

Volunteer & Meeting Guidelines – 12/1/20 Edition

OVERVIEW:

GSUSA has provided COVID-19 safety and health guidance for councils to share with their volunteers, recognizing that the timing of resuming in-person troop meetings, activities and programs will change as the risk of exposure changes. Things may also vary from state to state and even from county to county in certain regions.

This guidance is intended to be used for councils and volunteers in conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints and according to each council's individual state and local COVID-19 circumstances which change in response to risk factors.

This guidance is being provided as of the Edition date above. It is important that you continue to monitor local, state and federal guidelines and the other resources indicated below such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC). GSUSA may, but is not obligated to, modify its guidance from time to time in its sole discretion.

GSUSA will be inserting this pandemic safety and health guidance into Safety Activity Checkpoints. Councils should tailor their customized version Safety Activity Checkpoints with their volunteer version of COVID-19 guidance into their volunteer facing documents and websites.

TROOP MEETINGS:

Meeting Size

The current suggested maximum is ten people (eight girls and two unrelated adult volunteers). However, check your local restrictions for small gatherings. If more restrictive than 10 people, follow the local restriction. Restrictions vary greatly from state to state, county to county, and even from town to town--and can frequently change.

For large troops, have volunteers stay connected with girls while waiting for a safe time for everyone to gather. Large troops are wonderful, so encourage them to stay together! Some ideas for volunteers:

- Host virtual troop meetings (see below).
- Gather up in smaller groups—such as age-level groups, patrols, or groups of girls with a particular badge they'd like to work on.

Large Gatherings

If your jurisdiction permits larger gatherings, confirm the number of people that are permitted and remind volunteers to allow for proper girl-to-adult ratios. It is strongly recommended to meet outdoors as opposed to indoors, and only when social distancing can be maintained. For more people or large gatherings, when the time is safely appropriate, follow the CDC guidelines: [Large Gatherings and Community Events](#).

Volunteers should get council approval before planning any gatherings of more than ten people. Council staff may consider larger group gatherings greater than ten people after considering the norms in the local region. Answers to the following questions will help guide the decision:

- Has a successful final phase of re-opening been completed? (several weeks after)
- Do state and local law permit larger gatherings? If yes, how many people permitted?
- Have schools been re-opened for in-person classes?
- Is the event indoors or outdoors? (outdoors is safer than indoors provided social distancing is maintained)
- Can social distancing be maintained?
- Always follow CDC guidance and all GSUSA guidance available in this document pertaining to large in-person gatherings and/or hosting council events

Troop Meeting Space

Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained are strongly recommended for meetings when the weather permits. Volunteers should get advance permission from the property owner or the jurisdiction that provides the location.

For meetings held at public facilities, volunteers should contact the facility ahead of time and ask:

- Is the space cleaned, and touch surfaces (i.e., tabletops, light switches, chairs, etc.) sanitized, at least daily?
- Who else uses the space (how often, what size is the group)? Is the space cleaned between groups?
- What type of faucets / soap dispensers are available in the restroom (sensory or manual)?

Then, encourage volunteers to supplement any practices that are less ideal. For example, if the troop arrives after another user group, they should plan to bring sanitizing wipes to get the space ready for their troop. Another example: if faucets are manual, ask volunteers to take some time to show girls how to shut them off with a paper towel and to use paper towels for doorknobs whenever possible.

Meetings may not be held in fitness centers or gyms because the atmosphere in sports facilities is aerosolizing making them a higher risk for contracting virus.

Troop Meetings at Home

GSUSA suggests no meetings in the home out of concern that there would be greater risk of exposure to other family members. In certain exceptional situations and due to the current COVID-19 risk restricting public meeting options, councils *may wish* to evaluate in-home meetings on a case-by-case basis, particularly for those troops in rural areas who have regularly and successfully met in the home, have no elderly or immune compromised family members in the home, have been deemed safe beyond a final phase of re-opening and do not have access to a virtual or community-based location option. However, these complexities may be difficult to confirm and manage consistently which is why the recommendation, ideally, is to stay away from in-home meetings.

If a council opts to permit in-home meetings, consider making it mandatory that volunteers get prior council approval. To assist with the council approval process, safety checkpoint considerations include:

- The home must be the home of registered, background checked, council approved Volunteer.
- Girls may not meet in a home where a registered sex offender lives.
- Some councils may require membership and background checks for all adults living in the home.
- The troop needs to be able to focus without disruptions from other household members.
- Animals should be kept in a place that is separate from the meeting space.
- Homeowners should consider any personal homeowner insurance implications. The Homeowner should ask their Homeowner's insurance carrier if there are any insurance exclusions regarding holding troop meetings at the home, in the event an accident or injury occurs.
- Council staff should confirm with their council's insurance broker that a Girl Scout volunteer homeowner would be covered under the council's General Liability insurance carrier, in the event an accident or injury occurs during the course of a Girl Scout meeting at the home.
- Weapons must be completely out of view and stored in a locked space.
- Medication, dangerous cleaning products, or any poisonous substance must be stored in a secure space out of sight, preferably locked.
- Meetings should ideally be held outdoors, perhaps in the back or front yard of the home (*this is a COVID-19 specific precaution*).
- Ensure that the Hygiene and Risk Mitigation and all other guidance in this document are followed. (*this is a COVID-19 specific precaution*)

Backyard Meetings

For back and front yard meetings, make sure that the grounds are completely safe for children. For example, be careful that pools are fenced or otherwise safely sectioned off. The same goes for any equipment or tools or recreational apparatus that is deemed unsafe for girls such as outdoor trampolines. Make sure that pets are kept separate from

the girls meeting space. Ensure that both the troop leader, and co-leader can see girls and monitor their whereabouts at all times. Maintain the use of the buddy system for errands or bathroom breaks. If the property is large, ensure that the meetings space is kept distinctly separate from non-members.

Troop Meetings on Council Premises

Since regular troop meeting spaces may not be available, councils may consider using council property such as troop houses, service centers, camp properties and other program facilities for troops to meet. It is always best to opt for outside meetings than inside, whenever possible, until your jurisdiction is past the final phase of reopening. All safety guidelines must be carefully adhered to in accordance with CDC, state, local health authorities and as outlined in this document including:

- Re-opening phases and/or subsequent closures
- Restrictions by state and county
- Volunteer Awareness
- Troop meeting Size
- Large Gatherings (*when applicable, over 10 persons*)
- Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation (*enforce social distancing*)
- First Aid Supplies
- Disinfectants and Disinfecting
- Personal Contact
- Face Coverings
- Release & Waiver of Liability

Troop meetings on council premises, as with normal Girl Scout programs, should abide with Safety Activity Checkpoints in terms of two unrelated adult volunteers, adult-to-girl ratios etc.

Especially for troop meetings indoors, taking temperatures prior to attendance may not always be possible – but it is certainly ideal. The Release & Waiver example provided in this document is very helpful because it asks the signer to attest to very specific COVID-19 related health factors such as being symptom free and having not been in high-risk areas or in close contact with a known COVID-19 positive person within 14 days of the event. So, it's best to always use a Release & Waiver when hosting troop meetings on council premises.

Virtual Meetings

Meeting options may need to be flexible based on the fluid nature of COVID-19 risk. Troops that are able to run online meetings as needed (or wanted) should continue to do so. GSUSA recommends maintaining a virtual to in-person ratio of at least 20/80, which means to maintain virtual troop meetings at least 20% of the time to keep tech skills and virtual meeting habits fresh and the on the ready, should a second wave occur or shelter in place restrictions resume. Use the Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Meetings, to guide your meeting plans: Virtual Troop Meetings

Other helpful resources to support volunteers for virtual troop meetings and virtual activities, including the gsZoom page, Getting Started Guide and FAQs, can be found on gsConnect. Visit gsZoom on gsConnect for more information.

Activities / Programs

Day Trips and Activities

In conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints, the guidance for Troop Meetings and Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation in this interim guidance should be used for day trips and special activities. Call ahead to the facility or vendor to confirm that they are following CDC and state health department guidelines. If activity or sporting equipment is being provided, ask the provider if they wipe down equipment in between uses, similar to wipe downs in between uses for equipment at the gym. Make whatever appropriate accommodations that are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer or disinfectant wipes if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

Travel and Overnight Stay

The timeframe for resuming travel will vary from state to state and even from county to county in some cases. As always, volunteers must seek council prior approval before planning any overnight stays, follow guidance in Safety Activity Checkpoints and continue to practice the Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance outlined in this document for the foreseeable future.

Once your state jurisdiction permits travel, proceed cautiously to integrate overnight travel back into Girl Scout programs. Recognize that the COVID-19 risk is fluid, can and will change and contingencies for re-scheduling or pivoting to virtual should be considered.

For all travel, use all health and safety guidance available in your jurisdiction and the destination jurisdiction in conjunction with this guidance to ensure the safety of girls. See the Additional Resources located at the bottom of this document, the CDC (always), state and local health authority guidance or restrictions and Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Hosting Council Events

As with hosting troop meetings above, council hosted events must follow all GSUSA guidance provided in this document as well as those provided by the CDC, state and local health authorities. Be particularly careful with respect to complying with state and local guidelines or restrictions concerning Large Gatherings. Similarly, if the event is being planned at a third-party property or off-site facility, call ahead to ensure the property or facility owners are following the same standard of guidelines and safety protocols. Be prepared to fill in for areas where they may fall short, bringing disposable masks for example. It is the council's responsibility to ensure girl and guest safety, to the fullest extent possible. The GSUSA guidelines in this document apply, with special emphasis on the following (same as Troop Meetings):

- Re-opening Phases and subsequent closures.
- Current Restrictions by state or county
- Pre-screening and Symptoms Check
- Volunteer Awareness
- Troop Meeting Size
- Large Gatherings (*when applicable, over 10 persons*)
- Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation (*enforce social distancing*)
- First Aid Supplies
- Disinfectants and Disinfecting
- Personal Contact
- Face Coverings
- Release & Waiver of Liability

When/if the attendees are coming from outside the council's immediate jurisdiction, become familiar, whenever possible, with the risk factor involved with the location from which the guests are coming. If the risk is high, consider special accommodations or a contingency plan for how this risk can best be handled. Similarly, consider special accommodations or preparations needed when the event is being held off council premises. To support this assessment, consider using the Georgia Tech - Event Risk Assessment Planning Tool created by the Georgia Tech College of Sciences which is an interactive map that tracks and provides the COVID-19 risk factor by inputting the *number of attendees* and the *county* in question. There is more information on this tool in the Resources section at the end of this document.

Especially for events indoors, taking temperatures prior to attendance may not always be possible – but it is certainly ideal. The Release & Waiver example provided in this document is very helpful because it asks the signer to attest to very specific COVID-19 related health factors such as being symptom free and, in accordance with the CDC guidance, having not been in high-risk areas or in close contact with a known COVID-19 positive person within 14 days of the event. So, it is best to always use a Release & Waiver when hosting council events.

Family-Only Camp on Council Property

Reasonable accommodations to support property revenue can be assessed individually at the council level. One option is to permit family only overnight camp. Again, it is important to rely upon the guidelines for gathering as set forth in your council's state and local jurisdiction as these may vary greatly from state to state, and they will change as the risk of coronavirus shifts. Always practice pre-screening steps for all participants to eliminate coronavirus risk, as well as practicing mask usage and social distancing during the stay.

Some councils are offering, on a local level when the council location is very low risk *and* overnight stays or travel is permitted in the host state and county, having families camp overnight. Only one household per site should be permitted at camp where safety hygiene, distancing and all COVID-19 protocols are to be followed completely. Families stay in their own safe "pod". In this case, council staff is controlling the premises and safety protocols

as well as the number of the total participants. As with public campgrounds, each individual family site is insulated from other families. No interactive activities or shared camping facilities should be involved or encouraged.

American Camp Association (ACA)

While councils are in the process of developing guidelines, volunteer training and communications suitable in each jurisdiction for camp, the American Camp Association (ACA) website offers a vast amount of COVID-19 specific recommendations, additional resources and suggested interim guidance that councils should understand and implement. The ACA COVID-19 resources and guidelines should be followed whether a council is ACA accredited or not.

An excellent source of guidance for councils to follow is the ACA [Field Guide for Camps](#). The Field Guide for Camps is designed to provide camp directors and staff with a practical guide and toolkit to implement specific recommendations provided by the CDC in relation to risk reduction and camps. It provides educational materials for camp staff to reduce potential exposures and spread. Helpful ACA links include:

[Field Guide for Camps](#)

[ACA COVID-19 Resource Center for Camp](#)

[ACA COVID-19 Resources for Parents](#)

[Suggested Interim Guidance for Screening and Initial Response for Campers Example Health Screening Form for Campers](#)

[Pre-Camp Health Screening](#)

Transportation (Carpooling)

It is imperative to take all safety precautions when girls are travelling in motor vehicles. If possible, girls from different households should not carpool. Coronavirus transmission risk is high when people are in close proximity, less than six feet apart. The risk increases when people are in a closed in area or indoors for longer than 10 minutes. When transporting girls, always space out the girls to avoid crowding, have girls wear a mask and keep the windows partially open to provide ventilation.

Make sure parents are aware ahead of time if girls will be in a car together. Always, for every in-person event, meeting, or transportation arrangement, conduct the pre-screening process to ensure that coronavirus does not touch Girl Scout gatherings.

Individual parent drop-offs and pick-ups are also an option. Public transportation should be avoided and not encouraged.

Remember:

- Girls and adults should wear masks when inside of a motor vehicle
- Keep car window opened, at least partially, to circulate fresh air.
- Consider the personal situation of your girls: Do they live with an immune compromised person that they can put at risk? If so, perhaps make other accommodations for her with her parents.
- Prescreen all passengers: Have the families been isolating, and free from contagion? If so, the troop may essentially be a safe bubble.

Again, sustained contact within less than six (6) feet for longer than ten (10) minutes within an enclosed area creates high risk for virus transmission, so be very careful with carpool decisions.

CDC guidance for ride shares and drivers for hire may be helpful as an additional reference when evaluating motor vehicle transportation or car-pooling: [Ride Shares and Drivers for Hire](#)

Cookie Booths. For councils that will be able to conduct in-person cookie sales, always opt for outside booths whenever possible. Also think about the structure of booths. Consider building in a protective barrier to act as a sneeze guard and help to prevent girls and customers from breathing the same air before it can circulate.

Try to create contact-free ways to accept payments, especially cash, while maintaining a safe distance. Also consider operating cookie tables vertically instead of horizontally to ensure a greater distance is kept between girls and customers. Reach tools can be used to hand off cookies to customers. Remember that first aid, personal protective equipment and disinfectant should be in supply and easily accessible.

Business & Practices

Retail Shops

In order to safely operate retail shops for business while complying with maximum occupancy and social distancing rules, consider a shopping by appointment and/or a curbside pickup protocol.

Budget Considerations

Councils are encouraged to plan ahead financially for the additional expenses needed for personal protective equipment, signage and disinfectants. Consider establishing a dedicated general ledger code or activity code for COVID-19 related expenses.

Vaccines

Vaccine and vaccine exemption laws with respect to COVID-19 will likely focus on public and private school attendance more directly than they may for recreational youth organizations. Therefore, it is best to obtain local and state legal guidance and proceed in accordance with the local and state laws and regulations as it applies to school attendance.

If your volunteers have any questions about their obligation to communicate a girl's non-immunization with other troop parents, they should be instructed to contact their local council and council staff will obtain the appropriate local legal guidance. Absent specific state laws that speak directly to the COVID-19 vaccine and communicating non-immunization with parents of youth groups, the guidance is to follow the standard and protocol as it pertains to school attendance.

Phases of Re-opening

COVID-19 risk is fluid. States or counties may experience subsequent closures after an initial re-opening phase depending on the level of risk and scope of coronavirus spread. Accordingly, the guidance provided here does not supersede more recent government guidance or restrictions. Council staff should be checking regularly for changes to reopening guidelines that apply in their communities with careful adherence to the phases of reopening or closures or additional restrictions as mandated in your council's state and its local jurisdiction. With respect to implementing COVID-19 specific precautions for re-opening and resuming in-person activities and events, it is encouraged to benchmark with other councils and share plans and resources. Another benchmark is to become familiar with and consider following the health and safety protocols that are practiced in local public schools, though these may vary.

Restrictions by State

Before implementing these national guidelines, first and foremost:

- Check for current state and local restrictions for large and small gatherings in the council home state and county. They could vary greatly from state to state, county to county, or even from town to town. Restrictions will also change in response to risk levels. AARP publishes an excellent summary of restriction by state which is routinely updated: [AARP Coronavirus Restrictions by State](#).
- Check your state [Department of Health \(DOH\)](#) to ensure your jurisdiction is in compliance with its specific statutory norms and laws. For example, several states are experiencing restrictions within the ten-person limit for in-person gathering such as outdoors only, or the restriction that only two households can be represented within the ten-person limit.

Volunteer Awareness

Volunteers should be reminded, and acknowledge understanding, that COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community. Volunteers should take all reasonable precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, themselves and families. Councils should lift and highlight this important message in a way that promotes that awareness, preparedness, health and community service. It is an important time to be a safety-minded Girl Scout and demonstrate Girl Scout values.

Remind Volunteers of the importance of regularly checking and following real-time local and national safety directives and to survey families for their comfort level with respect to returning to troop meetings.

A short list of things that volunteers need to know for every in-person gathering:

- Pre-screening and Symptoms Check forms are used
- Girls and adults wear masks
- Outdoors is preferred to indoors, whenever possible
- Always maintain 6 feet distance
- Wash hands
- No touching the face
- Carry disinfectant and make sure girls are using it as appropriate
- Girls bring their own snacks and supplies whenever possible

Pre-screening and Symptoms Check

Prior to in-person troop meetings and activities, all participants should be screened to ensure they:

- Are healthy and that they have not experienced symptoms that are associated with COVID-19 in the previous 72 hours
- Have not knowingly been in contact with someone that has exhibited symptoms or has been confirmed positive with COVID-19 or a person waiting to see if they are positive; and
- Have not been to high-risk geographical regions particularly those regions that require a 14-day or otherwise specific quarantine period.

Note: The CDC defines “**close contact**” as follows:

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

Whether your council chooses to train volunteers to complete and retain a written questionnaire for each attendee or implement a verbal process and retain a log of Y/N responses, a pre-screening process is extremely important. GSUSA has prepared an example questionnaire outlining the pertinent questions on gsConnect: [Example Attendee COVID-10 Pre-Screening Questionnaire](#).

Volunteers and council staff that are planning events should complete the Pre-Screening and Symptoms Check step prior to each in-person gathering. Please check with local legal counsel to confirm the optimal amount of time that the completed Pre-Screening checklist should be retained based on the standard in your state and also to ensure there are no health privacy issues with respect to retaining written forms. The purpose of the forms is to implement and demonstrate this important health and safety step. If an attendee answers a question that would indicate a likelihood or a known possibility that they could be a carrier of the virus, they should be asked not to attend the gathering.

Please keep in mind that when adult volunteers are answering these questions, they need to answer them with respect to both their personal lives and their professional occupation. This fact is reflected within the caption of the [Example Attendee COVID-10 Pre-Screening Questionnaire](#).

When training staff and volunteers, please be sensitive to the fact that girls may be experiencing symptoms that are similar but completely unrelated to COVID-19 and not contagious such as menstrual body aches, headaches, allergies or a pre-existing condition. The goal is to keep the meeting safe from contagion and do the very best to ensure our girls are educated and healthy, not to make it unnecessarily difficult or uncomfortable for girls to gather safely.

Record Retention

Girl Scouts is *not* a covered entity under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). However, Girl Scouts takes the privacy and protection of our members data very seriously and does manage personal identifiable information (PII), personal health information (PHI) and other confidential information. Therefore, Girl Scouts does not retain personal data any longer than necessary and does not share personal data beyond a strict “need to know” basis.

Councils need to obtain local legal guidance with respect to the time element for retaining pre-screening forms and COVID-19 related documentation. Generally, with respect to paper pre-screening forms that are collected manually, the forms should be saved for the duration of the membership year. If the forms are collected at the very end of the membership year, they should be retained for approximately 3 months. Pre-screening forms should be shredded and disposed of thereafter. For councils that are collecting the pre-screening forms electronically, understand the technology security and record retention protocol so that you are prepared to answer parents’ and legal guardians’ inquiries.

Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

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

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and wash or sanitize your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Wash hands if you do touch these areas and other items that may not be sanitized.
- Volunteers, girls and parents should be reminded to make sure temperatures are taken prior to group interaction to confirm the individual is not running a fever and temperature is a normal 98.6 degrees. Members with fever or temperature higher than 98.6 should skip the in-person gathering until their temperature is normal.

Personal Contact

Hugs, handshakes, “high-fives,” and even activities like the friendship circle can transmit COVID-19 from person to person. Create a safe way for girls and volunteers to greet and end meetings instead (like tapping elbows). *Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials, and resources.*

Singing

If you normally close your meetings with a song, make certain girls and adults are all wearing masks. Singing and shouting both project germs farther than talking, ask your girls to either hum their closing song, or sing quietly, and always, of course, with their masks on.

First Aid / CPR Training

Keep skills up to date for any emergency. Talk to your council about alternative methods of training that may be available during this time, such as on-line training. For the time period that in-person training is not available, volunteers can receive on-line training with a council approved training provider. Once possible in your jurisdiction, have volunteers resume in-person skills assessment.

First Aid Supplies

Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items including hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), hydrogen peroxide wipes, tissues, disposable facemasks, and disinfectants. Trash baskets or bags should be supplied for meeting and activity spaces, if not already available. Disposable or no-contact thermometers may be added to supplies if available and not cost-prohibitive.

Disinfectants and Disinfecting

Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., tabletops, markers, scissors, etc.). Use a household disinfectant cleaner or see the [EPA's list of effective cleaners](#) approved for use against COVID-19. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.). See the [CDC's website](#) for more on cleaning and disinfecting community facilities.

FDA Warning

The FDA has advised consumers not to use certain hand sanitizers due to unsafe ingredients. The CDC provides an updated list of products that should never be used. Be sure to check [FDA updates on hand sanitizers consumers should not use](#) and stay away from products deemed unsafe.

Face Coverings (Masks)

In certain states wearing a mask is mandatory. Regardless of whether or not it is mandatory, girls and volunteers should wear a mask. Volunteers should remind girls that Girl Scouts wear face coverings, not only to protect themselves but to protect others. Face coverings are a civic responsibility and a sign of caring for the community. Girls can bring their own face coverings. Have disposable masks on hand for those who need them. Volunteers can teach girls how to handle their face coverings so that the coverings are effective.

Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks, due to medical conditions such as asthma. Councils should have an established protocol for handling such scenarios. It may be appropriate to require a doctor's note. Troops should inform families so they are aware if there is a member who will participate without wearing a mask. Volunteers should be instructed to contact their council for guidance on how best to handle these exceptional circumstances.

Reporting COVID-19 Positive Incidents and Waiver Language on Permission Slips

Reporting and communicating a positive COVID 19 test should ideally be managed by a council staff member. Volunteers should not manage COVID-19 communication responsibilities unless your council has established a definitive protocol that has been communicated to volunteers.

Designate a COVID-19 Incident Response Lead

Volunteers should be directed to contact a council staff member in the event of a COVID-19 positive test result. Each council have should assign a point person to lead the COVID-19 communications and responsibilities. This person should ideally be the CEO, COO, or an HR professional to ensure confidentiality. The point person's contact information should be readily available for all volunteers, so they know who to notify. Perhaps an email address can be posted on the council website. Another suggestion is to tailor the COVID-19 contact information into the interim COVID-19 guidance to be shared with volunteers. Remember: All health information is private/confidential to be shared only on a need-to-know basis. There are laws and regulations governing sharing of health data.

Unless your council has approved a process for volunteers to follow, let volunteers know that council staff, not volunteers, will notify parents, authorities and others about a positive test result and that the tester's identity is to stay confidential, sharing information only on a need-to-know basis.

The council staff point person responsible to manage COVID-19 positive tester reports will:

- Record the facts. An example incident report template, to be used internally to gather the necessary information, can be found here: [COVID-19 Incident Report Template](#)
- Create a file to keep all information related to the incident together, including emails.
- Confirm and trace the positive tester
- Notify the facility or homeowner where a troop has met
- Alert the state department of health
- Contact the parents of anyone who may have been exposed, or other adult volunteers.
- Do not share the positive tester's identity

Release & Waiver of Liability

GSUSA cannot provide legal advice to councils. The template [Release and Waiver Council Template](#) provided here is an example of what councils can use to emphasize and document the assumption of risk and waiver of liability related to COVID-19 to protect the council. However, always consult local legal advice. The waiver template language is not unique to any one jurisdiction, nor is it intended to replace the standard release for normal activities but rather provides COVID-19 specific language.

The catalyst for this example came from one council who had looked at what other youth organizations, cleared by the state to operate, were doing – such as youth sports leagues. The youth serving entities in this council's jurisdiction were utilizing detailed COVID-19 waivers similar this example. In any case, it is best to consult with your attorney, who will consider local industry standards and the law in your jurisdiction Also, councils may want

to consider combining the language so that they use only one release that includes both COVID-19 and a general release for activities, trips, events etc.

Food, Dining and Snacks

Be careful when handling and serving food and have girls be careful with each other when eating. Safety recommendations for food, dining and snacks include:

- Have not been to high-risk geographical regions particularly those regions that require a 14-day or otherwise specific quarantine period.
- Encourage girls to bring their own foods to eat (bag lunch or dinner)
- Encourage girls not to share their food after having touched it, such as a bag of chips.
- Individually wrapped items are recommended.
- If providing snacks, especially if unwrapped, have one person, wearing gloves, hand out items to each person, such as with cupcakes or cookies.
- Use a serving spoon or scoop rather than reaching into a bag or bowl of snacks.
- Use a buffet line only if staffed with a safely protected server with mask and gloves.
- Avoid “serve yourself” buffets.
- Public dining only as permitted in your local jurisdiction.
- If serving family style, have one person, wearing clean gloves, serve everyone on clean plates
- Use disposable plates, forks, napkins, etc. when possible.
- Encourage girls to bring foods they can easily cook themselves (a prepacked foil pack) or hotdog for outdoor cooking.
- Ensure everyone handling food, those serving, girls, adults, wash hands (even if they will be wearing gloves) prior to any food prep or meals, following CDC handwashing guidelines.
- If sharing outdoor cooking utensils (roasting forks), they should be washed and sanitized between each use or bring enough utensils so that each person gets their own.
- Continue recommendation for 6 foot spacing during meals.

Restrooms

Be very careful in public restrooms. Most public restrooms will regulate the number of people using the restroom at the same time, depending on the size. If there is no regulator or signage, have volunteers ensure girls take appropriate turns to maintain social distancing and that they wear their masks in the restrooms. It is ideal to have automatic flushers and sensory faucets to wash hands. If these are not available, girls and adults should get in the habit of using tissue or paper towel to open doors and latches, touching as little as possible. If the restroom is large, have girls use every other stall and avoid using stalls with a person in the stall next to them at the same time. Restrooms and toilets are fraught with germs normally, and more so now considering the contagion of coronavirus.

Additional Resources

1. [Event Risk Assessment Planning Tool.](#)

This current interactive map published by Georgia Tech College of Sciences is a planning tool for troop meetings, service unit meetings and Girl Scout events. Councils can insert the size of a meeting (number of attendees) on the sliding scale to the left and then click on the destination state and county on the interactive map. Once the map link is clicked, a likelihood percentage appears which indicates the risk of COVID-19 exposure or the likelihood of contracting COVID at a gathering given the levels of infection, by county, nationwide. Find out more information on this interactive tool by visiting the Georgia Tech college of Sciences homepage. [Georgia Tech - Event Risk Assessment Planning Tool](#)

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

2. [CDC One-Stop-Shop Toolkit.](#)

The One-Stop-Shop CDC page offers an array of topic specific COVID-19 guidance. There are many topics to review. Some of the notable subjects are copied in the below links, but all of them are very good and worth a review. This One-Stop-Shop site is updated regularly as situations arise and was most recently updated on July 21, 2020.

[COVID One-Stop Shop Toolkits](#)

Topic Specific Links:

[Suggestions for Camp and Camp Administrators](#)

[Toolkit for Childcare Programs and Summer Camp](#)

[Toolkits for Young Adults 15-21](#)

[People with Disabilities](#)

[Toolkit for Youth Sports and Activities](#)

[Toolkit for Domestic Travelers](#)

[Travel in the United States](#)

[Visiting Parks and Recreational Facilities](#)

[Social Media Toolkit](#)

[COVID-19 Resource Center for Camps – American Camp Association](#)