

Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast
Returning to In-Person Troop Meetings and Activities Current Guidelines
Edition date: June 16, 2021

This guidance is being provided as of the edition date above. Girl Scout of Wisconsin Southeast may modify this guidance from time to time as circumstances change. This guidance is intended to be used in conjunction with the Girl Scouts Safety Activity Checkpoints and according to state and local guidelines.

COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community. Take all reasonable precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, volunteers, and families. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to change as infection rates rise and fall in different areas. There may be regional differences or developments since this guidance was published.

For troops wishing to meet in person, please ensure that you are following your local health department guidelines and that you practice social distancing and cleanliness and see below for specific guidance on how to do so. Remember, in person troop meetings are not required. **Each troop/family should weigh their participation based on their own health concerns.** Discuss plans with families. Members should never be pressured to meet in person and always follow Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Wisconsin Department of Health Services safety guidelines.

Note: Since the COVID-19 pandemic continues to change as infection rates rise and fall in different areas, continue to follow local and national directives. Individual communities in Wisconsin may establish stricter requirements. If that is the case in your community, you must adapt these guidelines to meet those requirements.

Wisconsin State Guidelines

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services also provides a [COVID-19: Staying Safe in Your Community](#) resource, featuring recommendations for various activities including large gatherings.

GSWISE Guidelines in Accordance with GSUSA Guidelines

Troop meetings, as with normal Girl Scout programs, must abide by Safety Activity Checkpoints in terms of two unrelated adult volunteers, adult-to-girl ratios etc. Girl/adult ratios are to be followed in each individual group and **all girls and adult members MUST wear masks during indoor in-person gatherings and follow outdoor masking guidance including safe social distancing set by local and national agencies (for additional masking guidance, see “Face Coverings” on page 6).**

Volunteers should take all reasonable precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, themselves, and families – this includes frequently 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 and/or gatherings.

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 when indoors, and follow all current masking guidance when outdoors
- 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

***Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast requires a signed Agreement for each minor and adult participant prior to participation at in-person troop meeting or activities.
Assumption of Risk, Release and Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19***

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 associated with COVID-19 in the previous 72 hours, that they have not knowingly been in contact with someone who has exhibited symptoms or has been confirmed positive with COVID-19, and that they have not been to high risk geographical regions particularly those regions that require a mandatory quarantine period.

- As part of the screening process, it is recommended that the troop leader complete and retain a written questionnaire (see last page) for each attendee or implement a verbal process and retain a log of Y/N responses for a minimum of a month.
- Volunteers that are planning events should complete the Pre-screening and Symptoms Check step prior to each in-person gathering.
- 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 be sensitive to the fact that girls may be experiencing symptoms that are similar but completely unrelated to COVID-19 and not contagious at all, such as menstrual body aches or headaches or 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.

Troop Meeting Size.

- The recommended maximum is ten people (eight girls and two unrelated adult volunteers), although larger groups can meet following social distancing and using face masks. For more people or large gatherings, when the time is safely appropriate, follow the CDC guidelines: [Large Gatherings and Community Events](#).
- Volunteers should get prior approval before planning any gatherings of more than ten people.
- Larger troops or groups may break into smaller groups. It is strongly recommended to meet outdoors. When possible:
 - Host virtual troop meetings (see below).
 - Gather in smaller groups—such as age-level groups, patrols, or groups of girls with a particular badge they'd like to work on.

Troop Meeting Space.

Meetings may not be held in fitness centers or gyms, where a greater risk for contracting the virus may exist. Schools or churches may not permit outside groups on premises, so always check and confirm ahead of time.

- Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained are strongly recommended for meetings.
- Since regular troop meeting spaces may not be available, GSWISE is offering the option of using council property such as service centers, camp properties, and other program facilities for troops to meet. Visit [GSWISE Rec Desk](#).
 - 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.
 - **It is always best to opt for outside meetings than inside, whenever possible.**
- If you are meeting in other facilities, get advance permission from the property owner or the jurisdiction that provides the location.
- For meetings held at public facilities, contact the facility ahead of time and ask:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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, consider whether you can supplement any practices that are less ideal. For example, if you will arrive after another user group, plan to bring sanitizing wipes to get the space ready for your troop. Another example: if faucets are manual, take some time to show girls how to shut them off with a paper towel. Use paper towels for doorknobs whenever possible.
<p><u>Virtual meetings.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting options may need to be flexible based on the fluid nature of COVID-19 risk. Troops that can run online meetings as needed (or wanted) should do so. ● GSWISE 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. ● Use the Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Meetings, to guide your meeting plans: <u>Virtual Troop Meetings</u>. ● To help facilitate virtual meetings, GSWISE has purchased Zoom licenses available for Troop usage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upon request, one Zoom license is available per Troop with at least 2 co-leaders and 5 girls registered for the 2020-21 year. ○ Go to this link to request your license: https://gswise.wufoo.com/forms/zoom-request ○ Complementary licenses may be limited.
<p><u>Troop Meetings in the home.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GSWISE strongly suggests no meetings in the home out of concern that there would be greater risk of exposure to other family members. The recommendation is to stay away from in-home meetings.
<p><u>Transportation (car-pooling).</u></p> <p>Individual parents drop off and pick up their own girls from meetings is preferred.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is imperative to take all safety precautions when girls are traveling in motor vehicles. ● If possible, girls from different households should not carpool. ● If carpooling, make sure parents are aware ahead of time if girls will be in a car together. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Girls and adults should wear masks when inside of a motor vehicle. ○ Always space out the girls to avoid crowding. ○ Keep car window opened, at least slightly, to circulate fresh air. ○ Consider the personal situation of your girls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ Have the families been isolating, and free from contagion? If so, the troop may essentially be a safe bubble.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always, for every in-person event, meeting, or transportation arrangement, conduct the pre-screening process (see last page). • Remember, 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 <u>Ride Shares and Drivers for Hire</u> may be helpful as an additional reference when evaluating motor vehicle transportation or car-pooling:
<p><u>Transportation (public-transportation).</u></p> <p>Public transportation should be avoided, where possible, to maintain social distancing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transportation should be avoided whenever possible as large groups of people, indoors, for longer than ten minutes are typical of most public transportation which increases transmission risk. • Note, maintaining six feet social distance is often difficult or impossible with public transportation. • However, when public transportation cannot be avoided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid peak hours. • Allow extra time to wait and avoid crowded buses or subway cars or capacity restrictions. • Space out girls to avoid crowding (but keep to the buddy system) • Consider grade level, age, and maturity level of girls. • Always wear a mask • Obtain parental or legal guardian permission, make sure they are aware. • Clean hands before and after public transportation travel.
<p><u>Day trips and activities.</u></p> <p>In conjunction with <u>Safety Activity Checkpoints</u>, follow the same guidance as Troop Meetings and Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance in this document.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Make whatever appropriate accommodations that are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.
<p><u>Travel and overnight stays.</u></p> <p>International travel is prohibited at this time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troop Trips continue to be evaluated based on the destination of the trip and travel details. Volunteers must seek council approval before planning any overnight stays. • DHS recommends Wisconsinites cancel or postpone all travel unless you are fully vaccinated. If you must travel, please consider <u>actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19</u>. • See further travel guidance later in this document.
<p><u>Personal contact.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hugs, handshakes, “high-fives,” and even activities like the friendship circle or squeeze can transmit COVID-19 from person to person. • Refrain from these gestures for the time being. • Create a safe way for girls and volunteers to greet and end meetings instead (like tapping elbows).
<p><u>Singing.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you normally close your meetings with a song, make certain girls and adults are all wearing masks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p><u>First Aid Supplies.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items including hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), tissues, disposable facemasks, and disinfectants. • Trash baskets or bags should be supplied for meeting and activity spaces, if not already available. Make sure that the trash baskets (or bags) are easily accessible for girls. • Disposable or no-contact thermometers may be added to supplies if available and not cost-prohibitive, however, parents should be checking temperatures and allowing their girl(s) to join group activities only when temperatures are normal.
<p><u>First Aid/CPR Training.</u></p>	<p>Keep skills up to date for any emergency.</p>
<p><u>Disinfectants and Disinfecting.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., tabletops, markers, scissors, etc.). • Use a household cleaner or see the <u>EPA's list of effective cleaners</u> 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.). • Household bleach is effective against COVID-19 for up to 24 hours when properly diluted. Check that the bleach is not expired and determine if it can be used on a given surface. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To prepare a bleach solution, mix: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or ▪ 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water • See the <u>CDC's website</u> 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 <u>FDA updates on hand sanitizers consumers should not use</u> and stay away from products deemed unsafe.
<p><u>Maintain at least 6' distance from other individuals.</u></p> <p>NO PHYSICAL CONTACT.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all cases, indoor or outdoor, social distancing MUST be maintained. • Mark off distances on the ground or group sitting accordingly. • Adults are responsible for monitoring all social distancing guidelines. • NOTE: We highly recommend maintaining the six-foot distancing throughout the meeting. We understand there may be times when that is difficult, for example a leader may need to work closer with a girl. In that case, face coverings must be worn by both the girl and the adult.

<p><u>Face Coverings.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All girls and adult members should wear masks indoors during troop in person gatherings and wear masks outdoors when around people who do not live in the same household, per current CDC guidance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks, due to medical conditions such as asthma, or if participating in higher-risk activities such as swimming, campfires, eating, etc. ○ If you have additional questions after referencing the CDC recommendations, contact GSWISE for guidance on how best to handle these exceptional circumstances as they arise. • Face coverings are a civic responsibility and a sign of caring for the community. Please remind girls that Girl Scouts wear face coverings (masks) not only to protect themselves but to protect others. • 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.
<p><u>Food, Dining and Snacks.</u></p> <p>Be careful when handling and serving food and have girls be careful with each other when eating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 mealtimes.
<p><u>Restrooms.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, ensure girls take appropriate turns to maintain social distancing and that they wear their masks in the restrooms.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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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, regardless of COVID-19 restrictions, volunteers must follow guidance in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). For the foreseeable future, volunteers must seek council approval before planning **any** overnight activities and continue to practice the Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance outlined in this document.

Although travel plans are often arranged several months in advance, be aware that the COVID-19 risk is fluid; it can and will change, and contingencies should be planned ahead-of time for re-scheduling, cancelling, or pivoting to a virtual activity. For all planned trips, create a timeline and identify a drop-dead date when decisions must be made about whether to move forward with the planned trip or not, based primarily on the safety of our girls, along with financial commitment deadlines and/or other factors. You should also consider purchasing travel insurance but be sure to read all fine print and ask questions to ensure COVID or pandemic-related cancellation is covered; it is often excluded.

You can access a summary of Wisconsin’s suggestions/restrictions [here](#). Also, check all guidance provided by the [CDC specific to Travel](#), and, for international travel, check U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories. Be sure to check the CDC and Department of State advice with respect to US or international travel. Also, consider using the [Event Risk Assessment Planning Tool](#), published by Georgia Tech. This helpful interactive map geographically tracks COVID-19 risk factors by state and county. There is more information about the Georgia Tech tool located under the Additional Resources at the end of this chapter.

Travel approvals will be considered on a case-by-case basis, factoring in the risk associated with the specific type of travel being requested. For example, a troop might request to proceed with a camping trip, with girls and parents of separate households traveling separately, and sleeping and cooking in separate areas. For this type of trip, social distancing is possible, and masks can be always worn other than when eating, and eating is occurring only within the family unit. But, as with all in-person activities, all guidance outlined in this chapter should be implemented; for example, follow the guidance in the section for Volunteer Awareness and for Pre-screening and Symptoms Check.

Always implement modifications to travel plans that make social distancing practicable; for example, as mentioned above, travelers from separate households practicing social distancing. 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. For travel that include girls and adults from multiple households who must be in close proximity (e.g., sharing transportation or accommodations), consider guidance related to resident camp programs. See the [American Camp Association Resource Center for Camps](#) which include a [Field Guide for Camps](#).

Strategies to mitigate COVID risk may include breaking the group up into smaller cohorts or instituting pre-trip quarantine and testing requirements, in addition to pre-screening and symptoms checks, which should take place before all in-person activities.

Check the CDC [Domestic Travel Guidance](#) details about various types of travel, risk factors, and steps to mitigate risk. Another additional resource to examine is the [Educator Travel Toolkit](#) created by the Student Youth Travel Organization (although this resource was created for trips planned with a tour provider, the suggestions are more broadly applicable.) Recommendations from this guide include consider purchasing travel insurance (be sure to understand if the policy has COVID-19 or pandemic exclusions); plan to bring 1-2

adults beyond the ratio-required number of adults and to pre-book an extra accommodation space, in case it is necessary to isolate a traveler from the rest of the group.

Before implementing GSWISE guidance, first and foremost, always verify and stay in compliance with federal, state, and local governmental health authority guidance or restrictions.

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.
- 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.

Reporting and communicating a positive COVID 19 test. In the event of a COVID-19 positive test result, do **NOT** contact the parents or troop members. Promptly contact GSWISE council at (800) 565-4475 in this situation. **A council staff member** will work with you to contact your local health department so that the following can be done by the local health department personnel or GSWISE staff (NOT Volunteers):

- Confirming and tracing the positive tester,
- Contacting the parents of anyone who may have been exposed (or other volunteers),
- Notifying the facility where a troop has met.

Let additional volunteers know that DHS will notify parents and others about a positive test result and that the **tester's identity is confidential**. Remember that girl and volunteer health information is private and strictly confidential and should be only shared on a need-to-know basis with a council staff member.



Attendee COVID-19 Screening Form

Attendee Name:

Date:

Screening Questions

1. Do you have a fever or above-normal temperature (>100F)?	YES ___ NO ___
2. Have you taken fever reducers in the past 72 hours?	YES ___ NO ___
3. Have you been experiencing shortness of breath or having trouble breathing? YES ___ NO ___	
4. In the past 72 hours, have you had a dry cough?	YES ___ NO ___
5. In the past 72 hours, have you had a runny nose?	YES ___ NO ___
6. In the past 72 hours, have you had a sore throat?	YES ___ NO ___
7. Have you recently lost or had a reduction in your sense of smell or taste?	YES ___ NO ___
8. In the past 72 hours, have you had any other flu-like symptoms, such as gastrointestinal upset, headache, muscle pain or fatigue?	YES ___ NO ___
9. In the past 72 hours, have you had chills or repeated shaking with chills?	YES ___ NO ___
10. Have you been tested for COVID-19? If YES, date tested _____ & what is the result? ___ Positive ___ Negative ___ Awaiting result	YES ___ NO ___
11. In the last 14 days, have you been in contact with someone who has a confirmed case COVID-19, under investigation for COVID-19 or a respiratory illness?	YES ___ NO ___
12. In the last 14 days, have you traveled to any foreign country? If YES, where? _____	YES ___ NO ___
13. In the last 14 days, have you traveled to a state outside of WI? If YES, where? _____	YES ___ NO ___