



Girl Scouts®

Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Volunteer Policies and Procedures FAQ Sheet

September 2009

Registration

Q: Can girls be registered as lifetime members?

A: GSUSA only allows adults to register as lifetime members. A girl member graduating from high school may take advantage of a special one-time offer to purchase a lifetime membership at a reduced cost. Contact the council's eCouncil manager (in the Portland service center) for information on this special offer.

Q: The procedure refers to a financial assistance form for membership assistance. What is that?

A: The financial assistance form lets the council registrars know that an individual is requesting financial assistance. The form includes the name of the individual, the group number and other pertinent information so that the financial assistance can be credited to the correct individual. The financial assistance form also asks the individual to indicate how much financial assistance she/he is requesting. Some individuals may need financial assistance for only a portion of the membership dues while others will need assistance for the full \$12. It is up to the individual requesting assistance to indicate the amount of assistance being requested.

Adult Development

Q: The terms direct, indirect, short-term and long-term are all confusing. What do they all mean?

A: When someone volunteers for Girl Scouts, there are two primary aspects to their volunteering: the type of service they give and the length of that service. The chart below explains what these are:

Type of service	A direct volunteer is someone who facilitates the delivery of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience from a variety of volunteer positions. These volunteers normally have direct contact with girls (e.g. leaders, advisors, counselors, unit leaders, event chaperones, drivers).	An indirect volunteer is someone who supports girls behind the scenes, as a strategic thinker, administrator or project-based volunteers. Examples are board members, treasurers, trainers and delegates.
Length of service	A long-term volunteer is someone who fills a position for an extended period of time, usually more than eight weeks (e.g. leader of a troop, day camp director, board member)	A short-term volunteer commits to her/his volunteer position for a short period of time, such as an event registrar, service unit event flyer designer or helper with short term programs or

		events on an intermittent basis throughout the year.
--	--	--

A volunteer could be a:

- short-term direct volunteer (helper at day camp, leader of a six-week after-school program)
- short-term indirect volunteer (treasurer for a service unit event, member of a council task group)
- long term direct volunteer (group leader, Gold Award advisor)
- long term indirect volunteer (board member, service unit treasurer)

Q: Who needs to have background check?

A: On page 15 of the policies and procedures, it states:

“Any person who will have direct contact with girls must successfully complete the volunteer application process and background check. Exceptions to this would be an individual who meets all the requirements under either of the below:

- An individual who:
 - Serves as a one-time advisor or consultant, such as a speaker or presenter,
 - Is never left alone with girl(s), **AND**
 - Is not counted when considering the girl/adult ratio
- A parent or guardian who:
 - Attends group family function such as a court of awards or family picnic, **AND**
 - Is not counted when considering the girl/adult ratio”

In addition to the above, if a group meeting or activity is being held in a private residence, all persons 18 years or older who reside (permanently or temporarily) at that residence must successfully complete a criminal background check prior to the first meeting held in the private residence.

Q: The procedures indicate that a volunteer must take the Program Level course within six months of starting to work with girls. This seems like a long time before requiring someone to complete the course.

A: This timeline is under review. The adult development team will monitor how this timeline works during this coming year and make adjustments for the 2010-2011 membership year.

Q: If I have someone who comes in a few times a year to help with a program activity, what kind of training do they need?

A: The answer to this depends on the capacity in which you use this person. If she/he is never left alone with the girls AND you are not including her/him as part of your group’s girl/adult ration as outlined in Safety-Wise, this person does not need any additional training.

If they are going to be left alone with the girls or are included in the adult count for your girl/adult ratio, they will need to take training as outlined in the procedures.

Q: What about drivers for my group? What training is required for them?

A: If an individual is only driving occasionally for a group, we encourage them to take Council 101, but it is not required. If the individual is a regular driver, Council 101 is strongly recommended.

Q: As the group leader, I have attended all the required trainings (Council 101, Program Level, First Aid/CPR, Girls on the Move, Girl Scout Camping Basics and Extended trip). Is it okay that I’m the only one who has taken these courses when my group decides to take part in an activity or trip, or do different adults in the group need to have completed the required course as well?

A: The council requires that an adult accompanying the group on the activity must have taken the required course(s). It can certainly be the same person. And by having other adults attend some of the courses and helping fill this role with your group, you can relieve the stress of you being the only one in your group who fits this very important qualification. And it doesn't have to be a parent of one of the girls in your group. There might be a college student, young working professional, "empty nester," or single adult that might be more than willing to help. Think outside the box and see if there's someone you know who might be interested in helping.

For the best program experience for girls, it is expected that, in addition to the leader, the co-leader, assistant leader and all group helpers will take Council 101 and Program Level.

Q: What methods are available for me to take adult development courses?

A: In order to meet the learning styles and time constraints of our many volunteers, the adult development team has created three different ways an individual may take part in adult development courses. These are in person, on line and via home study.

Store

Q: Why are insignia only returnable for store credit, while merchandise will be accepted for exchanged or refund?

A: Insignia (ID strips, flag patch, troop number, pin tab and membership pins) are returnable, for refund, if in original packaging and in re-sellable condition.

Q: Why are there no exchanges or refunds on fun patches?

A: Fun patches are often seasonal in nature and by the time they might be returned, the fun patch themes have moved on to the next season.

Money-Earning Activities

Q: One of the procedures states that, "Money-earning activities will not receive approval if scheduled to be held during the order-taking portion of the fall sale or during all aspects of the cookie sale." How do I know what those dates are?

A: The dates for the 2009-2010 membership year product sales are:

Fall product sale order-taking dates	September 17 – 27, 2009
Cookie sale dates	January 9 – March 14, 2010

Q: One of the procedures states that "Money-earning activities may not receive approval if scheduled to be held during some local United Way campaigns." Why is this and how do I know which United Way campaigns this applies to and when their campaign dates are?

A: In those areas of the council that receive support from the local United Way, a funding agreement is signed between the United Way and the council. Part of this agreement is that United Way funding organizations will not hold money-earning activities at the same time as (in competition with) the United Way drive. The United Ways this affects and the dates of their campaigns are as follows:

United Way	Blackout Dates for 2009
Linn County	None
Southwestern Oregon (Coos Bay)	September 1 – November 15

Benton and Lincoln Counties	None
Deschutes County	None
Klamath Basin	September 8 – November 10
Eastern Oregon (La Grande)	None (but please don't compete with golf tournament September 12)
Jefferson County	September 1 – November 15
Jackson County	September 10 – November 18
Umatilla Morrow Counties	None (but please don't compete with major events – seek to partner with them)
Greater Douglas	August 31 – November 1
Mid-Willamette Valley (Marion, Polk, Yamhill counties)	None
Lane County	None (but please be aware that third week in October is the major push for their campaign)
Tillamook County	None
Crook County	To be determined – contact your local development associate for updated information

Donations

Q: Is there any limit on the dollar amount of pass-through donations my group can receive in a year?

A: Generally, no, there isn't – and the amount of money received from pass-through donations in a year should correspond with the age, ability and planning of the girls in the group. Seeking pass-through donations for the sake of having large sums of cash should not be the focus of any group. As with all requests for donations (and pass-through donations do fall into this category), there needs to be a well thought-out plan, with age-appropriate girl input, for the use of all funds received by the group. This information will need to be included on the form that you will submit requesting authorization to solicit these funds.

Q: Do donated supplies need to go through my local service center before I can accept them? And who provides the donor with a receipt for their donated supplies

A: First, remember that the solicitation of donated supplies is considered a request for a donation and needs to run through the appropriate channels as outlined in the procedures section of the council's "Volunteer Policies and Procedures."

While cash donations need to go through your regional development associate, supplies, goods and services donated to a group can go directly to the group. As group leader, you will need to write the thank you note to the donor. Be sure to include a description of the items donated and a description of how your group is going to use the donation. It makes the donor feel like her or his gift is truly of use to your group. Of course, if the value of the supplies being donated is significant, your regional development associate will work with you to ensure the donor receives the appropriate IRS-approved documentation (on donations valued by the donor as \$250 or more).

Q: Someone gave us \$5 for a \$4 box of cookies. Is this considered a pass-through donation or a solicitation? Do I need to fill out a request or authorization form for this? Can I accept the money?

A: Many individuals like to reward girls at a product sale booth with some extra change. Unless this is something the girls are specifically asking for (which they shouldn't be doing, as solicitation for

funds is expressly an adults-only activity), these small amounts of funds received at booth sales can be considered a donation to the group. The girls who receive the donation should say, "Thank you!" and the group leader needs to be sure to report these donations on her/his year-end financial report.

Q: My group received a donation from someone who told me, "I don't need a receipt." Should I insist on giving them one anyway?

A: The purpose of a receipt is primarily for the individual who is giving the donation as proof of the donation for her/his taxes. If the individual insists on no receipt, you are not obligated to send one. Do be sure, however, to send a thank you note and include a description of what was given – the amount of money or the type of goods received (arts and crafts supplies, camping equipment, etc.) and how much (three boxes, two tents, etc.).

Bank Accounts

Q: I'm a new leader and I'm ready to open my group's bank account. What do I need to do?

A: When you are ready to open your account, contact your service unit treasurer. She/he will have a letter that has all the necessary information the bank will need in order to open your account. You will have to provide your group number to complete the information.

Before you get to the bank, you will need to determine who, in addition to you, will be a signer on your account. Council policies state that there must be at least two signers on the account. That doesn't mean two people must sign each check, but there must be at least two signers on the signature card with the bank. The other signer(s) should be someone who has some connection with the group, such as another parent or other adult that works regularly with the group. It should also be someone who is good with numbers and is comfortable balancing a check book. Remember – anyone working with the group bank account must also be a registered member of Girl Scouts and successfully complete a background check. As group leader, you may not feel comfortable handling the check book on a regular basis and that's okay. Involving another adult with the leadership of the group will make your job as group leader that much easier.

Q: When a group disbands and a request for the funds to follow the girls to a new group, how is that money transferred?

A: Once a request for the disbanded funds is received from the new leader, a check, made out to the group, will be sent to the new leader. The amount of the check will be dependent upon all the factors listed in the procedure that go into figuring the amount that will follow the girl(s) to a new group.

Q: What's the difference between an inactive group and a disbanded group?

A: An inactive group is one that has failed to re-register and the girls in the group have not indicated an interest in moving to a new troop. A group becomes inactive when the girls no longer are able to be part of the group or there is no interest on the part of the girls to continue.

A group is considered a disbanded group when there is no leadership for the group and there are girls interested in continuing their Girl Scout experience with a new group. Disbanding may occur for a variety of reasons, including the group leader moves out of the area, has a change in her/his time availability, is asked to step down as group leader for cause or realizes she/he underestimated the skills and abilities needed to lead a group. In these cases, there are usually girls still interested in continuing their Girl Scout experience and are happy to be placed in a new group.

Travel

Q: When is a health examination needed for travelling?

A: Health examinations are required for girls who participate in resident camping, in a trip of three nights or more, or in organized competitive sports. The health examination must have taken place within the 24 months preceding the event/activity. Although health examinations are necessary to protect the health and welfare of the girls, obtaining them may be a financial burden for some. Here are some additional ways this requirement can be met:

- The health examination may be given by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant or registered nurse.
- A girl may obtain a copy of her current (within the 24 months preceding the event/activity) school health examination record.
- A girl may obtain a copy of a current (within the 24 months preceding the event/activity) sports health examination record.
- A girl may use a clinic or community health services, such as the health department, the U.S. Army Medical Corps, or college or university medical schools.

Q: That answers the health exam question for girls, but what about adults?

A: The requirements for health exams for adults are not as stringent for girls. The need for a health examination from adults will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Q: How does mileage impact the type of travel I am taking?

A: Mileage does not have any impact on the definition of different travel types. The need for additional approval is based completely on amount of time you will be away (including travel time). For example a group from Salem traveling to Portland and staying four nights would be treated the same as a group from Grants Pass traveling to Los Angeles and staying three nights. Because of the length of the trips, both are considered extended travel.

Health and Safety

Q: I have heard that reporting suspected child abuse is a confidential process between me and the appropriate governmental agency. Why do I need to also report it to GSOSW?

A: The safety of our girls is of the utmost importance to all of us. If there is suspected child abuse, it needs to be reported. The suspected abuse also impacts all of us in Girl Scouting. If the suspected abuse is from another member, be it a girl or adult member or a relative of a member, or someone unconnected with Girl Scouts, GSOSW must take the steps necessary to safeguard all parties involved. The council also needs to be prepared for any media inquiries the report may ultimately generate.