

Stepping Out

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Thank You for Volunteering!

You will need to access the following resources to complete this course and the test:

Stepping Out Manual

[Volunteer Essentials](#)

[Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)

All [Forms](#) are listed or can be found using the search box and searching by the form name.

All of the above resources are available on the Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast website at www.girlscoutscoc.org.

INTRODUCTION

Stepping Out is a course designed to prepare adult volunteers, both leaders and/or troop caregivers, in the supervision of girls outside of regular meetings.

After completing the course, either at home or live, you will be equipped with the skills necessary to safely and effectively lead girls to step out into the world through field trips and travel. This course is also a stepping stone between a regular troop meeting and wider outdoor experiences. It covers the necessary skills and planning so adults can provide girls with safe and enjoyable daytime experiences outside the meeting place. Activities that involve outdoor overnight camping or outdoor cooking using a heat source of any kind are beyond the scope of this course.

Certification is granted once the Stepping Out test at the end of this document is completed and passed, valid for three years. Tests are graded by Learning Facilitators.

Stepping Out Learning Objectives

Stepping Out from the regular troop meeting is a vital part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. It is how many of the GSUSA program goals and objectives are met. Stepping Out training is the beginning of anything and everything experienced by girls on an outing – travel, overnights, friendships, and FUN!

Please remember that although this training is for adults, girls need to take part in the planning and preparation of events just as much as they participate in it. Girls are often more capable than we think. Usually, all that is needed is a little guidance and a few suggestions. They can come up with loads of ideas which they will enjoy doing. Just about anything is possible in the eyes of the girls planning to step out the door.

At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the purpose of stepping out of the regular meeting location in Girl Scouting.
2. Identify the possibilities and limits in travel, cooking, and overnight programs for a Girl Scout troop or group.
3. Assess and choose appropriate activities in the progression of outdoor activities, while including girls in the decision-making and planning.
4. Know characteristics that can make a good activity a great one and provide new experiences for girls utilizing that knowledge.
5. Find and use these resources when planning activities: Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials
6. Utilize the appropriate additional permission forms for activities outside of troop meetings.
7. Coordinate with other troop/group leaders to ensure adequate and sufficiently trained adult supervision.
8. Take the next step to Outdoor Training.

Stepping Out Mission

In aiming to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place, many of the programs from badge earning to Journeys ask Girl Scouts to venture out into the world, meet people, and explore places in their quest to grow and develop into the leaders of tomorrow. Stepping out from regular troop meetings is an integral part of this Girl Scout Mission.

In addition, care for the environment is a focus of the national Girl Scout program. Being out in nature fosters leadership, confidence to seek challenges, and problem-solving skills in girls. Girls who have opportunities to get outside are more likely to connect with and care for the environment. Taking girls outside is great for girls and even better for our world.

The Stepping Out-trained volunteer can encourage and facilitate field trips into the neighborhood or to a museum, travel to new places, go on overnight experiences, and undertake activities outside in the fresh air.

Outdoor Education for Girl Scouts

The objectives of outdoor education in Girl Scouting are:

- To promote the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of every girl and leader.
- To develop resourcefulness, initiative, self-reliance, and recognition of the worth and dignity of each individual.
- To provide opportunities for practice in democratic living.
- To develop a sense of responsibility, qualities of leadership, and an awareness of the capacities of all people.
- To provide an inner satisfaction, a sense of awe and wonder, and a deep enjoyment for both girl and leader.
- To provide a sense of accomplishment.
- To stimulate each girl's awareness of the scope of the natural world.
- To develop each individual's understanding of the environment, leading to responsible action.

From Troop Camping, GSUSA booklet.

Key Ingredients for Successful Adventures

The following chapters of this course will describe how a Stepping Out-trained adult can ensure that the Key Ingredients are included in travel, field trips, and experiences outside in nature with Girl Scouts.

Progression: Girls must first acquire the basics to progress to more difficult skills. In the Out-of-Doors progression, we 'look out' and 'meet out' before attempting field trips and 'explore out' activities.

Readiness: A girl's readiness for a particular activity, whether a slumber party, a leaf rubbing, or a volleyball game, is not as dependent upon age as it is upon her physical and emotional maturation.

Girl-Led Planning: Girl planning and girl/adult partnership are inherent in the Girl Scout program. Girls have the opportunity to make their own decisions while benefiting from adult guidance and facilitation. When they help plan an activity, they are more apt to buy into it, which increases opportunities for growth and learning.

Safety and Standards: Girls should have the opportunity to understand and address safety concerns while learning to take responsibility for their well-being. It is the leader's responsibility to follow and share the Safety Activity Checkpoints with girls during planning.

Environmental Protection: Girls learn about the environment every day, and every day, Girl Scouts ask how they can take action to respect and protect the planet we all call home.

Leave No Trace Video - <https://vimeo.com/172739251>

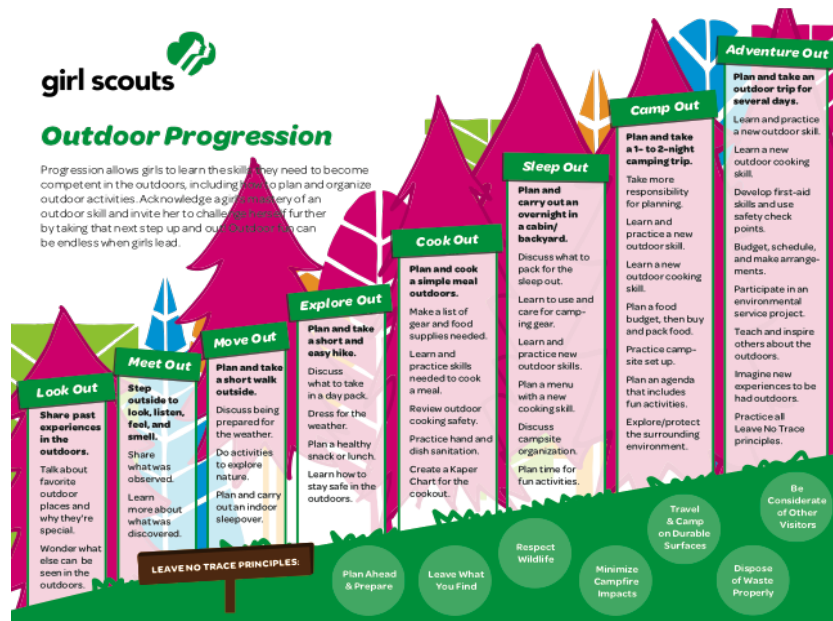
Skill Development: Girls should be developing life skills, discovering their interests, and sharing their talents.

FUN! Activities in the out-of-doors should be experiential and hands-on, providing opportunities for positive interaction and a sense of accomplishment or adventure. The leader's attitude often shapes the girl's perceptions, so be prepared for exploration and always bring a sense of humor!

PROGRESSION

The Girl Scout program is built on the foundation of progression—acquiring the skills needed to progress to more difficult or highly skilled activities. Progression underlies all avenues of Girl Scouting, from grade-level handbooks to community service, Girl/Adult planning to use of tools, tent camping to backpacking, or roasting a marshmallow to preparing a gourmet dish in a Dutch oven.

Progression is the key! 🗝️



Role of the Stepping Out Volunteer

Girls supervised by adults whose highest level of Girl Scout training is Stepping Out may participate in activities on the scale of Outdoor Progression at levels up to and including **Explore Out**. Limited **Cooking Out** and **Sleeping Out** activities are also permitted. These include cooking

with heat on traditional indoor appliances and overnight experiences using indoor accommodations. The Stepping Out-trained adult guides girls' activity choices during planning to make sure that progression is appropriately followed to the age, experience, and maturity of the girls.

It is important to remember that following progression will make all the difference in the outcome. Too much too soon may create a bad or unsafe experience, while too little too late may cause girls to become uninterested. In each aspect of travel and outdoor activities, begin where the girls (and you) feel comfortable. Girls new to the troop/group will catch on quickly if the more experienced ones share their skills and knowledge, and girls who teach other girls will feel empowered when their knowledge and expertise are recognized. Girl-led teaching is an especially rewarding method for both new and experienced troop/group members.

Travel Progression involves increasing the time and distance of trips as girls age and gain experience visiting new places away from their families. Begin with a brief local trip away from the meeting place for the youngest girls, followed by a day-long outing, then an indoor overnight, then a weekend trip to a nearby city or destination, an extended trip several days long or farther away, a trip out of state, and finally an international trip.

Troops interested in sleeping outdoors, camp outs, and adventure outs require an adult to be Outdoor Trained.

Girl Scout Travel Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent travelers, including how to plan and organize trips. Because when girls take the lead, the possibilities are endless.

LOCAL FIELD TRIPS

Get your travel feet wet! Walk to a nearby garden, or take a short ride to a firehouse or other local spot.

Keep it girl-led: girls choose the location.

DAY TRIPS

Take an all-day trip!

Keep it girl-led: girls choose the location and activity (perhaps working toward a badge) and make plans for lunch.

OVERNIGHTS

Start with one night, maybe at a camp or museum. Progress to a weekend trip in a nearby city or state park.

Keep it girl-led: girls plan the activity and meals, create travel games, and pack their own overnight bags.

REGIONAL TRIPS

Spend three to four nights away somewhere a few hours from home.

Keep it girl-led: girls plan key details of the trip, such as the activities, the budget, the route, and lodging.

(Extended trip insurance required.)

NATIONAL TRIPS

Travel the country! Trips often last a week or more. Girls should think beyond a typical vacation location and consider historical sites, museums, or national parks!

Keep it girl-led: girls lead the entire planning process and might add a community service or Take Action project.

(Extended trip insurance required.)

INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

Travel the world! These life-changing trips usually take one to three years to prepare. Consider visiting a WAGGGS World Centre!

Keep it girl-led: girls download the Global Travel Toolkit and plan their entire trip (including learning about the language, culture, passports and visas, exchange rates, etc.).

(Extended trip insurance required.)

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

Older girls with national or international travel experience can travel nationally or internationally independently through council-offered travel opportunities or GSUSA's Destinations program. Check with your council, or visit the Girl Scout Destinations website!

Check with your council about age requirements. Girls should have experience at every level of the progression before moving on to the next level. For regional travel, girls must be Juniors or older. For national and international trips, girls must be Cadettes or older.

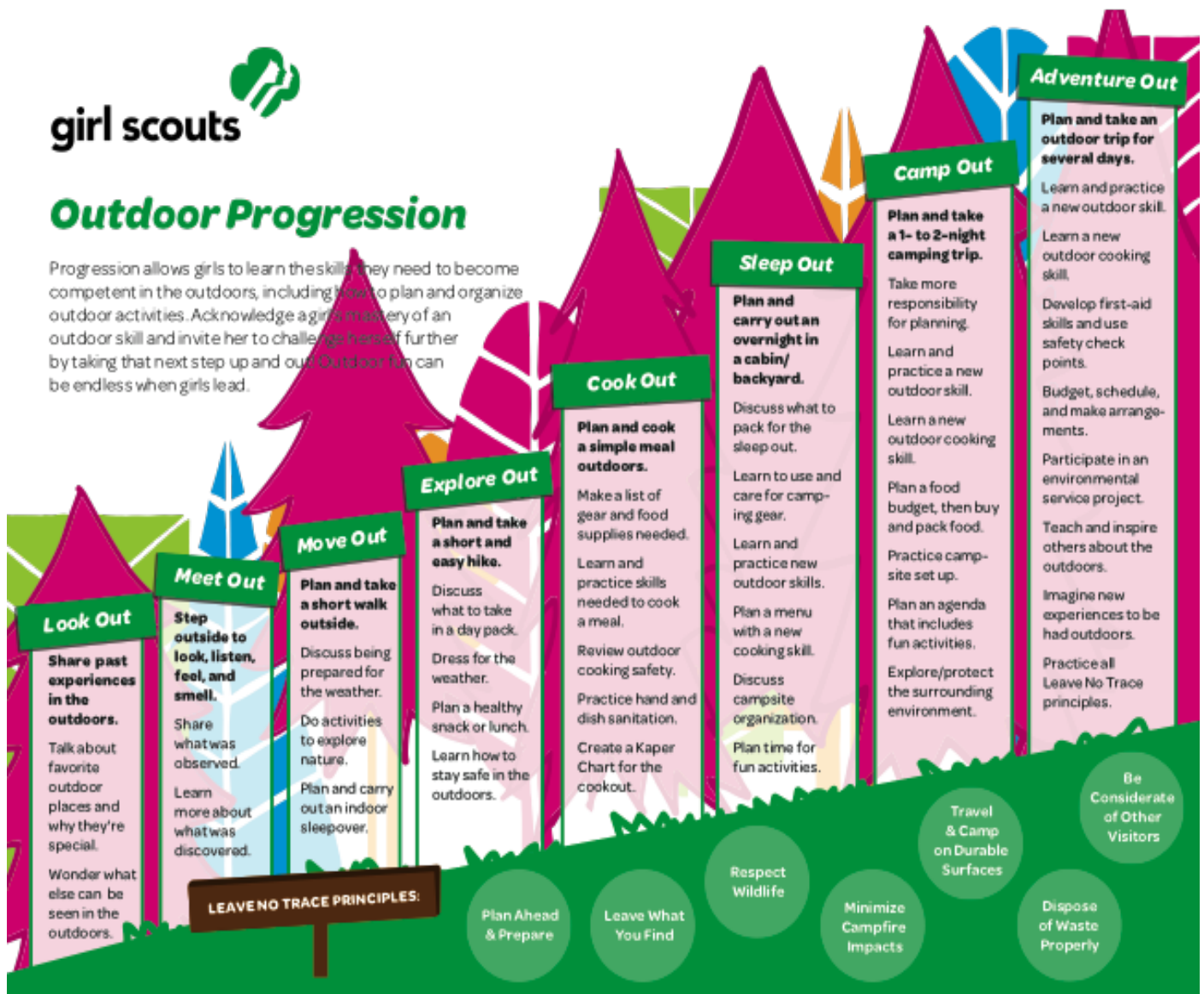
When moving up to each level of the progression, consider girls' independence, flexibility, decision-making skills, group skills, and cross-cultural skills.



girl scouts

Outdoor Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent in the outdoors, including how to plan and organize outdoor activities. Acknowledge a girl's mastery of an outdoor skill and invite her to challenge herself further by taking that next step up and out! Outdoor fun can be endless when girls lead.



READINESS

The Stepping Out trained adult will consider the readiness of the entire group for any field trip, travel, or outdoor adventure. Consider the least ready individual when deciding to proceed with an activity or trip; use progression to build readiness and work up to an activity. Remember to consider the girls and the adults!

Are the Girls Ready?

Including girls in the planning process allows you to gauge their readiness and gives them a chance to voice their concerns. Discuss expectations, particularly in regards to safety and courtesy. The primary readiness characteristics are:

Emotional Maturity

- Wants to go.
- Is not afraid to be away from home or caregivers.
- Is willing to sleep, eat, and play with all girls.
- Can cope with unknowns:
- Strange places (including bathrooms)
- Night noises or darkness

Skills and Knowledge

Knows her caregivers phone number and can ask for help.

- Can work together.
- Able to care for herself – brush teeth, comb hair, etc.
- Can keep her personal belongings organized.

Experience

- Follows directions well.
- Has spent time away from home.
- Able to perform tasks on a Kaper Chart.
- Able to participate with the group.

Before embarking on an outdoor or travel adventure, do a self-check. It is important to not only make sure the girls are ready but that the adults are too. Don't get in over your head! Progress slowly, staying within your comfort level. Remember, your attitude is contagious. If you progress too quickly, it might create a rough situation where you feel disappointed, overwhelmed, etc. These feelings will be echoed by your troop/group. Do not start an epidemic; keep yourself in check.

Safety Activity Checkpoints includes information that is relevant to assessing the readiness of the group, including the adults. The section "Adult Supervision" contains information on the minimum required adult supervision according to the number and age level of the girls

AM I READY?

Gage your own comfort level, ask yourself.

What is my comfort level in the outdoors?

What are my experiences in the outdoors or how much experience in the outdoors do I have?

Do I have any phobias relating to the outdoors?

How will I keep them in check?

Do I need training or is training required for the activities we wish to do?

Do I need any special skills for the activities we wish to do?

What are my expectations of the girls, others, and myself?

Do I have a support network from caregivers?

participating. Review the chart on adult-girl ratios and make sure you understand how to determine the number of adults needed for your particular plans.

Involving Chaperones

To determine how many volunteer chaperones the girls will need on the trip, see the adult-to-girl ratios in Safety Activity Checkpoints. As you ask for chaperones, be sure to look for ones who are committed to:

- Being a positive role model.
- Respecting all girls and adults equally, with no preferential treatment.
- Creating a safe space for girls.
- Prioritizing the safety of all girls.
- Supporting and reinforcing a group agreement.
- Handling pressure and stress by modeling flexibility and a sense of humor.
- Creating an experience for and with girls.
- Getting fit (appropriate to the trip).

Consider the number of chaperones to bring. More adults than the minimum required ratio may hinder girls' interactions and group cohesion, or it may allow flexibility to break into smaller groups. Consider the wealth of experience in the adult volunteers available to your group, who may enjoy lending their expertise.

GIRL-LED PLANNING

A cornerstone of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is that Girl Scouting is girl-led. Girl-led decision-making happens in all areas of scouting, including travel and outdoor adventures. Girls will experience more leadership skill-building, adventure, and success when they are empowered to lead.

Younger girls will need more guidance from adults. For example, leaders may give Daisies and Brownies a couple of appropriate options to choose from. As girls grow older and gain experience, they can take on more decision-making responsibilities. Older girls can research choices on their own and make informed budgetary and itinerary decisions.

The **Stepping Out volunteer** facilitates activities and guides decision-making as girls create their own experiences. Give girls as much responsibility as you think they can handle, and then give them a little more. Effective guidance includes making sure girls are having respectful discussions, listening to each other, including everyone, and double-checking that their choices are reasonable.

Whether your girls are selecting a Journey or planning an event, they will need your support as they learn to take the reins. Girl-led planning for your Daisies and Brownies could mean that you consolidate their ideas and offer guided questions to help them reach decisions. Juniors will have more focused thoughts about what they'd like to do during their troop year but may need some support as they start planning activities. You might encourage them to review GSUSA's Safety Activity Checkpoints document ahead of outdoor activities or use the Volunteer Toolkit to help plan meetings.

Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors can take on more responsibilities, but your role as an advisor is still crucial as your girls hone practical skills that will benefit them throughout their careers, like planning an event from start to finish, taking the lead on a service project or budgeting for activities.

Planning a Great Outdoor Activity

Progression is the key to successful outdoor activities and programs. However, there are a few components that can make a good outdoor activity a great one.

When working with girls to determine what activities will be done on their adventure, guide the girls in their decision-making by keeping the following in mind:

Encouragement and Variety

All girls should be encouraged to participate in a variety of outdoor activities.

Quality and Quantity

When it comes to outdoor experiences, quality and quantity count. There are a wide variety of settings, from zoos and nature centers to camps and farms. Girls who develop a sense of deep appreciation and respect for the environment are the girls who have had many opportunities to discover and explore the natural world. Significant attitude changes occur in girls who have had exposure to multiple outdoor experiences.

Do It Outdoors

Physically doing activities in the outdoors has a greater impact on girls. You can supplement activities with videos, DVDs, computer games, or surfing the net, but nothing can take the place of an outdoor classroom.

See, Touch, Smell, Taste, & Hear

Connect the girls to the outdoors by using all of their senses. The smell of food cooking outdoors may be familiar, but what about the scent of dirt, wildflowers, pine, friendly skunk, or the air after a quick summer rainstorm? Have the girls seen a sunset, a sunrise, or gazed up into a starlit night in a peaceful outdoor setting? Can they feel the difference in the bark of a pine tree and an oak tree? With their eyes shut, sitting on a beautiful mountain, have they counted the many different sounds you may hear on a crisp autumn day? Fish, honey, and pine nuts are just a few of the many foods found in nature. Have their taste buds discovered the many treats nature has in store for them?

Keep It Real

Whenever possible, use authentic items or objects.

Hands-On

Keep girls involved by doing hands-on activities. Each girl can build her skills by doing rather than watching.



Making the Connection

Show interrelationships between different elements of the outdoors. Discuss how nature is connected; every living thing is dependent on another. Certain species of bird may solely depend on one type of tree to live. If our actions cause these trees to die, so may this bird species.

Fun and Challenging

Make it fun and safe with an element of challenge, based upon age level and progression. Make it different and unique. At times, focus on individual interest and firsthand experiences. Then the activities will have built-in motivation.

Leave No Trace

Follow the seven principles of Leave No Trace, doing activities with minimal impact on our natural environment. Girl Scouts leave a place better than they found it!

Plan It Together

Involve girls in planning the activities. Girl/adult planning and partnerships promote positive attitudes and strengthen girl and adult relationships.

Role Models

Surround the girls with good role models. Provide girls with positive adult role models who can set and maintain a positive tone in the group.

Being Enthusiastic

Enthusiasm creates enthusiasm.

Caution Statement: Do not forget to use one of the most important senses—COMMON sense. Avoid hazards by being on the lookout for dangers and taking precautions to avoid them, from slippery edges and poisonous plants to dangerous intersections and inappropriate horseplay.



Planning an Overnight in Six Meetings

Below is a suggested outline for how you can incorporate girl-led planning for an overnight adventure with the responsibilities of the group's adult chaperones to put together a great overnight experience.

	Meeting Content	Leaders Do
Meeting 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorm ideas or vote on going.• Treasurer Report—do we have enough money to go?• Set Product Sales goals and plan money-earning events in addition, if needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make reservations.• Visit site if possible.• Review Safety Activity Checkpoints to ensure all precautions are followed.
Meeting 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan an agenda with the troop.• Plan a budget.• Create a shopping list.• Look at weather reports and discuss your packing lists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share agenda with families, including date & address.• Ask for adult volunteer support for shopping, transportation, chaperones, etc.• Turn in necessary trip forms.
Meeting 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan activities.• Make a sit-upon.• Look at a map to see where they are going.• Learn an active song and/or grace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send packing list home to caregivers.• Send permission forms home.• Display appropriate items to pack and what to leave at home.
Meeting 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make SWAPS.• Practice safety skills, emergency signal, buddy system, fire drill, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect permission forms.• Ensure all forms are up-to-date.• Set up transportation.• Check First Aid kit.
Meeting 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss expectations and behaviors for overnight.• Practice other skills.• Learn two quiet songs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with adult volunteers to discuss transportation, shopping, meals, etc.
Meeting 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a Kaper Chart.• Plan a Girl Scout's Own ceremony.• Review plans with troop.• Answer questions.• Give final details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Print directions.• Provide caregivers with agenda.• Get ready.• Have fun!

These suggestions are planning ideas (some are necessary, such as paperwork), but they do not all need to be completed, nor in the order given. They should be tailored to the age level and individual readiness of the group.

SAFETY AND STANDARDS

PART I: SAFETY GUIDELINES AND INSURANCE

Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls. We demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these standards at all times. Please take a moment to read **“Your Role as a Volunteer”** in the [Troop Management](#) section of Volunteer Essentials for additional details on each of the volunteer guidelines listed below. This step is especially important for adult volunteers who have not read the Volunteer Essentials guide recently, as it is updated annually.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Understanding the three keys to leadership.
- Sharing your knowledge with a positive and flexible approach.
- Working in partnership with girls, other volunteers, and council staff.
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities.
- Communicating with girls’ families regularly.
- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork.
- Overseeing the troop funds with honesty and integrity.

The role of the Stepping Out trained adult is to work with other group chaperones and leaders to ensure that these guidelines are communicated to girls, their caregivers, and any other participants in an activity.

A Note on Cell Phone Use: While a cell phone can be useful in so many ways while Stepping Out, it can also be a distraction both from the experience of the group and from the supervision that adults are there to provide. When chaperoning, be mindful of your phone usage, the example it sets, and the compromises in experience or safety that could result. Establish ground rules for appropriate cell phone use by the girls. Set specific break times for contacting friends or family at home. Keep individual privacy and online safety in mind.

Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC)

Health and safety must be a priority in every Girl Scout activity. Safety should be planned, respected, and practiced by all, but this does not necessarily imply burdens or cumbersome restrictions. When a troop learns about safety, more activities are at its command, and participants can feel relaxed and confident.

The Safety Activity Checkpoints are addressed to leaders who work with girls. It also serves as a resource for those adults who provide direct assistance or supporting service to leaders and councils.

When planning an outing or trip, begin by reviewing Girl Scout Activity Safety Standards & Guidelines, paying particular attention to Adult Supervision and First Aid requirements. Then, review the activity for further guidance.

Activities With High Risk

Generally, High-Risk permission is necessary for any activity of height, speed, requiring a helmet, or involving water for participants. All High-Risk activities require troops to complete a [Trip or High-Risk Approval Form](#) and a [High-Risk Parent Permission](#) slip.

Certain activities are not permitted by GSUSA. Please see Safety Activity Checkpoints for the most current list of activities.

Working with outside vendors: When planning an outing with a vendor, we recommend sending the vendor the safety activity checkpoints before you book with them, requesting confirmation that the vendor can abide by the guidelines.

Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow the development of individual girls. Girl Scouts' volunteer-to-girl ratios show the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls.

Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved volunteers present at all times, plus additional volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Any adult that is supervising girls must be an approved volunteer. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and screened before volunteering. One troop leader in every group must be female. Please refer to the chart below.

	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	<i>Two</i> unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for every:	<i>One</i> additional volunteer to each additional:	<i>Two</i> unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	<i>One</i> additional volunteer to each additional:
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K-1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2-3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4-5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6-8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9-10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11-12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

SWIMMING LIFEGUARDS AND WATCHERS RATIOS

Number of Swimmers	Lifeguards	Watchers (1:10 ratio)
1-10	1 adult (see exception for pools)*	1**
11-20	1 adult (see exception for pools)*	2**
21-25	1 adult (see exception for pools)*	3**
26-35	2 persons, at least 1 is an adult; others may be 16 years of age or older.	3-4**
36-50	2 persons, at least 1 is an adult; others may be 16 years of age or older.	4-5**

**Exception for pools: For swimming activities in public pools, hotels, cruise-ship pools, and backyard pools, the lifeguards are at least 16 years old and have American Red Cross Lifeguard Training certification or the equivalent.*

***Some states allow watchers to be under the age of 18, but in all states, they must be at least 16 years of age.*

Insurance

Girl Scouts offers many different travel opportunities so girls can see new places, meet new people, and learn about different cultures and ideas. As members of Girl Scouts of the USA, your membership provides basic secondary insurance (Plan 1).

For some of the activities you do as Girl Scouts, you will need to purchase additional insurance, especially for trips longer than two nights, activities involving non-members, and/or international trips. Additional insurance is purchased through the council using the Enrollment Form [here](#).

The **Stepping Out trained adult** is responsible for ensuring that activities and travel for their group are properly insured (with additional insurance purchased when needed) and that enrollment forms are submitted a minimum of three weeks before an event. Should an accident or injury occur that requires medical attention, the Stepping Out adult should make sure caregivers are aware of Girl Scout insurance coverage and assist them in reaching council for more information.

Optional insurance plans include:

Plan 2 is necessary whenever non-Girl Scouts attend Girl Scout events. It is also necessary for Girl Scout trips lasting longer than two nights and three days, in which case it must be purchased for all travelers with the troop/group for the duration of the trip, including registered Girl Scouts.

Plan 3 (Excess) covers members and non-members as participants, same as Plan 2 with the addition of sickness benefits when illness/symptoms occur while coverage is in place. Must be purchased for all participants.

Plan 3 (Primary) provides sickness coverage. It is identical to Plan 3 Excess, but the non-duplication provision does not apply. Must be purchased for all participants.

Plan 3PI is required for international travel. Must be purchased for all participants and covers accidents and medical costs.

See the **Enrollment Form** for price information. Note that there is a minimum price of \$5 for each enrollment form submitted. However, when completing the form, multiple separate events may be included in a single form. The \$5 minimum applies per form submission, not per event.

SAFETY AND STANDARDS PART II: OVERNIGHTS, LODGING, AND TRANSPORTATION

Review Travel / Trips in Safety Activity Checkpoints before planning any trips.

A Girl's First Overnight

Few young girls are ready for overnights at the same time. We highly recommend that the first group overnight be in a home-like setting. Include the girls in planning activities as age-appropriate. Discuss expectations, particularly in regards to courtesy and safety. Review what to bring, length of outing, and buddy system rules. Plan and practice a sound-off system so you can easily keep track of each other.

Family Camping

In family camping, each family is responsible for all cooking and sleeping arrangements while camping; the Girl Scout Volunteer provides approved outdoor activities (for example, looking at the stars or observing bugs). The Girl Scout volunteer does not provide or instruct girls on outdoor cooking, sleeping in soft-sided structures, fire building, pocketknife handling, or other camping skills unless the volunteer is an Outdoor Trained adult. In the absence of an Outdoor Trained adult, family camping is the only allowed outdoor option for overnight accommodations. Groups that have supervision by a Stepping Out trained adult can participate in overnight experiences with indoor accommodations.

Daisies may feel most comfortable in this setting. Family camping is likely to involve non-Girl Scout participants. Be sure to include the purchase of insurance for non-Girl Scout participants in planning for a family campout (See Plan 2 Insurance [Enrollment Form](#) on Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast [website](#)).

Sleeping Arrangements

The Stepping Out trained adult is responsible for ensuring that the following guidelines for safe sleeping arrangements are followed for any overnight trips.

- **Separate Beds:** Each participant has her own bed. Individual side-by-side sleeping bags are considered separate beds. Caregivers must be notified if girls are to share a bed.
- **Privacy:** Respect each person's modesty. Plan for private changing spaces on overnights or any events where changing of clothes may be needed (such as a trip to the beach).
- **Female Adult Supervision:** It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the same sleeping area (cabin, motel room, designated room in a museum, etc.) with the girls. If an adult female will use the same sleeping area as the girls, there should always be a minimum of two unrelated adult females present. Two adults should be accessible to girls during the night.
- **When Males Chaperone:** Males may participate in overnights only if separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms are available for their use. Males may not sleep in the same space as girls and women. In some circumstances, such as a museum or mall overnight with hundreds of girls, this accommodation may not be possible. If this is the case, males must either sleep in a separate area, or arrangements for female supervision must be made.
- **Family Arrangements:** During family or caregiver-daughter overnights, one family unit (including males) may sleep in the same quarters where areas are designated to accommodate a family arrangement.

Indoor Overnights

Overnight experiences and travel may involve accommodation in private homes, museums, hotels, or organized lock-in events. Planning for these activities vary in risk and requires different strategies depending on the accommodations chosen. At least one **Stepping Out trained adult** (male or female) per troop must be present in the facility for all indoor overnights. Girls should not enter a male sleeping area during sleep time, so ensure that a female chaperone is accessible during the night.

Accommodation Safety

- Know your girls. Have they been prepared for the situations they might encounter?
- Is the location safe? Utilize travel reviews and Google Street view.
- Hotels and motels with interior hallways and keyed building access are preferred over ones with open exterior doors.
- Suites for multiple occupants (i.e., an adult plus several girls) are preferred. Connected rooms are recommended.
- Girls cannot share a room with any males other than her family; confirm arrangements for separate sleeping and restroom facilities for males.
- Notify caregivers of any shared (same bed) sleeping arrangements.

- Make sure girls know where chaperones will be sleeping in case help is needed during the night.

Courtesy

- Respect each person's modesty. Make sure private spaces for changing clothes are available as needed.
- No running or inappropriate behavior that would reflect poorly on Girl Scouts.
- No inappropriate words, voices, or noises in the rooms, hallways, or public areas.
- Respect quiet time and facility usage hours (pools, workout room).
- Use resources wisely.
- Know reservation details about check-in/out times, persons per room. Carry a copy.

Be Prepared for Emergencies

- Designate a safe place outside the building in case of an emergency evacuation. Consider practicing the route if destinations aren't obvious.
- Make an "If we get separated" plan and communicate it to all participants. Practice the buddy system and head counting sound off.
- Share itinerary with all participants and their caregivers.
- No swimming unless there is a lifeguard and watchers per the Swimming Safety Activity Checkpoint.
- Consider whether meals, especially hotel provided continental breakfasts, are appropriate for all participants, or will you need to supplement due to health/allergy issues?

Overnight Challenges and Suggestions

Here are some typical challenges and solutions for group overnight issues:

Issue	Suggestions
Emotional or Physical Complaints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling excluded. Feeling bored. Feeling ill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix up the girls and assign partners. Assign tasks (Kaper Chart). Sing songs or play active games. Listen and address her concerns. Call caregiver in the event of illness.
Homesickness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregiver's overemphasis on being away. Missing family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage young girls to bring a picture of her caregiver. Make sure it is not another issue, for example, she had an accident. Distract with fun games. Allow girls to call home and reassure her it is okay. For Brownies and older, ask the girl to talk about her family, pets, things she likes to do at home. Sit or walk side by side with the girl instead of face-to-face when discussing with an upset girl. When private conversations are necessary, stay in view of other girls and/or adults to maintain safety.
Night sounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Night sounds and shapes are not so bad once you see what's making them. Use flashlights to pick out locations of sounds and shapes that might appear scary with the lights out before the lights go out for the final time. Consider bringing a nightlight, glow bracelets, extra flashlights.
Bed-Wetting Accidents happen, and for 10% of 8-year-olds, this is a <i>normal occurrence</i> . Focus on clean-up and let the girl lead the conversation comfort level. Consider bringing an extra bag or blankets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help the girl: have her wash herself and change clothes. Ziploc/bag her clothes or wash and hang dry as time permits. Air-dry her sleeping bag for the day. If possible, bring an extra sleeping bag. Ask a caregiver to bring a fresh sleeping bag.
Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set expectations before the trip with a group agreement. Try a new activity or partner/group. Recognize good behavior and model enthusiasm. Ask the girl to help others, lead a song, or give her a specific task. Letting girls have a say in the planning of the activity will decrease the likelihood of misbehavior. Offer a snack or a break. Fatigue and hunger can lead to behavior problems and short tempers for both girls and adults. If a girl becomes physical or you feel unable to handle the situation, then call the caregivers and send her home.

Transportation

Get Ready to Go!

The **Stepping Out volunteer** can help the group get ready to go. Encourage girls to be involved in making decisions on what to bring and to pack things themselves. Communicate with caregivers and provide packing lists that include what to bring and what to wear, even for smaller day trips.

Packing Reminders:

- Snacks and bulk water to refill water bottles.
- Refillable water bottles.
- Trash bags and supplies in case motion sickness.
- Sunglasses, hats, Chapstick, sunblock & bug spray
- Suggestion: Pack two bags per girl —one to carry with them and one inaccessible while traveling.
- Be specific on baggage limits due to vehicle storage and the ability of girls to carry their own gear.
- Stow all cargo so that sudden stops or impact won't result in injury.

When traveling together as a group, the **Stepping Out trained adult** should check that travel plans adhere to guidelines found below for public or private transportation and in the section **“Plan Transportation in Advance” within Safety Activity Checkpoints.**

Choose Public Transportation – Whenever possible, choose public transportation (trains, commercial airlines, bus lines, and ship lines). These common carriers are preferable because they have set standards for equipment, personnel, and insurance.

- Discuss behavior expectations with girls: Both personal safety and respect for other passengers.
- Have an emergency plan.
- Confirm tickets/reservations for each rider.
- Follow all rules required by the carrier.
- Stow belongings properly: Ensure items will not fall on passengers, keep aisles clear, and do not take up extra seats.
- Be prepared: Know the route, fares, wait times, transfers, gate numbers, walking distances, etc.
- The use of Uber/Lyft or any similar “shared vehicle transportation” company is not recommended.

Private Transportation – If public transportation is not possible, private vehicles are suitable for Girl Scout travel only if:

- Drivers are approved volunteers at least 21 years old and have a good driving record, valid license, and registered/insured vehicle.
- Each passenger is in a legal seat, wearing a seatbelt at all times (Camper/RV passengers must wear seatbelts and must sit in seats designed by the manufacturer for that purpose).

- Drivers adhere to all state laws, including those regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
- The following are NEVER suitable for transporting girls: Flatbed or panel truck, the bed of a pickup, fifth-wheel camper trailer, campers that fit onto pickup flatbeds, or the body of any other trailer.
- The rental of 15-passenger vans is not recommended, and a commercial license is required to carry 12 or more passengers.

In case of an accident, the vehicle owner's insurance is the primary applicable insurance.

Drivers carrying Girl Scouts must carry a:

- ☐ First Aid Kit

and the following paperwork:

FOR EACH VEHICLE:

- ☐ First aid log
- ☐ Council Emergency Procedures Form
- ☐ Incident and Injury Report Form
- ☐ Troop Roster (suggested, not required)

FOR EACH GIRL IN A VEHICLE:

- ☐ Annual Permission
- ☐ Health History
- ☐ Medication Permission
- ☐ Permission to Release to other than a caregiver

SAFETY AND STANDARDS PART III: ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY PREVENTION

First Aid

NOTIFY COUNCIL WITHIN 5 DAYS OF ANY INCIDENT

REQUIRING MEDICAL TREATMENT

by following the procedures in the [Council Emergency Procedures](#) form and filing an Incident and Injury Report.

A **First Aid Kit** is required for all Girl Scout activities. See Safety Activity Checkpoints, First Aid on page 12 for suggestions. Forms to include in your first aid kit are the First Aid Log, Council Emergency Procedures, and Incident and Injury Report. A troop roster is also recommended.

A **First-Aider** is a person who has current certifications in First Aid and CPR. The Stepping Out trained adult is responsible for knowing when a First-Aider is required and ensuring that the group plans for their attendance, and assists the First-Aider in handling emergencies and communicating with council if needed. It is recommended that all troop meetings be attended by a First-Aider. A First-Aider is required for all travel beyond the regular troop meeting location and any cooking activities requiring the use of heat or sharp tools.

The First-Aider should be relied upon for the treatment of injuries and illnesses. The **Stepping Out** trained adult should ensure that medications are handled according to the council guidelines below.

Medication Guidelines

1. No girl will be given any prescribed or over-the-counter medication without prior expressed written approval and specific instructions from the custodial caregiver.
2. No medication will be administered unless it is in the original container. All over-the-counter medication that a girl brings MUST be marked with the girl's name on the label; all prescriptions MUST have the girl participant's name clearly printed on the label, as prescribed by a medical doctor.
3. All medications must be placed in a sealed plastic bag and will be taken from the girl's possession at the beginning of the activity, remaining with the adult in charge. Medications will be returned to the girl at the end of the activity. Girls with written permission from their caregiver may carry physician-identified emergency medications such as a bronchial inhaler or epi-pen. If such emergency medicine is in a bag or backpack, whether by a girl or an adult, the pocket should be clearly labeled with brightly colored tape or a lanyard for quick retrieval.
4. Participants may keep over-the-counter insect repellent (non-aerosol), sunscreen, and anti-itch lotion/ointment that they bring in their possession, but caregivers must provide written approval for use.

The Stepping Out adult can also help Girl Scouts “Be Prepared” to avoid accidents and injuries in the first place. This includes anticipating and preparing to handle adverse conditions such as animal or poisonous plant encounters, a lost Girl Scout, dressing for the weather, and taking safety precautions in the kitchen.

Poison Oak

“LEAVES OF THREE, LET THEM BE”

Its leaflets are shiny, in groups of three, and are definitely oak-leaf shaped. It usually grows as a low shrub with many white to red berries. It can cause a painful rash when the leaves or stems are rubbed against, even when the plant has no leaves at all.

To treat: Wearing gloves, pull back clothing upon itself, and then wash contact area with soap and cold water.

Anti-itch lotion/ointment may be applied if brought by the child and itemized on the Medication Permission form.



Wild Animal Safety

When Stepping Out with Girl Scouts, it is common to encounter wildlife within our council boundaries. As Girl Scouts, we respect all living things and do not harass or harm them in any way. Most often, you will encounter small animals, birds, reptiles, and insects that are no threat to people. Teach girls to avoid wildlife and to respect the animal's space within their natural environments.

Occasionally, Girl Scouts will encounter dangerous animals. One of which is the venomous Pacific Rattle Snake. If you encounter a Pacific Rattle Snake, back away slowly, and when safe to do so, turn and walk in the opposite direction. Never harass or harm any snakes.

Very rarely will Girl Scouts encounter large dangerous mammals such as mountain lions and black bears. These large animals do not frequent heavily populated areas; yet, there is a chance you may encounter one on a hike. If Girl Scouts encounter a large, dangerous mammal, make as much noise as possible and **do not run!** Mountain lions will eventually move away on their own. Backing away slowly and at an angle will appear non-threatening to a black bear, and it will likely lose interest and move away from your group.

If you encounter a large, dangerous mammal, contact 911 once it is safe to do so. Authorities need to track these animals if they are encroaching on heavily populated areas.

Animal Bites or Scratches

Girl Scouts should never feed or handle wildlife due to the possibility of bites or scratches. Feeding wild animals is dangerous for girls and bad for wildlife that may become sick or lose their foraging instincts from consuming human food. Wild animals willing to be handled by a human may be sick or injured. Call animal control instead. Even family pets can bite or scratch. Girl Scouts should not handle pets without the permission of their owners. *Any animal bite or scratch that breaks the skin must receive a medical examination right away.*

Dressing for the Weather

Faced with varying weather conditions in the out-of-doors, girls must be able to select, put on, and care for outdoor clothing. Be prepared for sudden temperature changes. Dressing appropriately can ensure well-being and enjoyment in cold or hot weather.

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint provides specific suggestions related to the event but there are some Girl Scout standards:

1. **CLOSED-TOED, CLOSED-HEEL SHOES** should be comfortable and provide good support; roomy but not too large. Make sure they're "broken-in" before long treks.
2. **SOCKS** help prevent blisters; tall socks reduce scratches and bug bites.
3. **LONG PANTS** offer better protection from the sun, wind, and scratchy plants than shorts.
4. **SHIRTS** that cover the shoulders and have sleeves offer sun protection.
5. **HATS** with a visor reduce sunburns, heatstroke, and eyestrain in the heat or sun. Sunglasses are also recommended. Headwear on a cold night conserves body heat.

Layering involves wearing several loose-fitting garments rather than one or two heavy garments. These must provide warmth/sun protection and ventilation without hindering mobility or adding weight. Helping the body regulate body temperature and prevent hypothermia (lowered body temperature) or hyperthermia (elevated body temperature) is very important.

- **SKIN LAYER** - Should wick perspiration away from your skin.
- **MIDDLE LAYER** - Light wool or fleece for warmth (as needed).
- **OUTER LAYER** - Protection from wind and wetness. May provide additional warmth.

Knowing the characteristics of fabrics to suggest to girls will make clothing selection easier.

- **COTTON** allows air circulation for staying cool. However, it soaks up and retains water. For instance, denim can double or triple in weight when wet and take a long time to dry.
- **LYCRA-SPANDEX** stretches and has options to retain heat or keep you cool. Most resist water and wick moisture from the skin. Quick-drying
- **FLEECE OR PILE** sheds water, insulates well, and is lightweight. When wet, pile gains only 2% in weight compared to wool's gain of 40%.
- **WOOL** helps retain body warmth even when wet. It dries quickly and sheds water. Wool blends are *the best* socks. However, wool is heavy, and washing care can be difficult. Wool blends are lighter and can be machine-washed.
- **NYLON** is available in many grades that vary in durability, strength, wind, and water resistance. These are usually quick-drying, resist abrasions, and can be inexpensive.
- **LIGHT COLORS** are best in the heat because they reflect the sun's rays.
- **DARK COLORS** are best in the cold because they absorb the sun's rays.

Other suggested items to wear:

- **BANDANAS** have many uses! For sun protection, to hold back hair, as a mask around fires. For first aid, as a sling, as a tourniquet, or to wet and apply to the neck when hot.
- **WHISTLE ON LANYARD** should be worn at all times and used in an emergency.

Preventing Lost Girl Scouts

Use the buddy system and count heads often. Prepare Girl Scouts with a meeting place where they can wait should they become separated from the group. Consider wearing name badge holders with emergency contact information inside when on field trips. Younger girls can learn their phone numbers. Older girls should have leaders' phone numbers. When hiking, carry whistles. Three blasts is the customary distress signal.

Streetwise Safety

- Have an adult at the front and the end of the group.
- On sidewalks, break up into twos and threes, but don't spread out and block the way.
- At crosswalks, wait together for a light and cross together without straggling.
- Along a roadway, walk on the left side facing traffic, forming a single line if narrow.
- Wear something white or fluorescent at night and carry a flashlight.
- Keep together on buses and trains, and be considerate of others.
- Follow the safety activity checkpoint when applicable.

Kitchen Safety

An **Outdoor Trained adult** is required before Girl Scouts receive instruction or cook with a campfire, barbecue, camping stove, solar heat, or any other outdoor heat source.

Under the supervision of a **Stepping Out trained adult**, Girl Scouts may use conventional indoor kitchen appliances for cooking with heat.

For any activity that includes preparing food with heat or sharp tools, a **First-Aider** is required.

With the supervision of a First-Aider, there are many things girls can learn to start their cooking experience, such as peeling and chopping vegetables or cutting fruit into shapes. They can also make healthy, blended smoothies and fresh juices. With the additional supervision of a Stepping Out trained adult, they could make soup on the stove or bake cookies.

Learning the skills for the safety, care, and cleanup of the tools to make these foods is just as important as the cooking itself.

The **Stepping Out trained adult** should facilitate establishing behavior expectations in the kitchen, fire safety rules, and emergency procedures with the girls. Have an appropriate fire extinguisher at hand and know how to use it. First aid for burns and cuts is mainly the responsibility of the First-Aider.

First Aid Badges & Safety Awards

Each age level has a First Aid badge and Safety Awards. Girls can progressively learn first aid and safety skills. Even Daisies can practice Stop, Drop, and Roll fire safety for the Safety Award before cooking with heat activity. The Stepping Out volunteer should consider the age, experience, and skill level of girls assessing readiness and appropriate progression when planning a cooking activity with girls and other leaders. Finally, the Stepping Out adult should make sure everyone is included by considering those with food allergies and religious or other dietary requirements.

The Girl Scout safety procedures are:

Around Heat Sources

- Pull back loose hair
- Remove dangling jewelry
- Roll-up long sleeves
- Do not wear plastic garments that may burn
- Wear closed-toe shoes

General kitchen safety include:

Food Handling

- Wash hands
- Keep raw foods separate from cooked ones
- Don't taste uncooked food
- Clean up spills right away to prevent falls

When Using Knives

- Learn knife skills with progression: plastic knife or butter knife before a sharp knife
- Pass knives by offering the handle
- Sharp knives are safer to use than dull ones
- Knives dropped into a tub of dishwater can be hard to see and cut someone

Around Stove or Oven

- Use a fire extinguisher or smother a fire with baking soda or a pot lid. Never use water on a cooking fire.
- Turn pot handles toward the back
- Keep potholders and towels away from burners
- Confirm appliances are off when finished

COOKING IDEAS

Remember that whether or not these cooking activities are planned, a Stepping Out training adult and/or First-Aider will be required when Girl Scouts need to use sharp tools or indoor conventional kitchen appliances (see the [Kitchen Safety](#) section above). Additional recipes and cooking ideas are located in other Girl Scout program materials.

S'mores in the Oven – place graham cracker squares in the bottom of a 9" x 13" dish and place a large marshmallow on top. Place under broiler until browned. Be ready with chocolate pieces and more graham crackers to cover them when removed from the oven.

International Fruit Salad – collect fruits to make a fruit salad from other nations and compare the location and climate to where we live.

Stone Salad – everyone brings a salad fixing. Prepare as needed and offer ingredients separately or mixed. Have the group make salad dressings and have a “senses test.”

Popcorn in a Bag – take one paper lunch bag and add 1/4 cup uncooked popcorn kernels. Close the bag with a rubber band 1” from the top and place it in the center of the microwave. Set on HIGH for 5 minutes. Turn off the microwave when you can count 3 seconds between pops. Use a potholder to move to a countertop and let cool for 1 minute. Cut off the rubber band and enjoy plain or add melted butter and other toppings.

Tacos or Burritos – girls can make everything from the tortillas to the salsa with the leader’s help.

Cookies! – Make cookies from a mix, basic ingredients, or use Girl Scout cookies and make a new creation. Incorporate a service project to say thank you to a local hero or say hello to a group that needs a cheerful visitor.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

In Nature

- Be sure to leave gates open or closed as you found them.
- Get permission to go on private property.
- Only pick fruits, vegetables, or flowers on private property when you have permission.
- Stick to paths across farmlands or go around fields when no trails exist.
- Stay on trails in wildlands, and leave trail signs and markers as you found them.
- Leave bark and twigs attached to trees.
- Leave trees, any wooden structures, and any sandstone formations clean and free of carvings or graffiti.
- Encourage appreciation of nature without desire for possession.
- Spare the wildflowers. Let them live in your heart, not die in your hand.
- Respect the home of any living thing.
- Keep lakes and streams clean and safe.
- Give wildlife of all sizes, even bugs, respect and space.
- Follow Leave No Trace (LNT) principles.



At the Beach

- If you pick something up from a tide pool, replace it as you found it. Even empty shells can become homes for small sea animals.
- Many living things attach themselves to rocks, only pick up living things that are not attached to their environment!

When Cleaning Up

- While picking up trash, use gloves. Girls are NEVER to touch medical refuse.
- Recycle glass and plastic bottles. Use thick, protective gloves for broken glass.
- Put recyclables in receptacles when available or carry them home to proper facilities.



Leave No Trace

Minimal impact is a method that encourages each person to live lightly on the land and leave no trace of their presence after a trip or activity outdoors. Minimal impact skills require each person to adopt a code of behavior that reflects a commitment to preserving, and outdoor activities

require planning and on-the-spot action. Through these experiences, girls learn and understand how they can apply these skills so they leave no mark on the land. Each girl can practice simple activities that will increase their understanding of minimal impact outdoor activities and camping. Please follow the principles of Leave No Trace when participating in outdoor activities. For more information on Leave No Trace, visit their website at lnt.org or contact the GSBDC Program Department at 304.345.7722 or 800.756.7616.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND FUN!

Travel and outdoor activities are excellent learning and leadership experiences for Girl Scouts. It is not a time for the Girl Scouts to play while the adults do the work. Adults teach, advise, supervise, and exercise patience, while Girl Scouts learn to do things for themselves. Each Girl Scout is responsible for helping with the planning, set-up, tear-down, and clean-up of all activities.

The **Stepping Out Volunteer's** role is to coordinate girl planning and communicate with caregivers about equipment, supplies, budget, group shopping, meals, and pocket money. Get girls involved by helping them assign responsibilities with a Kaper chart. Communicate with caregivers (and girls as appropriate for their age and progression) to delegate tasks concerning equipment, supplies, and food. Depending on the activity or trip, preparation might involve a personal packing list and gathering, borrowing, renting, or buying shared group equipment. Help girls create their packing list then share it with their caregivers. Involve girls in budgeting decisions as much as their age and experience allow and share all activity costs with the girls' guardians in advance.

Activity Ideas for Skill Development and Fun

- Games, songs, and skits are fun during car rides or sleepovers, no matter the age!
- Earn badges or complete steps for a Journey.
- Include balanced amounts of activity, fun, and downtime.
- Take ceremonies outside—Investiture, Girl Scout's Own, or Bridging.
- Explore beaches, parks, trails, mountains, museums, historic places, and businesses.
- Visit Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast events and Program Centers.
- Connect with other Girl Scouts.
- Include community service such as beautification, donation drives, flag ceremonies, and food pantries.

SIT-UPONS

Girl Scouts make sit-upons to use when the ground is damp or to keep their clothes clean. Below are a few suggestions for making sit-upons.

Pattern: Cut waterproof material (vinyl/plastic tablecloth or shower curtain) into two squares large enough to sit on. Choose filling material (newspaper, fiberfill, foam, or lightweight carpet scrap) and place it between the waterproof squares. Overcast the edges of the squares, fastening them together using a yarn needle threaded with yarn or string. Another option is to use a hole punch to punch holes 2" or 3" apart around all four sides and overcast using long shoelaces, knotting at the corners.



Try ECO Choices: Decorate and waterproof a pair of shorts or jean cut-offs, sewing the openings closed after stuffing. Use fabric or a belt to carry the sit-upon around your waist during hikes. Try other plastic-free, eco-materials such as burlap or canvas fabric for the outside and coconut coir, which is naturally water-resistant, for stuffing. Coconut coir is located in the gardening aisle of craft and home improvement stores.



Bucket Sit-Upons: Use a clean, 5-gallon bucket with a lid. Make a pattern of the top, inside part of the lid. Cut this circle out of stiff cardboard (the base) and another out of fiberfill, foam, or carpet (the filling). Cut a circle of heavy vinyl (the top) 3-4" bigger all around than your seating circles. Baste all around the vinyl circle with heavy thread to make a drawstring, with an inch border outside the sewing line. Lightly glue the filling to the inside of the top, then to the base. Using the end of the thread, gather the vinyl, pull tight, and tie it off. Duct tape the end of the thread to the cardboard. Apply epoxy, NOT a water-based glue, to the bucket lid and pad and press onto the lid. Leave a heavy item on top until dry.

S.W.A.P.S. (Small Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere)

These are handmade, little remembrances that one Girl Scout gives another. They may include event names, dates, and troop numbers. Do NOT include edible foods or personal information. Typically, they include a safety pin or some way to attach them to clothing or a hat.

Etiquette includes giving a SWAP, even when another girl may not have one to give. It is considered rude to give away SWAPS that were given to you. Carry the two separately.

Swapping promotes friendship, encourages girls to talk to one another, and is a great way to remember group events. Remember to make extras!



FORMS AND ADULT TRAINING

Annual Forms

A set of annual participation forms, described in the following table, is required for EACH GIRL for ALL Girl Scout activities. The troop or group leader should carry these forms for ALL events, including regular meetings. The driver of any vehicle transporting a Girl Scout who is not the driver's child also needs to carry these forms. (Consider carrying a Health History Form for each adult. It is optional but may be helpful in case of emergency.)

The table also includes forms for handling injuries and emergencies, which are to be carried during all activities and with drivers as part of their First Aid Kit.

FORMS FOR BASIC PARTICIPATION

Form Name	Purpose	Completed By:	Submitted To:
Forms for EACH GIRL for ALL Activities:			
Annual Permission Form	Grants permission to girls to attend local meetings or events that are within 60 miles of the normal meeting place or no longer than six hours in length, participate in non-high-risk activities, and participate in product sales.	Caregivers	Troop or Group Leader Drivers
Health History	Grants permission for girls to receive medical treatment in case of emergency.		
Medication Permission Form	Grants permission to administer medication.		
Girl Release to other than Guardian	List of those authorized to pick up a girl other than her caregiver.		
Injury and Emergency Forms:			
Council Emergency Procedures	Steps for leaders for handling an emergency.	n/a	n/a
Incident and Injury Report	For notifying council and Service Unit in case of an accident or injury.	Leader	Chief Operating Officer and Service Unit Manager
First Aid Log	For recording all first aid treatment rendered including minor injuries.	First Aider	Council, if requested

Beyond Basics: Forms and Submission Schedule

For field trips and travel away from the regular meeting place and for risky high adventure activities, additional approval may be required from the Service Unit, Girl Scout council, and caregivers to participate. These forms are described in the following two tables: Forms Description and Form Submission Lead Time.

NOTE: Volunteers are not authorized by Girl Scouts to sign any contracts or hold harmless agreements.

FORMS DESCRIPTION

Form Name	Purpose	Completed By:	Submitted To:	Permission Granted By:
Trip or High-Risk Approval Form	For requesting permission from Service Unit or council for participation in activities not covered by the Annual Permission Form	Leader	Council <i>Council sends a copy to your Service Unit</i>	Service Unit or Council
Parent Permission Form - Specific Trip	For requesting permission from caregiver for activities not covered on the Annual Permission Form	Leader	Service Unit	Service Unit or Council
		Caregiver	Leader	Caregiver
High-Risk Activity Permission Form	For requesting permission from caregiver for high adventure activities not covered on the Annual Permission Form	Caregiver	Leader	Caregiver
Physician Medical Release	Required for some activities including resident camp and international travel	Doctor and Caregiver	Leader (international travel) or Camp Administrator	Doctor and Caregiver
Plan 2/3 Activity Insurance	For requesting insurance for non-Girl Scout children and adults attending a Girl Scout event Or For insurance for certain traveling Girl Scouts	Leader	Council (to the mailing address on the form)	Council

FORM SUBMISSION LEAD TIME

Form Name	Activity Type			Submitted to SU in Advance of the Activity Date By:
	Approved by:	SU	Council	
Trip or High-Risk Approval Form (THR)	Any field trip more than 60 miles away from the regular meeting location. Any activity, event, or field trip that exceeds six hours, including time for transportation.	✓		2 weeks (3 weeks preferred)
	Any trip of three or more nights. Any trip including air travel.	✓	✓	3 months
	Any international travel.		✓	1 year and updated at 6 months prior
	Any activity listed on the High-Risk Activity Permission Form. Any other activity of height, speed, or requiring participants to wear a helmet. Any day hike or backpacking where participants will be located more than 30 minutes from emergency services. Any activity in Safety Activity Checkpoints that requires the leader/instructor to have additional training or documented experience. Except when vendor approval is required (next box).		✓	2 weeks
	Vendor Approval: When a professional, whose services are hired or donated to the Girl Scouts, will lead the high-risk activity.*		✓	1 month
Parent Permission Form - Specific Trip	Accompanies any Trip or High-Risk Approval Form submission.			As above for THR
	Recommended, but not required, for cooking and pool swimming activities that do not otherwise require a Trip or High-Risk Approval Form for any of the reasons listed above.			Not submitted, used only between leaders and caregivers
High-Risk Activity Permission Form	Accompanies Trip or High-Risk Approval Form submission when concerning a high-risk activity			As above for THR
Plan 2/3 Activity Insurance	Plan 2: Any activity that includes participants who are not registered as Girl Scouts. ** Plan 3: Accident, Sickness, and Travel insurance for longer trips.			3 weeks

* For example, a bike ride conducted by troop leaders can be approved in three weeks. But, a group surfing lesson from a hired professional or whitewater rafting booked with a rafting company needs three months' advance notice.

** For example, a family campout with unregistered siblings and caregivers.

If something comes up and you are unable to submit forms in a timely manner, please contact Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast at 800-822-2427 or email info@girlscoutscoc.org so we can assist you.

Required Adult Training

The next table shows how activity progression for girls meshes with the training progression of adults. When supervising Girl Scouts, different adults in the group may carry the training required for the activities included in the event. Many activities require training beyond Stepping Out. Not every possible activity/training is included in the table. Always check Safety Activity Checkpoints or seek guidance from your Service Unit or council for determining which specialized trainings are required.

First, **any and every** Girl Scout activity or meeting requires an adult Girl Scout leader with:

- GSUSA membership
- Background check
- gsLearn: Successful Leader Learning Series
- Face-to-face meeting with Service Unit and/or council
- First Aid Kit

The Stepping Out trained adult should be aware of training available to Girl Scout Volunteers and check that appropriately trained adults are included whenever the group will have a cooking activity or an outing away from the meeting place. Training required includes leaders, First-Aiders, Stepping Out adults, Outdoor Trained adults, lifeguards, and adults with other specialized training as needed.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY AND TRAINING PROGRESSION

If the Planned Activity Includes:	Then Required Adult Training is:						
	Stepping Out	Outdoor Training	Back-packing	Other Specialty Training*	First Aid + CPR	Wilderness First Aid	Lifeguard + Watchers
Any field trip away from the regular meeting location	✓				✓		
Overnight with indoor sleeping accommodations (incl. home, hotel, museum)	✓				✓		
Overnight with outdoor sleeping accommodations (incl. tents, yurts, open-air)	✓	✓			✓		
No heat, no sharp tools cooking							
Food preparation using sharp tools such as knives or skewers					✓		
Indoor cooking with conventional appliances	✓				✓		
Outdoor cooking, incl. BBQ, box oven, open fire, solar oven, hobo stove, etc.	✓	✓			✓		
Hiking within 30 minutes of services	✓				✓		
Hiking beyond 30 minutes of services	✓				✓	✓	
Family camping	✓				✓		
Troop camping	✓	✓			✓		
Outdoor skills instruction for soft-sided shelters, fire-building, knife handling, outdoor cooking, etc.	✓	✓			✓		
Backpacking (with no swimming)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Swimming	✓				✓		✓
Firearms sports with girls over age 12	✓			✓	✓		
Any activity on the High-Risk Activity Permission Form	✓	As needed per SAC			✓	As needed per SAC	

* Specialty training depends on the activity. Check SAC for specific requirements. Examples include ski instructor, small watercraft certification, climbing instructor, whitewater rafting guide, shooting range safety officer, etc.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST FOR THE STEPPING OUT VOLUNTEER

Much of a **Stepping Out Volunteer's** job happens before actually attending an event as a chaperone. A majority of this role is carried out during the planning stages for all events beyond the regular troop meeting. Work together with other group leaders to plan with girls and caregivers, and assist the group in ensuring adequate supervision, training, and safety paperwork are complete. Adapt this checklist to the particular event or activity and refer back to sections of this manual as needed for more details.

Progressions, Readiness, and Girl-Led Planning

- ☐ Involve girls in planning
- ☐ Guide girls' decision-making to be inclusive and respectful
- ☐ Check chosen activities for appropriate progression
- ☐ Assess girl readiness
- ☐ Assess adult readiness

Safety and Standards

- ☐ Communicate Girl Scout Safety Guidelines to chaperones, caregivers, and girls
- ☐ Check Safety Activity Checkpoints
 - Confirm supervising adults have enough certification and training
 - Confirm minimum adult-to-girl supervision ratios
- ☐ Confirm purchase of insurance for any non-Girl Scout participants
- ☐ Inform caregivers of optional insurance
- ☐ Confirm that sleeping arrangements follow guidelines
- ☐ Confirm that transportation plans follow guidelines
 - Review guidelines with chaperones
 - Provide directions to chaperones
 - Review behavior expectations with girls
 - Confirm the number of seatbelts matches cars and drivers
- ☐ Secure tickets, registrations, and reservations
- ☐ Communicate with caregivers and girls
 - Trip rules, behavior expectations, and consequences
 - Trip itinerary
 - Costs
 - Sleeping arrangements
 - Packing List
 - Equipment and food needs
 - Delegated jobs
- ☐ Check freshness of first aid kit supplies
- ☐ Inform caregivers and chaperones of medication handling guidelines
- ☐ Discuss accident and injury prevention appropriate for the event with chaperones and girls

Environmental Protection, Skill Development, and Fun!

- ☐ Discuss environmental protection guidelines and Leave No Trace
- ☐ Check that the plan includes learning, leadership, and goals of the Girl Scout program
- ☐ Check that the plan includes FUN!

Forms and Adult Training

- ☐ Confirm GSUSA registrations for girls and adults
- ☐ Assess whether a Trip or High-Risk Form will be needed
- ☐ Set a timeline for submitting forms for approval
- ☐ Set a timeline for permission forms and any money collection with caregivers
- ☐ Confirm submission of Trip and High-Risk Forms to SU and/or council

YOU MUST RECEIVE APPROVAL - this is not just a “notification” process

- ☐ Confirm that during any Stepping Out activity/trip, one adult chaperone carries:
 - ☐ Current Basic Forms for each girl
 - Annual Permission
 - Health History
 - Medication Permission
 - Girl Release to other than Guardian
 - ☐ First Aid Kit containing:
 - First Aid Log
 - Council Emergency Procedures
 - Incident and Injury Report Form

Also, if required, one chaperone carries:

- ☐ **Approved:** Trip or High-Risk Form
- ☐ **Signed:** Parent Permission Forms

Also, if driving by private cars, each driver carries:

- ☐ First Aid Kit with the above three forms
- ☐ Basic Forms for each girl riding in their car

- ☐ Confirm that at least one adult accompanying the group has First Aid training
- ☐ Confirm that at least one adult accompanying the group has Stepping Out training
- ☐ Check that adults with specialized certification or training required for the planned activity will be present and verify that their certification is current (for example, lifeguard, GS Outdoor Trained, ski instructor, etc.)

[STEPPING OUT TEST](#)

Click title for online test.

STEPPING OUT COURSE EVALUATION

Name: _____ Troop # _____

Email Address: _____

Phone#: _____

Mailing Address: _____

	Yes	Some what	No
I understand the purpose of taking trips outdoors and/or away from the regular meeting place in Girl Scouting.			
I understand the importance of progression in outdoor education, travel, and cooking.			
I understand how to assess girls' readiness for an overnight.			
I understand how to use the Safety Activity Checkpoints.			
I understand the need for First Aid/CPR Cert. for outdoor activities and field trips beyond regular troop meetings.			
I understand the additional permissions required beyond the Annual Permission form, where to find the forms, and how to use them.			
I understand the requirements of High-Risk Activity participation.			
I understand the role of the Stepping Out trained adult and when additional training is needed.			

Suggestions, Comments, Questions:

When completed, please turn this test to your local Learning Facilitator for review. Alternatively, you may email training@girlscoutscce.org or call 1-800-822-2427 for assistance.