



## Frequently Asked Questions About Girl Scout Meetings, Activities, and Covid-19

### Cohorts

**Q: I heard that we can meet as a cohort. What does that mean?**

A: A cohort is a stable group of no more than 14 children and no more than two supervising adults (or a configuration of no more than 16 individuals total in the cohort). A cohort is a supervised environment where adults and children stay together for all activities and avoid contact with people outside of their group while in the cohort setting.

**Q: The girls in my troop are from different schools and different zip codes. How can our troop be considered a stable cohort?**

A: Girls may be in more than one cohort (i.e., school, sports team, Girl Scouts). It's the nature of a cohort to come together and disband when the cohort activity is over. The idea is to keep the cohort limited in size (no more than 14 children / 2 adults) and to follow all safety guidance when the cohort is together (i.e., [screening](#), sanitizing, masking, social distancing).

**Q: Are there restrictions about how many cohorts a girl can be in?**

A: There's no rule about the number of cohorts youth can be in. However, it makes sense to choose carefully and limit the number of cohorts to just those that are most important.

**Q: What precautions should we take if the girls in our troop are in multiple cohorts (school, sports, etc.)?**

A: Cohorts are instructed to take these steps every time they gather:

- [Screen](#) for any symptoms or recent exposure
- Maintain hygiene (keep hands and surfaces clean)
- Wear cloth masks that securely cover nose and mouth
- Maintain social distancing of six feet

By taking these steps, each cohort plays a role in protecting its members for the time that they are together. Be sure to meet outdoors when the county is in purple or red tiers.

**Q: I have a large troop. How can I make the cohort model work?**

A: Large troops can split into multiple cohorts with an adult leader assigned to each cohort. Leaders should not rotate between cohorts. Large troops can stay connected by continuing to have all-group meetings virtually, by sharing news about their last meeting, or by making items for the other group. A card or small craft from one girl to another will help them stay in touch.

**Q: I have a multi-level troop of 12 girls. Should I form cohorts for each level?**

A: There is no need to form cohorts for each level, especially since a troop of 12 girls +2 adults meets the requirement of 16 or fewer for a cohort.

**Q: I volunteer in more than one troop. Can I be in two different Girl Scout cohorts?**

A: There is no rule about the number of cohorts. However, it makes sense to limit the number of cohorts to just those that are most important.

It's also important to follow these guidelines in each of the cohorts you participate in:

- [Screen](#) for any symptoms or recent exposure
- Maintain hygiene (keep hands and surfaces clean)
- Wear cloth masks that securely cover nose and mouth
- Maintain social distancing of six feet

By taking these steps, each cohort plays a role in protecting its members for the time that they are together. During purple and red tiers, be sure to meet outdoors, too.

## Meetings

**Q: What are the recommended precautions for in-person troop meetings?**

A: See the [Safety Checkpoints for Hosting In-Person Meetings and Activities](#) for full guidance.

**Q: Where do you recommend we hold in-person troop meetings?**

A: Outdoor community areas like parks, pergolas, picnic tables, schoolyards, or patios are ideal. If there's a shortage of these in your area, it's possible to meet in a private yard or driveway. You can request an exception in advance with [this form](#).

**Q: Do we have to meet in person?**

A: No. Meeting in person is an option at this time, as long as cohort and safety guidelines are followed. Leaders, families, and girls should make their own decisions about meetings.

**Q: Can we hold troop meetings at a private home?**

A: Girl Scouts of the USA recommends against meeting at private homes. In some areas, however, public spaces are not available. If you must host in a home's backyard or driveway, [request an exception](#) in advance.

**Q: Do in-person troop meetings need to be held outdoors?**

A: Meetings must be held outdoors when your county is in purple or red tiers. Spaces that are open on at least three sides can be considered "outdoor." Have a plan for poor weather that does not rely on going indoors.

**Q: Do we need to practice social distancing and wear masks at in-person meetings, even though the troop is a cohort?**

A: Yes. [Screening](#), social distancing, sanitizing, and wearing masks are required. During purple and red tiers the cohort must meet outdoors.

**Q: What if an outdoor space doesn't have a restroom?**

A: If meetings are short, you may not need a restroom. If you do, keep looking for a space that better fits your needs. Consider parks, places of worship, and community centers.

**Q: Can we reserve outdoor space at council for troop meetings?**

A: Opening Girl Scout property is complicated. Unfortunately, we'll have to wait a bit to open property up to troops. But, we're looking forward to the day when you and girls can come back!

**Q: Can girls carpool to meetings?**

A: Avoid carpooling to the meeting place. Only members from the same household should ride together. If any girl *absolutely must* ride with another household, be sure that all wear masks, sit as far apart as possible, and keep the windows down, as risk is greater in enclosed spaces.

**Q: Does the *COVID Girl and Adult Participation Guidance and Waiver* need to be completed for every in-person meeting/activity.**

A: A [waiver](#) must be completed for each adult or girl in the troop who plans to meet in-person. Retain the completed waivers with troop records. Waivers do not need to be completed each time the troop meets.

**Q: When do I use the Attendee Screening form?**

A: Each time you meet in person, ask all girls and adults in attendance the questions on the [Attendee Screening form](#). Keep the form with troop records for three months.

**Q: What if only some of my troop can meet in person?**

A: Families will have different levels of comfort with in-person activities. Talk openly with families and consider all the options. It might be best to wait a little longer to meet. Or, you might decide to try hybrid meetings. Or, you might try mixing and matching: a full troop meeting one week, an in-person one the next. No matter what works best, encourage respect and inclusion during this time to help girls continue to feel like "a sister" to their troop mates.

**Q: Will the Girl Scout adult/child ratio change when we meet with our troop?**

A: For Daisy troops, the maximum girls in one cohort is 13, since the Girl Scout adult/girl ratio for 13 Daisies requires 3 adults ( $13 + 3 = 16$ , the maximum in a cohort). All other program levels can have 2 adults and up to 14 girls.

**Q: What if I need to add another adult to my meeting for safety or support?**

A: Keep the number of adults as low as possible and the total participants to 16. If you must have an additional adult to support safety measures or special needs, you may do so, as long as the total group doesn't exceed 16.

**Q: What if parents want to stay at meetings or if siblings are present?**

A: Ask parents to walk around the area so that they can have the comfort of keeping their Girl Scout in sight. Remind them that you must maintain safety protocols. Eventually, they'll feel comfortable with the idea of leaving.

**Q: My Daisy troop may have a hard time social distancing at in-person meetings. What do you suggest?**

A: Girls this age will be especially excited to see each other, so take it slow. Talk with families about it--if parents report that their girls have been doing well social distancing at school or while shopping, you might decide to meet in person. Make it short and see how it goes. It's ok to stick with virtual meetings for a while longer.

**Q: Should I limit the duration of in-person meetings?**

A: In general, 60-90 minute meetings are the norm for Daisies or Brownies. But that may be too long while they are getting used to wearing masks and keeping distant. Start on the shorter side, no matter the age of the girls. Have longer meetings when girls want more and can maintain safe practices.

**Q: Do we need to scan girls for their temperature prior to a meeting?**

A: You aren't required to take temps, but it may give you some extra confidence. However, you must ask [screening questions](#) each time you meet.

**Q: Why is it ok for girls to meet when we are in the purple tier?**

A: The San Diego Health and Human Services Agency has provided GSSD with guidance that allows for in-person troop meetings during the purple tier. Troops who choose to meet in person must follow the same California [guidance for cohorts](#) that other youth organizations in the state must follow. Note that meeting in person is optional. Families, volunteers, and girls should make their own decision about whether to meet based on personal comfort levels.

## Volunteer Concerns

**Q: What do we do if we find out after a meeting that a troop member has or has been exposed to Covid-19?**

A: We're here to help! Contact Girl Scouts San Diego right away at [accidentreporting@sdcgirlscouts.org](mailto:accidentreporting@sdcgirlscouts.org) or 619-298-8391 (press 2 after hours). We'll help you take next steps. In the meantime, remember not to share private health information with others in your troop.

**Q: Are volunteers liable if a girl or adult in the troop tests positive after attending a troop meeting?**

A: As always, following Girl Scout guidelines offers volunteers the best protection from liability and helps keep girls and volunteers safe. Volunteers are covered by the [COVID In-Person Guidance and Waiver](#). Be sure to collect signed waivers from participating adults and girls and keep the waivers with troop records.

**Q: What do I do if a troop member refuses to wear a mask during a meeting?**

A: County cohort guidelines require that all members of the cohort wear masks. A girl who refuses to wear a mask cannot participate in the cohort. Call her parent/guardian immediately and keep her separate from the other girls until her adult can pick her up.

**Q: What should I do if I have a troop family that doesn't wear masks or follow travel restrictions?**

A: It's not possible to police what happens outside of your troop meetings. The precautions you'll take (i.e., [screening](#), masking, social distancing, hygiene) are excellent protection even if one of the families doesn't follow those rules outside of the troop. That said, if this worries you, it might be a sign to wait a little longer to meet in person. It's up to you!

**Q: Is it ok to ask troop parents or volunteers if they've been vaccinated?**

A: It's not appropriate to ask others about their health information.

**Q: How do we respond if the public disapproves about cookie booths, standabouts, or outdoor troop meetings?**

A: Posting a copy of our [Safe Reopening Plan](#) will show that you're following county guidelines. You can explain that county officials have reviewed our plans and approved them. Feel free to direct those with questions to our website if they want to learn more.

## Activities

**Q: How can my troop go for a hike safely?**

A: Arrange for each family to bring their girl to the trailhead. Let them know when you'll be back so that they can pick up their child. On the trail, follow [these tips from Leave No Trace](#) to pass others safely and kindly and protect the environment. Have a lead adult at the front of the group and another at the end as "sweeper." The sweeper will most easily see when girls start to get too close and can remind them to keep their distance, when needed.

**Q: Can we plan a family camping activity where all troop families socially distance and eat separately?**

A: Not just yet.

**Q: When will we be able to have a bridging ceremony?**

A: You can have a bridging ceremony--or other ceremony--with your cohort. Cohort guidelines must be followed (i.e., [screening](#), masking, social distancing, hygiene). Ceremonies must also be held outdoors in purple or red tiers. Be sure to take lots of pictures! To involve families, consider doing a Facebook Live or Zoom broadcast.

**Q: When will we be able to camp as a troop?**

A: Troop camping presents some unique challenges around tenting or being inside, cooking, and cleaning up. We're working on guidelines to help troops get going again and will roll them out when camping is permitted.

**Q: When will troops be able to go on field trips?**

A: Field trips are possible now, as long as the activity can be done safely with the cohort and safety precautions are maintained (i.e., [screening](#), masking, social distancing, hygiene). Each family will need to transport their own girl. You can go on a hike or art walk, do a beach or park cleanup, maintain a community garden, have a team scavenger hunt, and more. Field trips must be outdoors when the county is in purple or red tiers.

**Q: When can troops travel?**

A: Troop travel will depend on the pandemic conditions at home and at each desired travel destination. Girl health, family comfort levels, and specific plans will all come into play. Expect guidance to be provided progressively: local travel first, advanced travel (on planes, out of state, or longer than 3 nights) next, and finally, international travel. Troops that have travel plans for summer 2021 may [request an extension](#) to retain funds until 2022 if they're concerned that travel won't be possible.

## First Aid

**Q: When will Girl Scouts San Diego offer first aid training?**

A: We are resuming classes in late March. Available dates will be posted at [sdgirlscouts.org/events](https://sdgirlscouts.org/events).

**Q: I have a first-year Daisy troop. Do I need first aid training before we meet in person?**

A: There is a three-month grace period on the first aid requirement for routine meetings and activities. There is no grace period for higher risk activities that need approval (like horseback riding).

**Q: Where can I take a first aid class?**

A: Classes will be held at our Balboa Campus, first. Soon after, we'll offer dates at Escondido Program Center. Offsite locations will also be available when feasible. Find dates and locations at [sdgirlscouts.org/events](https://sdgirlscouts.org/events).

**Q: Can I take an online first aid class?**

A: You can take an online first aid course as long as the instructor verifies your skills as part of the course. Courses that are entirely online with no skills verification do not meet GSUSA standards. You can also take a blended class where you learn online and then have your skills verified in-person by an instructor.

**Q: I haven't been able to recertify my first aid. Is there an extension?**

A: There is a three-month grace period on the first aid requirement for routine meetings and activities. There is no grace period for higher-risk activities that need approval (like horseback riding).

**Q: Is there anything special I should add to my troop first aid kit for Covid-19?**

A: GSSD suggests [these items](#) for the troop first aid kit. For Covid-19, include a few extra disposable masks, in case a mask is forgotten, is ill-fitting, or breaks. Hand sanitizer and wipes or cleaning products to wipe down surfaces will be necessary. Taking temperatures is not required, but may provide volunteers with peace of mind. Include a touchless thermometer in your first aid kit if you decide this step is important to you.

**Q: Can service units offer first aid training?**

A: Service units may arrange for local classes for their volunteers, as long as the certification requirements are met. GSSD will offer trainings by request when capacity allows.

**Q: Will Girl Scouts provide girls with masks?**

A: Providing masks to GSSD troops is a logistical challenge. It's acceptable to use troop funds for supplies that help keep the troop safe, including masks.

**Q: Can we use troop funds to purchase masks, sanitizer, etc.?**

A: Yes! You can use troop funds for hygiene, cleaning, and first aid supplies that help keep the troop safe when girls and adults come together.

**Q: If adults are vaccinated but travel, should they be able to come to a meeting?**

A: It's not possible to police the travel or whereabouts of others. And, it's not appropriate to ask others about their health information, including vaccinations. Asking adults and girls [screening questions](#) each time you meet and following other cohort guidelines (i.e., masking, hygiene, and social distancing) are the best precautions you can take for in-person activities.

## Council-Sponsored Activities, Properties, and Events

**Q: When will Girl Scouts San Diego start in-person training for volunteers?**

A: We'll resume as soon as our business sector is allowed to return and we can adjust our courses to welcome you back. We can't wait!



**Q: Will there be summer camps in 2021?**

A: We will be releasing information about summer programs at the end of March.

**Q: When will we be able to pick up items from the Resource Center?**

A: The Resource Center will reopen when our business sector is allowed to return to work.

## Cookie Program

Detailed information about safely participating in the cookie program, booths, and standabouts, can be found on the [cookie webpage](#).

**Q: Can we set up a drive-thru booth at a location that we choose, like a church?**

A: Girl Scouts San Diego must approve booths for insurance purposes and they must be listed in eBudde™. If you have an idea for a booth location, connect with your service unit cookie coordinator or reach out to the Product Program team at [cookies@sdgirlscouts.org](mailto:cookies@sdgirlscouts.org).

Exception: Booths at schools (K-12) and religious institutions may be coordinated by their members without GSSD approval. All Girl Scouts who are members of the school or religious institution must have equal opportunity to participate in these booths. Troops should follow specific location guidelines.

**Q: How many adults are required at cookie booths?**

A: Two adults must present at the booth at all times. Adults participating at the booth must belong to the same Girl Scout troop cohort or family household and one adult must be a Girl Scout registered member with a current background check on file.

One adult per booth is acceptable at locations where there are booths stationed at multiple doors as long as all doors have an adult present. A single adult is also acceptable at booths attended by an individual Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador.

**Q: How many girls can be at a cookie booth at one time?**

A: No more than two girls can be stationed at a booth at one time. Girls must belong to the same Girl Scout troop cohort or family household.

**Q: What safety/Covid-19 supplies do we need to bring to a booth?**

A: Bring hand sanitizer and sanitation products to wipe down surfaces as well as signs that remind patrons to mask up and practice social distancing. Girls and adults must wear a face mask at all times. More guidance, including how to build an optional plastic barrier can be found in the [Standabout and Cookie Booth Safety](#) document.

**Q: Are we required to place 6' social distancing markers (tape) on the ground at the booth location?**

A: Providing [social distancing markers](#) for customers is a good practice, if allowed by the booth location. Be sure that all edges are secured with painter's or masking tape.

**Q: My daughter's Cookie Bucks are expiring. She uses these to pay for resident camp. What do you suggest?**

A: Cookie Bucks that expired in 2020 have been extended to 2021.

**Q: Why is it ok for girls to participate in the cookie program when we are in the purple tier?**

A: With support from the Health and Human Services Agency, we learned that Farmers' Market guidance can be applied to cookie booths. The County of San Diego has reviewed and approved our [Safe Reopening Plan](#) for standabouts and booths.

## Resources

[California Health Kids Survey Information](#)

[CDPH Guidance: Day Camps](#)

[CDPH Guidance Related to Cohorts](#)

[CDPH Industry Guidance](#)

[Community-Based Organizations](#)

[Girl Scouts Safe Reopening Plan for Troop Meetings](#)

[Live Well @ Home Website](#)

[Outdoor Recreation Guidelines](#)

[The Safe Reopening Plan](#)

[San Diego County Office of Education](#)

[Mental Health & Wellness Resources](#)

[Telebriefings](#) (1st/3rd Friday at 1 p.m.)

[The Safe Reopening Plan](#)

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