

Policies and Procedures Frequently Asked Questions

Program, Travel:

Policy:

Notice must be submitted, and approval received at least 24 hours in advance for any activity planned beyond the normal group meeting date, and/or time which exceeds four (4) hours, including travel time. . . .

Question: What does "which exceeds 4 hours" mean?

Answer: Any length of time longer than 4 hours. This could apply to trips which total 4 hours and 5 minutes or trips which are 2 weeks.

Question: Does this include day trips?

Answer: Yes, if the day trip is longer than 4 hours.

Question: Are trip alerts needed for activities less than 4 hours?

Answer: Trip alerts are not needed for activities less than 4 hours if they are occurring at the normal group meeting date, time, and place. If the activity is taking place in a location different than the normal group meeting location and date, than a trip alert is needed even if it will last less than 4 hours. See page 6 of Volunteer Policies and Procedures.

Question: How will Volunteer Support Coordinators know if those driving have gone through the process and are registered?

Answer: Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountain's Volunteer Support staff notify the Volunteer Support Coordinator when an individual has successfully completed the volunteer application process.

Volunteer Selection and Appointment

Policy

Only those adults who have successfully completed the volunteer application process, successfully completed a background check, and who register as members of Girl Scouts of the USA shall be appointed to volunteer positions. Volunteers appointed in these positions must also complete the appropriate training. . . .

*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 onetime advisor or consultant, i.e. a speaker or presenter,*
- *Is never left alone with girl(s), AND*
- *Is not counted when considering girl/adult ratio.*

A parent or guardian who:

- *Attends group family function, i.e., court of awards, family picnic, etc. AND*
- *Is not counted when considering girl/adult ratio.*

If the group meeting or activity is being held in a private residence all persons 18 years or older who reside at that residence must successfully complete a criminal background check prior to the first meeting.

Question: Does a parent need a background check for a day trip?

Answer: A parent does not need to go through our background check process if this is a family event and they are not counting towards a ratio. If the parent is volunteering as a chaperone for a day trip, then they would need to complete the background check process.

Question: Is a background check required for a trip which is not a full day?

Answer: Yes

Question: If a community is going on a full day bus trip and several parents are “going along for the ride,” do the parents need to register, complete the volunteer process and background check?

Answer: Yes. In this situation, parents are not attending the event as advisors or consultants, and the trip is a not a family group function. Parents are attending to participate in the program activity and provide additional support for the troops. Therefore, the parents need to complete our volunteer application process.

Question: Can a troop pay membership fees for adults participating on trips who are not serving as chaperones?

Answer: If the adults are not serving as chaperones, there is no benefit to the troop or girls and expending it from troop funds does not seem appropriate.

Question: How does an adult get a criminal background check?

Answer: Please contact the Manager of Volunteer Intake and Placement, Stacy Sousa, at 888-474-9686, or via email at ssousa@girlscoutsgwm.org

Question: If an individual passed the original background check, but does have a criminal record that should be reviewed, how can that be handled?

Answer: Concerns regarding criminal records are handled by the Chief Executive Officer or the Director of Human Resources. Information pertaining to the

criminal record should be brought to their attention or the attention of a supervising staff member.

Question: Would the person need a background check if they live there, but are not present when the activity is happening?

Answer: Yes

Question: Who pays for the criminal background checks?

Answer: Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains

Question: How often is a criminal background check needed?

Answer: In accordance with our procedures, background checks are required every 5 years. Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains reserves the right to require a background check sooner than 5 years if there has been a significant break in volunteer service or circumstances arise which warrant a shorter time period.

Question: Who is responsible for making sure the criminal background checks are completed every five years?

Answer: Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountain's staff monitor the 5-year time period.

Question: Is it ok for girls to pick up cookies at your house with their parents without having all of these checks?

Answer: In the circumstance where a parent is solely in contact with their own children and not chaperoning other children, such as accompanying their child to pick up cookies or driving them to or from events, the parent does not need to have completed all of the background checks.

Question: If a parent offers to host an end-of-year party at their house, do they need to complete the inspections, background checks, etc.?

Answer: Yes

Question: Why is there an exception for short-term volunteers on background checks and parents who only participate in a group activity?

Answer: This policy has been implemented to ensure the safety and security of our girls and volunteers when children are left in our care and become our responsibility. The policy exempts individuals who will never be left alone or take responsibility for another individual's child. In the case of short-term volunteers, our exception applies only if it is a onetime event, they are never left alone with girls, and they are not being counted towards the ratios. Parents attending family functions remain responsible for the care and well-being of their children.

Question: If a parent helps at a meeting by bringing a snack and helping with one activity, does that require the background check and training, or is that considered short term?

Answer: If it is a onetime event, they will not be left alone with any children and they are not being counted towards your necessary ratios, then they are not required to complete a background check and training.

Question: Can you clarify who has the ultimate responsibility for maintaining the background checks (every five years, which ones are complete, etc.) the volunteers or Council staff?

Answer: The staff of Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains.

Question: A trip alert was always needed for any event or meeting outside of a regular meeting place and time, so a sleepout, end-of-year celebration, etc. always required a "trip" alert. Do any events or meetings held at a house now need to be inspected, etc.?

Answer: Yes

Question: The group meeting at house rule...is that on a regular basis meeting there and not just a onetime event?

Answer: Any meeting or event held at a private residence requires the inspection and background checks on all residents 18 and older.

Group Meeting Places

Policy: Regular group meetings will be held in public buildings. Exceptions may be made in order to accommodate the special needs of group members. All meeting places not in public buildings must be inspected for safety and accessibility prior to use. In addition, the homeowner must provide a current Certificate of Insurance at the beginning of each membership year, and a copy of any renewal/change that occurs during the year. . . .

If the group meeting or activity is being held in a private residence all persons 18 years or older who reside at that residence must successfully complete a criminal background check prior to the first meeting.

Question: Does the policy apply for regular group meetings only, or does it also apply to troop sleepovers in private residences?

Answer: The policy applies to both circumstances.

Question: If parents are supervising their child at a cookie booth sale do they need to be a registered volunteer and background checked?

Answer: If parents are merely waiting around a cookie booth sale for their child to finish, they do not need to be background checked or go through the volunteer process. If parents are actively chaperoning children at cookie booth sales and counting towards our safety ratios, then they do need to go through the volunteer process and background checks.

Question: Does every parent that stays at a cookie booth to help troops have to follow the volunteer application process (registration, application, criminal background check) or can the extra adult be considered in the two time rule under say "cookie presenter"...where they would not be alone and it would most likely be 1-3 hours for most troops over 1-2 days?

Answer: If the parents are staying to chaperone and handle troop finances, they need to go through the process. If they are just hanging around the store or location because it takes too much time to drive home and back, and they are not helping out, handling money or chaperoning any of the girls, then it would not apply.

Corporate Contributions:

Policy:

Any designated donation monies received from a foundation, corporation, government entity, or individual (including recognition of volunteer service hours) received on behalf of a Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountain's troop, District, Community, or individual member will be accepted and recognized by Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains. The Council will return 50%, not to exceed \$250, of the donation to the designated troop, District, Community, or individual member. The designated troop, service unit or individual member may designate the balance of the donation to approved Council expenses such as, but not limited to, the Girl Assistance Fund, property support or campership.

Question: If our troop or Community receives a donation do we still have to send that through Council?

Answer: If the donor wishes to count the gift as a charitable donation on their tax return, then the donation needs to be processed through Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains and benefit the entire Council due to our non-profit status. The Fund Development Committee is currently evaluating this policy and will bring recommendations to the Board in 2012.