

## GSUSA 2021 Edition Safety Activity Checkpoints (SACP) Change Memo – Important Updates to 2021 Edition *2021 Edition Revised @ April 2021*

To: Council COOs and Council Program, Volunteer, Camp Staff  
From: Lisa Shimborski, GSUSA Director of Risk & Insurance  
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The 2021 Edition of GSUSA's Safety Activity Checkpoints has been updated to reflect the following changes as outlined in this three-page memo. National guidelines are developed in collaboration with the Girl Scout Council Safety Activity Checkpoints Task Team which includes a balanced regional representation as well as in-depth expertise and experience in the areas of Girl Scout programs, safety, and risk management.

**Standard Safety Guidelines.** GSUSA's Standard Safety Guidelines (formerly titled "Girl Scout Activity Safety Standards & Guidelines") are located on pages 4 - 22 and apply to *all* Girl Scout activities including: troop meetings, day trips, special events, camp, travel, and product program.

Accordingly, we added a link under each activity chapter to direct volunteers to the Standard Safety Guidelines section.

Please communicate to volunteers the importance of learning and practicing these overarching Standard Safety Guidelines.

**Within the Universal Safety Standards & Guidelines (p. 4 - 22) are the following updates:**

**Adult Supervision.** Further emphasizes the long-standing Girl Scout rule of *at least two* registered and approved, unrelated Girl Scout volunteers, one of whom is female. Examples of unrelated are provided as: not a sibling, spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, or anyone who would be considered a family member, and who do not live in the same residence.

This rule applies to all Girl Scout gatherings and is mandatory whenever girls meet, whether in person or virtually. It is recommended that councils advise troops and parents of this requirement so that the council can be alerted if the supervision is not meeting this requirement.

**Activities not Listed in Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Added a bullet to remind volunteers that when an activity is not listed in Safety Activity Checkpoints, they must consult council staff for prior approval before taking girls. Councils have authority to vet an activity, and the vendor or facility if one is involved, and either approve the request or not approve it.

**Selecting an Activity to do with Girls.** This section reminds volunteers to be intentional when selecting an activity. It encourages volunteers to bring girls into the selection process whether for GSUSA approved activities and those that may not be provided in SACP, but that girls are asking to do. Beyond learning a new skill and having fun, volunteers are reminded of the five key long-term outcomes that girls receive in Girl Scouts and how volunteers can foster those outcomes. Girls will get an opportunity to think about how their experiences will tie back to a strong sense of self, positive values, challenge seeking attitudes, healthy relationships and community problem solving.

**Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts.** This section addresses the COVID-19 safety guidelines and basics. This is the guidance that councils have developed in conjunction with GSUSA over the past year.

**Equity.** This section was formerly titled Equal Treatment for all Girls. A paragraph was added to expand the guidance which alerts volunteers to be mindful of physical and social-emotional disabilities and to further consider the history, culture, and past experiences that could impact all girls to equally participate. This bullet is added to each activity chapter in addition to Girls with Disabilities.

**Vans designed for 15 passengers.** While these commercial and professionally operated vehicles are permitted, volunteers themselves are not permitted to operate them with girls unless council staff specifically approves the request. Council *staff* is permitted to operate these vehicles, at camp for example, because the proper safety precautions and specifics are outlined in the Risk Management Guide for that purpose. However, for the average driver, these vehicles are still considered high risk and therefore not encouraged for volunteers to transport girls.

Two new activity chapters have been added:

- Community Clean-Ups
  - Beach Clean Ups
  - Rivers and Waterways
  - Public Parks
  - Highway / Road
  - Adopt-a-Highway
  
- Rocketry / Model Rocketry
  - Engineering
  - Designing
  - Physics
  - Launching

Other activity specific updates include:

#### **Travel / Trips.**

- Added information about public transportation and seating in a checkered manner to provide social distancing during COVID-19.
- Added a reminder that volunteers need to purchase the extra Activity Accident insurance for international travel and other nuances about Activity Accident insurance such as the federal holiday exception to the two night overnight stays (three nights instead of two are covered when it is a federal holiday).
- Added a reminder to read the fine print when purchasing cancellation insurance with an airline because pandemic may be excluded. Broad cancellation insurance is called CFAR (Cancel for Any Reason).
- Added a reminder to have extra money available/accessible as part of a contingency plan for when things do not go as expected, for example: cancelled accommodations, missed trains, or illness which requires quarantine or recuperation.
- Added a reminder to become aware of any necessary quarantine periods necessary for going to or returning home from international or out of state travel.
- Clarified and combined sleeping and bathroom arrangements,

#### **Sailing.**

Sailing is not recommended for Brownies, but it is permitted. Volunteers need to carefully assess the maturity, decision making skills, progression, and experience with small watercraft vessels as well as the type of sailboat being used.

**Water vessels.**

- Added clarification that privately owned powered boats, sailboats, and small watercraft such as canoes are permitted. This is also addressed under the Scuba Diving chapter. Prior editions of SACP were silent on the issue of privately owned boats, so this provides clarification.
- Added clarification that council prior approval is not required for commercial transportation such as ferries.
- Added a carbon monoxide warning to the powered boats chapters such as diving, waterskiing & wakeboarding and scuba diving and refers to stern and platform safety.