

New Troop Leader Checklist

You've got this!

You do **not** have to do everything at once. This checklist is here to help you stay organized, build confidence, and create a safe, fun experience for your girls.

Before Your First Meeting

- ☐ Register with Girl Scouts.
- ☐ Complete and clear background check.
- ☐ Complete *New Leader Onboarding Part 1*.
- ☐ Complete *GSUSA Girl Scouts Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Course*.
- ☐ Connect with you Girl Scouts of South Carolina—Mountains to Midlands (GSSC—MM) Community Development Manager (CDM).
- ☐ Connect with your service unit manager (SUM) to learn about the service unit (SU).
- ☐ Open or schedule opening of a bank account.
 - Your CDM will provide a *Troop Bank Authorization Form* to take to the bank.
- ☐ Confirm meeting location.
 - Meeting space should be free, if possible. Using troop funds to pay for space adds up quickly. Ask your service unit team for meeting location suggestions. (Example: schools, churches, community centers, etc.)
- ☐ If your troop is a Girl Scout Daisy or Brownie level, decide if the troop will order the Girl Experience Box and decide who will place order. Learn more about this resource [here](#).
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with the resources:
 - Access the Volunteer Tool Kit (VTK) by logging into your account at <https://mygs.girlscouts.org/>.
 - Review the Badges and Awards [page of](#) our website.
 - When planning your year, check [the council's Events Calendar](#) to see if there are activities or events near you that your troop can attend.
 - Utilize VTK and [Troop Year Planner](#) to plan out your meetings if you are not using the Girl Scout Experience Boxes for Girl Scout Daisies or Brownies.

- ☐ Recruit a co-leader or troop helper if you have not already (you shouldn't do this alone!). Ensure all required adult volunteers are registered and approved.
 - Learn and adhere to adult-to-girl ratios. This is in your *New Leader Guide* and in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) on the GSSC—MM website.
 - Adults cannot be alone with the girls; at least two adults are always needed.
- ☐ Review safety guidelines for first meeting.
 - [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) are your go-to for safety questions.
 - Certain activities cannot be done by every Girl Scout. Be sure to check before scheduling an event or activity with a community partner.
- ☐ Decided how and where to buy uniforms. Have cost estimate on uniforms for caregivers.
 - In the first year, caregivers should pay for uniforms. If girls have financial needs, advise caregivers to reach out to Customer Care to learn about financial assistance procedures.
- ☐ Schedule a caregiver meeting before your first meeting with the girls.

Caregiver Meeting

- ☐ Hold a caregiver meeting to start the troop year—it sets up both new and returning troops for success!
 - Check out our step-by-step guide and caregivers meeting outline in the [Volunteer Toolkit](#). (Remember, you can access the Volunteer Toolkit via MyGS!)
 - Use this meeting to talk to caregivers about what the Girl Scout year will look like. Explain what a troop will do, cost of uniforms, patches, trips, programs, events, etc., discuss troop dues, etc.
 - Pass out the *Caregiver Interest Survey* which is found at the end of this document and helps you find volunteers.
 - Decide on plan for a snack.
 - If the troop meeting is one hour and close to dinner time, you do not have to provide snacks.
 - If the meeting is 90 minutes+, snacks should be provided.
 - Mention snack cost to caregivers and that it can use troop funds very quickly. Caregivers can rotate who brings snacks each week to alleviate costs on troop.
 - Decide on plan for troop communication., e.g. Rallyhood, text messages, GroupMe, Facebook, etc.
- ☐ Decide if the troop will participate in the Girl Scout fall product sale and/or Girl Scout cookie sale.
 - **TIP:** If so, recruit caregivers to help. Troop Leaders cannot do everything.
 - Cookie program begins in January, with training in December. You do not have to make that decision at the first meeting. Keep it in mind for a meeting later in the fall.
 - Secure/work on securing a co-leader and troop chaperone(s).
- ☐ Hand out [Health History](#) forms. You can send these via email in advance.

At Your First Meeting

- ☐ This meeting is all about the girls, making connections, getting to know each other and creating excitement!
- ☐ Hand out name tags for girls.
- ☐ Check roster. Ensure every girl is registered.
- ☐ Have icebreaker game(s) for girls to get to know each other.
- ☐ Share a simple overview of what the troop will do together this year. Meaning: getting to know each other, learning about Girl Scouts, working on a community service project that they choose, earning petals/badges, and having fun. Resource: [What Girl Scouts Do](#).
- Let girls share what they are most excited about. Take notes: their ideas matter.
 - Be sure to say the [Girl Scout Promise & Law](#). You can do this in a “repeat after me style” until the girls learn it.
- ☐ Establish a few troop agreements or norms together (e.g., we listen when others speak). Girls take ownership of ‘rules’ they create themselves; see [kaper chart](#).

Before Every Meeting

- ☐ Send a reminder to caregivers 24 hours before meeting. Confirm attendance.
 - This helps with purchasing supplies and snacks.
- ☐ Confirm the required registered, approved and background checked volunteers are in place to meet the appropriate adult to girl ratio.
- ☐ Review meeting plan and gather supplies.
 - Best practice is to bring more supplies than you will need.
 - Always have scissors, paper, markers/crayons, glue/glue sticks, and cleaning supplies.
 - Girl Scouts always leave a place cleaner than they find it. Ensure the room is clean before you leave. Girls should always help clean up after themselves.
- ☐ Check for any health concerns, allergies, or accommodations.
- ☐ Update/revise troop agreements as needed as you learn the girls' personality.
- ☐ Remember: the goal is connection, not perfection.

During Every Meeting

- ☐ Create a welcoming environment where every girl feels included.
- ☐ Give girls opportunities to make choices and lead.
- ☐ Review meeting room for safety issues (e.g. tripping hazards, etc.)
- ☐ Encourage kindness, respect, and teamwork. Use the *Girl Scout Promise and Law*.
- ☐ Keep an eye out for bullying or non-Girl Scout behavior. Address it immediately.
- ☐ Speak to every girl.
- ☐ Have fun!

Throughout the Year

- ☐ Listen to what girls want to do and try to build their ideas into the plan in a way that works for everyone.
- ☐ Remember to go back to your resources: [Volunteer Essentials](#) and the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- ☐ Let the girls choose badges, activities, and adventures.
- ☐ Celebrate girl accomplishments and badge achievements throughout the year.
- ☐ Keep families informed.
- ☐ Get every/any permission slip(s) signed.
- ☐ Share council camp opportunities with girls and caregivers.
- ☐ Ask for help when needed.
- ☐ Attend service unit meetings whenever possible.
 - Service unit meetings are one of the best ways to stay informed, discover local opportunities, connect with experienced volunteers, and get support when questions arise.
 - Meeting formats and schedules vary by service unit and may be held in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid format.
- ☐ Optional but encouraged: Attend annual council adult events like Volunteer Kick-Off, Annual Celebration, Mountain Magic.
- ☐ Connect with other troop leaders.
- ☐ Remember why you said "yes."

At the End of the Year

- ☐ Celebrate troop accomplishments and recognize each girl's growth.
- ☐ Host an end-of-year celebration or special activity.
- ☐ Invite caregivers to celebrate the girls' achievements.
- ☐ Begin discussing next year's plans with the girls.
 - Ask girls what badges, activities, trips, and experiences they would like to explore next year.
- ☐ Complete bridging activities or ceremonies, if appropriate.
- ☐ Thank co-leaders, troop helpers, caregivers, and volunteers who supported the troop throughout the year.
- ☐ Complete your *End of Year Financial Report* with guidance from your Service Unit Manager as needed.
- ☐ Encourage returning girl registration when registration opens.

Quick Safety Check

Before every activity, ask yourself:

- ☐ Is this activity appropriate for the girls' age and abilities?
- ☐ Do I have the required adult supervision?
- ☐ Do I know of any medical needs or allergies?
- ☐ Have families been informed of any special plans?
- ☐ Do I know what to do if an emergency occurs?

If you're unsure about any answer, pause and contact your Community Development Manager or Service Unit team. They are here to help.

Remember...

The girls will not remember whether every craft was perfect, or every meeting went exactly as planned.

They **will** remember the leader who welcomed them, believed in them, kept them safe, laughed with them, and showed up week after week.

You've got this—and your Girl Scout community is with you every step of the way.

Caregiver Interest Survey



Our troop families are a great resource for bringing meaningful program activities to our girls. By sharing a little bit about your interests, hobbies, and/or professional experiences, we will be able to match your time and talents to the activities, programs, and badges the girls will be working on this year.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Do you hold a current certification in any of the following?

- ☐ Standard First Aid
- ☐ CPR: Infant/Child _____ Adult _____
- ☐ Lifeguard
- ☐ Water Safety Instructor
- ☐ Archery

At Girl Scouts, the safety of the girls is always a top priority. In order for the girls to participate in troop/group activities outside the normal meeting place or go camping, we will need a First Aider and/or an Outdoor Certified Adult. Would you be interested in earning certification in any of the following and serving as the First Aider or Outdoor Certified Adult? If so, please let us know by checking below.

- ☐ Adult and Child First Aid/CPR/AED
- ☐ GSSC—MM Outdoor Certified Adult

Tell us about your job, business, or profession. *Please use the back, if necessary.*

Are you affiliated with any community groups or organizations that the troop/girls may be able to complete a community service or Take Action project for? If so, please list them below and/or on the back.

What other talents or skills do you have that you would be interested in sharing with the troop/group? *Please use the back, if necessary.*

Do you have a special interest or experience in any of the following areas? Great! If the girls choose a related activity or badge we'll reach out to you for ideas and suggestions!

- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Arts & Crafts
- ☐ Astronomy
- ☐ Auto Maintenance
- ☐ Bicycling
- ☐ Camping
- ☐ Canoeing
- ☐ Career Planning
- ☐ Chemistry/Science
- ☐ Child Care
- ☐ Community Service
- ☐ Computers
- ☐ Cooking/Nutrition
- ☐ Dental Health
- ☐ Drama
- ☐ Drawing/Painting
- ☐ Environmental Issues
- ☐ First Aid, Health & Safety
- ☐ Gardening
- ☐ Global Issues
- ☐ Health & Fitness
- ☐ Hiking
- ☐ Horseback Riding
- ☐ Human/Personal Relations
- ☐ Kayaking
- ☐ Literacy
- ☐ Music, Singing
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ Sewing
- ☐ Sports
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Woodworking
- ☐ Women's Issues
- ☐ Other, please list on back.