

Transporting Girl Scouts

How parents decide to transport Girl Scouts between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities, in which a group will be transported in privately owned vehicles, arrange qualified drivers and ensure:

- Every driver must be a registered, trained, background-checked member (approved adult volunteer) at least 21 years old, and have a safe driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle, and meets council standards and policies for driving and transportation.
- Girl Scout youth members never drive other members to, from, or during activities or field trips.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, registered, trained, and background-checked members (approved adult volunteers) in the vehicle, one of whom is female.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, registered, trained, and background-checked members (approved adult volunteers), one of whom is female. If a vehicle is transporting a male adult volunteer, a female volunteer who is registered, background checked and trained must be present in the vehicle.

Plan for Safe Driving

- Review and implement the standards in the [Checklist for Drivers](#), later in this section. Share it with all drivers, in advance. Build possible delays into your schedule. Allowing time for traffic or other delays will help prevent urgency and stress, which can be dangerous when driving.
- Provide directions for each vehicle.
- For driving trips of more than a few hours, plan a stop where all cars can meet and gather. This will avoid having drivers follow too closely or worry about being separated from the group.
- Anticipate stops every couple of hours for drivers to rest and refresh. Let drivers know they can stop more often if needed.
- Arrange for relief drivers if drive time will last six hours or more.
- In each vehicle, there should be a first aid kit, and permission and health history forms for each person in that car.
- All drivers must be registered as Troop Volunteers with a background check and complete the [415 Learn the Basics: Troop Volunteer Training](#) path that includes Troop Safety and Girl Scout Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention training.

Borrowing or Renting Vehicles. When borrowing or renting vehicles, drivers may rent cars or minivans in their own names without council staff signature. Make sure the car is adequately insured; consult the driver's auto insurance company. Know who is responsible for damage to, or loss of, the vehicle. Be sure the vehicle is used only for Girl Scout purposes, as non-related use can compromise coverage. When renting a vehicle for a Girl Scout-sanctioned trip, the Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois requires individual renters and designated drivers to provide their own vehicle insurance to the rental venue. Vehicle rental companies will need to provide their Certificate of Insurance (COI) with the Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois listed as Certificate Holder. [More information about obtaining Certificates of Insurance from venues can be found here.](#)

To avoid surprises, read rental agreements to be familiar with the terms of the agreement and to be sure you comply with the terms. For example, in many cases the minimum age of drivers is 25, and the maximum age is often under 70.

Chartered Vehicles. Chartered vehicles, such as buses, are contracted, usually with the driver or operator, for a group's exclusive use. Volunteers may not sign contracts for charters even if there is no cost. Contact your council to request approval and signature. Please send all charter vehicle contracts to customer-care@girlscoutsni.org.

Taxis and ride-sharing services, including Uber and Lyft, may be used with these guidelines:

- **An adult should ride in each vehicle** with Girl Scouts when multiple vehicles are being used.
- **Wait for your ride in a safe place.** For taxis, when possible, call (or ask your hotel to call), rather than hailing from the street. Use a taxi stand at airports. Stand away from traffic while waiting.
- **For taxis**, check that the taxi is appropriately marked.
- **For ride-sharing services:**
 - Check that the vehicle's license plate, make, and model match what is shown in the app.
 - Compare the app's photo with the driver. Ask for their name and be sure it matches the app.
 - Ask, "Who are you here to pick up?" They should have your first name, but no other information about you.
- **If you feel uncomfortable for any reason, do not get into the vehicle.** If you become uncomfortable, end the ride. Report your experience to the taxi service or ride-sharing app.
- **Send your in-town trip contact the name of the driver and your destination.** Most apps have a sharing feature for this purpose.
- **Do not share information about the group or where you are staying with any strangers.**
- **Each passenger must wear a seat belt.**
- **Enter and exit curbside.**
- **In foreign countries**, consult a local expert about how best to call for taxis or rides. Reputable practices vary.

Recreational Vehicles, Campers, and Trailers. Whether privately owned or rented, these may be used if the driver has the appropriate training and license for the vehicle. Passengers must use seat belts when the vehicle is in motion and may not ride in a trailer or in the bed of a truck.

Vans Designed for 15 Passengers. Volunteers are not encouraged to operate 15-passenger vans as the design of the vehicles makes them inherently unsafe for the average non-professional driver. School buses, minibuses, and minivans are preferred. For atypical circumstances, when another option is impossible, make sure to follow this checklist before driving Girl Scout members in a van designed for 15 passengers:

- Prior council approval must be obtained, which will require a Certificate of Insurance (COI) from the vehicle rental venue.
- The van was built in 2011 or later.
- Driver assistance technology has been installed:
 - Electronic stability control
 - Tire pressure monitoring
 - Side curtain airbags
 - Center aisle
- Insurance is valid. Check with the auto insurance company to confirm.
- All other safety measures are in place; see the [Checklist for Drivers](#).
- No gear is loaded on top, or heavy gear in the back of the van.
- Van is not overloaded.
- Drive with headlights on, in the right-hand lane when possible.
- Inspect tire conditions and pressure before each trip.
- The driver has the appropriate license in the state(s) where the van will be driven. This type of van may need a commercial driver's license.

***Note:** These rules do not apply to commercial or professionally operated services such as airport shuttles. Professionally operated commercial vans designed for 15 passengers are permitted.*

Commercial and common-carrier transportation is available to the public. They include buses, trains, airlines, ferries, and similar modes of transportation. In the United States, these are regulated and can be considered safe. Keep it girl-led; members can compare fares and schedules and make decisions with adult support.

When traveling internationally, consider the transportation options available in the host country and determine safety and accessibility specific to the location.