



Short & Snappy Express Train

Station 2: Safety Wise

What happened to the Safety-Wise book? It's been recreated as Safety Activity Checkpoints and the Volunteer Essentials document. They are not available in the stores but you can download your copy from the GSCCS website: <http://www.girlscoutscs.org/safety-activity-checkpoints/> and <http://www.girlscoutscs.org/forms/> under the "Resources" heading.

GSUSA has streamlined Safety-Wise's 35 Program Standards into a list of twelve steps to Girl Scout Safety:

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.**
2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.**
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.**
4. **Report abuse.**
5. **Be prepared for emergencies.**
6. **Travel safely.**
7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.**
8. **Role-model the right behavior.**
9. **Create an emotionally safe space.**
10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.**
11. **Promote online safety.**
12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.**



For detailed information on each step, see page 2 of this handout.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Each activity checkpoint has in-depth safety guidelines and tips that adult volunteers use for a wide range of activities, ranging from canoeing to surfing to selling cookies. Girls can also use these checkpoints to ready their group for a girl-led activity. Each checkpoint includes the following information:

- Basic gear and specialized gear for the activity
- Prepare for the activity – includes adult to girl ratios, required certification of instructors, First-aid requirements and other guidelines for ensuring a safe experience
- On the day of the activity reminders and tips
- Links to helpful websites
- Know-How for girls offer games and other fun ways to expand girls' knowledge
- Jargon specific to the activity

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with your Council *before* making any definite plans with the girls. A few activities are allowed only with written Council pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely. The following activities are never allowed for any girl: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing, and trampolining); creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skis, and wakeboards); hunting or shooting a projectile at another person; riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes; and taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher.

Caution: You must get written pre-approval from your Council for girls ages 12 and older who will operate motorized vehicles, such as go-carts and personal watercraft; use firearms; take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable; or fly in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot-air balloons, and blimps.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer: Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and must complete background screening by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.
4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Should you suspect child abuse of any kind the Council suggests that you report the condition to the appropriate agency.
5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls' families.
6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer, complete the background screening process and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.
9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group websites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge and have them commit to it. http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp
12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout-approved product sales and efforts.