

## Camping



### About Camping

Camping, a great Girl Scout tradition, is one of the very first activities that Girl Scouts' founder Juliette Gordon Low encouraged for girls. The key to an enjoyable camping experience is being prepared—by packing just enough gear, supplies, and weather-appropriate clothing. Girl Scouts advocate for the Leave No Trace method of camping, which involves leaving a campground the way it exists in nature, free of garbage and human impact.

You can add to the experience with a camp kaper chart, dividing up cooking duties and getting creative when preplanning outdoor meals. Also, be ready with camp entertainment. Before you go camping, read about camping stories, songs, activities, and games.

**Note:** *When planning activities to do while camping, remember that girls are never allowed to hunt, go on high altitude climbs, or ride all-terrain vehicles or motor bikes.*

*For travel camping—camping as you travel—note the additional safety precautions listed.*

### Learn More

- [American Camp Association](#)
- [Go Camping America](#)
- [Leave No Trace](#)
- [ACA Coronavirus Safety at Camp](#)

### Coronavirus Safety at Camp

The health and safety of Girl Scouts at camp has always been, and continues more than ever to be, our highest priority. All the precautions taken to keep girls healthy and safe have never been more important as the world returns to what is likely the new normal, after months of shelter in place in most communities.

As with any Girl Scout activity, adults and girls should be very mindful to abide by the guidance that has been issued by the [Center of Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) for integrating back into regular life, which is to practice the basics.

The American Camp Association has provided an excellent source of guidance at: [COVID-19 Resource Center for Camps](#). Adults and girls should learn and follow the guidance set forth here by the American Camp Association. Additional information on [Health and Wellness at camp](#) and [Ways to Promote a Child's Resilience](#) from Child Trends are also available.

#### **Council Approval:** Required

Certificate of Insurance (COI) is required from vendor providing this activity. Visit <https://www.girlscoutsni.org/resources#COI> for information on requesting a COI from the venue.

#### **Activity Permitted for:** D B J C S A

**Required:** If attending a camp for the day, one adult must complete the GSNI Beyond the Troop Meeting training. If attending a camp overnight, at least one adult must be trained in GSNI Lodge and Outdoor Overnight Training.

**Implement practices that minimize potential for communicable disease once camp is in session:**

- Wear a mask and have your troop members wear a mask.
- Practice social distancing and proper spacing between campers.
- Practice appropriate hand washing and/or hand sanitizing. This assumes adequate wash basins and/or sanitizing pumps are at key locations.
- Cough/sneeze “into your sleeve.” Covering coughs/sneezes with one’s hands is no longer desired behavior; bury coughs/sneezes in one’s shoulder.
- Keep peoples’ hands away from their faces.
- Make it a camp rule that personal supplies—hairbrushes, pillows, caps, contact lens solution, make-up—belong to the owner and should not be shared with others.
- Make it a regular practice that one drinks only from one’s personal drinking cup; no sharing, even “to be nice.”
- Increase the social distance between people, especially in dining rooms.
- Sleep head-to-toe rather than nose-to-nose—in bunks, tents, and so forth. Go for the greatest distance between sleeping heads.
- For resident camps: maintain distance, ideally six feet, between beds and sleep head-to-toe (top bunk has the person’s head at one end, bottom bunk has the person’s head at the other end). Utilize universal precautions—for and by everyone. See the ACA Operating Guidance for specific recommendations by state. [State Operating Guidance for Summer 2021 | American Camp Association \(acacamps.org\)](#)
- Direct Health Center staff to isolate people with questionable symptoms until communicable illness can be ruled out.
- Instruct staff to direct campers complaining of gastro-intestinal upset to the health center staff for assessment. Do not wait for kids to throw up!
- Make certain that food service staff know and implement safe food handling practices.
- When food service personnel have questionable symptoms, especially those associated with the gastro-intestinal tract, keep them away from food preparation until appropriately improved.

**Camping with Daisies and Brownies**

A Daisy troop may participate in an occasional overnight camping experience. Daisies who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Daisies who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights.

Travel camping is not recommended for Daisies and Brownies.

Know where to camp when camping with Daisies and Brownies, which includes Girl Scout camps; public, private, state, and national parks; and sites deemed appropriate by local and state authorities.

Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions and for information on using a non-council-owned site. Search for campground locations at [Reserve America](#).

**Include Girl Scout Members with Disabilities**

Talk to Girl Scout members with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Always be sure to check with the location in advance to ensure they are able to accommodate those with disabilities.

**Equity.** In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities, consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the Girl Scout members in your troop that could affect their ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with members and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all Girl Scout members and their families feel comfortable and have access to whatever is needed to fully participate, such as proper equipment, prior experiences, and the skills needed to enjoy the activity.

**COVID-19 Guidelines.** Review the Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts section under the *Standard Safety Guidelines*. Be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. Always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare girls for this activity.

**Emergency Action Plan (EAP).** Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) before taking girls out for any activity and review it with the girls so they too are prepared. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, sudden illness, or sudden weather or water emergencies.

## Camping Checkpoints

**Safe camping locations** are Girl Scout camps, public, private, state, and national parks, and sites deemed appropriate by local and state authorities. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions and for information on using a non-council-owned site. The campsite should be able to provide evidence of one million dollars General Liability insurance and instructor certifications upon request.

**Verify leader/instructor knowledge, experience, judgment, and maturity.** Ensure that at least one adult is trained or possesses knowledge, skills, and experience in the following areas:

- outdoor program activities and leadership,
- girls' emotional responses to trips, including homesickness,
- trip planning in a girl-led environment,
- safety management,
- program activities specific to the trip,
- group dynamics and management, and
- outdoor cooking (if relevant).

**Ensure that supervision of girls and adults for travel camping include at least two adults who are additionally trained,** or have documented experience, in the following areas:

- Participation in similar trips.
- Familiarity with the area in which the trip is conducted.
- Physical fitness and skills necessary to support the group.
- Chosen mode(s) of transportation.
- Site orientation.
- Emergency procedures.
- Minor maintenance for equipment and vehicles, as appropriate.

**If travel camping** (using campsites as a means of accommodations), verify the following adult certifications and standards:

- For trips by small craft, one adult is currently certified as required by the safety activity checkpoints for any vehicle or vessel being used (canoe or kayak, for instance).
- For trips that involve swimming, one adult who is present is currently certified in basic lifeguarding.
- Each driver of motorized transportation is at least 21 years old and holds a valid license appropriate to the vehicle.
- No adult drives more than six hours per day, with rest breaks every two hours.
- If a trailer is used, make sure it complies with all state, local, and federal regulations for the areas of travel. The assigned driver is experienced in pulling a trailer. No girls or adult leaders ride in the trailer.
- No caravanning (cars following closely together, with the lead vehicle in charge) is allowed. Each driver must have information about the route and destination in addition to the cell phone numbers of other drivers.
- Ensure that girl and adult participants receive information about first aid kit procedures, emergency and rescue procedures, environmental awareness, and program plans for mode of travel and geographic area, as well as operational procedures (water purification, food preparation, camping equipment, sanitation, and food storage procedures).

**For sites without electric lights and toilet** facilities (otherwise known as primitive campsites):

- Choose and set up your campsite well before dark.
- Use a previously established campsite if available.
- Make sure the campsite is level, below the tree line, and located at least 200 feet away from all water sources.
- Avoid fragile mountain meadows and areas with wet soil.
- Avoid camping under dead tree limbs.
- Use existing fire rings if a fire is necessary.
- If a latrine is not available, use individual cat holes—holes for human waste that are at least 200 feet away from the trail and known water sources—to dispose of human waste.  
*Note: Cat holes are not permitted in some areas, so follow local sanitary codes or alternative instructions in those areas.*
- Wash dishes and do personal bathing at least 200 feet away from water sources.
- Store food in a secure location away from tents and out of reach of animals.
- Where necessary, use a bear-proof container to store food or, if allowed or appropriate, hang food at least ten (10) feet off the ground from a rope that's stretched between two trees. If the site is in bear country, check with local authorities for additional precautions.

## **Sleeping Arrangements**

On trips where male volunteers are part of the group, it is not appropriate for them to sleep in the same space as girl members. Always support and maintain an all-girl atmosphere for sleeping quarters. Men may participate only when separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms are available for their use. In some circumstances, such as public venue (museum or mall) overnights, with hundreds of girls, this type of accommodation may not be possible. If this is the case, men do not supervise girls in the sleeping area of the event and the adult-to-girl ratio is adjusted accordingly.

Always avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. An exception is made for family members during events such as parent-daughter or family overnights where one family may sleep together in an area specifically designated to accommodate families. Also please note the following:

- Each participant has their own bed. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed.
- Girls and adults do not share a bed; however, some councils make exceptions for mothers and daughters.
- It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area (tent, cabin, or designated area) with the girls, but if an adult female does share the sleeping area, there should always be two unrelated adult females present.

If possible, men should have their own designated bathroom. If a unisex bathroom is used, the door must have a working lock, or a system for notifying others that the bathroom is in use. This system should be reviewed and understood by all girls and adults.

Men should not have to walk through the girls' sleeping area to get to the bathroom. When camping in tents or single room cabins, men must stay in a tent or a cabin that is separate from the girls or women.

During family or "he and me" events (in which girls share sleeping accommodations with men), ensure the sleeping details are clearly explained in a parent/guardian permission slip.

More than one family may use a tent or single-room cabin during these events only if both families agree.

In public venue overnights, such as museums or at malls, ask if there are separate sleeping area and bathrooms for men. If no such areas exist, designate an area out of the way or off to the side so that men are not sleeping alongside the girls.

For long distance travel, men must have separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms away from girls. Each participant should have their own bed. If girls want to share a bed, they must obtain parent/guardian permission. Girls and adults may not share a bed, however, though some councils may make exceptions for mothers and daughters.

Women are not required to sleep in the sleeping area (for example, a tent or cabin) with girls, but if a woman does share the sleeping area, two unrelated women must always be present.

### **Safety Gear**

- Clothing, including a rain jacket or poncho that can be layered and is appropriate for the weather.
- Socks with sturdy shoes, hiking boots, or sneakers (no sandals, clogs, flip-flops, or bare feet).
- A sleeping bag that is rated for the anticipated temperature.
- A flashlight and other battery-powered lights for indoor use (no candles, kerosene lamps, portable cook stoves, heaters, or other open-flame devices are to be used inside tents).
- A first aid kit.
- Insect repellent.
- A hat or bandana.

- A hat, gloves, and thermal underwear for cool temperatures.
- Flame-resistant tents or tarp (no plastic tents).
- A map and either a compass or a GPS.
- Mosquito netting, where necessary.
- Cooking supplies (pots, pans, utensils, mess kit, dunk bag, etc.).
- A cooler for food storage.
- Portable cook stoves and fuel whenever possible (to reduce the use of firewood).
- A flashlight or propane-fueled lantern (for outdoor use).
- A water purification kit.