should be staggered as not to have a large waiting queue to enter the event.
- Service Unit meetings/events for are for currently registered girls and adults.
- To ensure and maintain proper social distancing measures, designate six-foot spacing with signage, tape or by other means. **NOTE: although girls/participants are wearing face coverings they need to maintain six-feet of distance from each other.**
- Provide participants with a means to sanitize hands during the event by ensuring clean, well-stocked restrooms (i.e. plenty of soap or hand sanitizer) and allow event volunteers to wash/sanitize their hands at least once every 30-minutes throughout the event.

- Post signage at each entrance and throughout the event venue advising participants of the requirement to wear appropriate face coverings during the event, **whether the event is held indoors or outdoors (note that the face covering guideline for events is different than the expectation for troop/group meetings and activities as at service unit events, there will be several troops and groups gathering together vs. just the members of one troop/group).**
- During the event, be it held indoors or outdoors, Girl Scouts should be in activity groups of no more than 10 girls and 2 adults; girls and adults are to remain in the same group (no changing group members) for the entire duration of the event. Event volunteers should have a record of which girls and adults are in each group and maintain this record with Service Unit records for a period of one (1) year. If possible, assign girls from the same family to the same group.
- Consider separate event stations where activity groups rotate from one activity station to another. Ensure that event stations are cleaned in-between each group.

Determination of Maximum Occupancy: Per the State of Maryland, “Maximum Occupancy” means that the maximum occupancy load of the facility under the applicable fire code, as set forth on a certificate issued for the facility by a local fire code official; or if no such certificate has been issued for the facility by the local fire code official, the maximum occupancy of the facility pursuant to applicable laws, regulations, and permits.

Event Risk Assessment Planning Tool: This current interactive map published by Georgia Tech College of Science can be helpful to Service Units in assessing the risk of holding an event in a specific state and county. To use the tool, enter the size of the event (i.e. number of participants) on the sliding scale and then click on the state and county name on the interactive map. Once the map link is clicked, a likelihood percentage appears which indicates the risk of COVID-19 exposure or the likelihood of contracting COVID at a gathering given the level of infection by county, nationwide.

[Georgia Tech - Event Risk Assessment Planning Tool](#)

[Georgia Tech College of Sciences - Homepage](#)