

## Cover Memo | 2022-2023 Editions

# Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials

Date: June 10, 2022

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This memo outlines updates to the 2022–2023 editions of Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) and Volunteer Essentials.

Previously, these documents were reviewed and released separately to councils. Going forward, GSUSA will review and release these two important volunteer resources in tandem to ensure continuity and align content across documents when the same or similar information appears in both. Both documents have also been updated to reflect our new branding.

Below is a breakdown of the significant updates made to each of the individual documents along with the formatting updates made to give them a fresh new look.

## 2022-2023 Edition | Safety Activity Checkpoints

Safety Activity Checkpoints provides the standard safety guidelines for GSUSA and council approved activities. In addition to providing volunteers with safety guidelines to ensure the physical and emotional safety of girls, information is also included throughout SACs to ensure equity, diversity, and inclusive thinking when planning Girl Scout activities so all girls with a desire to participate are included.

As with previous years, these national guidelines are developed in collaboration with the Girl Scout Council Safety Activity Checkpoints team and council risk committees, which include a balance of regional representation as well as in-depth expertise and experience with Girl Scout programs, safety, and risk management.

## Safety Activity Checkpoints – Standard Safety Guidelines

The following items detail the significant updates to topics under the Standard Safety Guidelines section of Safety Activity Checkpoints (pages 5–21):

- **Adult Supervision (p. 5).** Added a sentence to express that troop leaders must always be adults. Youth or youth members are not permitted to substitute for adult supervision.
- **Visiting and Participating Adults (p. 11).** Added: Volunteers are prompted to contact their council staff representative for a background check on adults that will be doing any of the following: regularly or periodically attending Girl Scout gatherings, shared oversight over members, participating in an overnight stay, handling money, or driving youth members.
- **Buddy System (p. 12).** Suggested for trips and activities but added *pairing members of similar age* to deter a 14-year-old from pairing with an 8-year-old, for example, in troops with wide age ranges.
- **Drugs and Alcohol (p. 13).** Added: Youth members are not permitted to gather where alcohol is served. Only with council prior approval youth members may be permitted to attend functions at locations where alcohol is incidentally being served to adults and only if the alcohol will not be consumed in the presence of members. For example, a council may approve an event taking place at an arena, stadium, theme park, movie theater or places where alcoholic beverages are purchased at a concession stand, taken away, and consumed elsewhere.

- **Physical or Sexual Abuse (p.20).** This section explains Girl Scouts of the USA’s zero tolerance for physical or sexual abuse. Added a sentence to emphasize incidences of abuse of any kind will result in immediate council intervention.
- **Youth Violence and Bullying (p. 20).** Added section. This section addresses youth to youth violence and explains that 1) youth violence occurs when young people intentionally use physical force or power to threaten or harm others; and 2) bullying is a form of youth violence, which Girl Scouts also does not tolerate it. Volunteers should become familiar with the signs, risk factors, and preventive measures against this type of behavior. The CDC provides excellent resources which are shared and linked to in this section. [CDC Youth Violence](#); [CDC Bullying](#); [CDC Youth Violence Prevention](#).
- **Child Abuse (p. 20).** Added CDC guidance as a resource for volunteers to learn about child abuse and neglect prevention: [CDC Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention](#)
- **Mental Health and Safety (p. 21).** Added resource: Included the CDC guidance for identifying and responding to self-harm and harmful behaviors: [Self-directed Violence and Self-Injury](#) and also, a section on at-risk youth which explains adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and preventative strategies. [ACEs Youth at Risk](#).
- **Include Girl Scout Members with Disabilities (p. 21).** Changed section title throughout SACs from “Include Girls with Disabilities” to “Include Girl Scout Members with Disabilities” to clarify inclusivity of *all* members – girls, adults, and volunteers.
- **Equity (p. 21).** The Equity section has been updated to emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusive thinking when planning Girl Scout activities.

## Safety Activity Checkpoints – Activity Checkpoint Chapters

The following items detail updates to individual safety activity checkpoint chapters (please note that the page numbers below are *before* council information has been added):

- **Added new page “How to use Safety Activity Checkpoints” (p. 37)** after “Activities at a Glance” table as a lead into the individual safety chapters and to provide guidance to volunteers on how to use and follow *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Computer and Internet (p. 73).** Added: Girls may create their own Girl Scout program website to showcase their program activities. Girls should only share program activity website links with family, friends, and others they know firsthand.
- **Cookie and Product Sales (p. 81):**
  - Added: All girls should have a hands-on role in marketing their cookie business. Girls of all ages should partner with their parents, guardians, or caregivers to develop a plan to safely market their business online. Parents/guardians should do the posting for girls under the age of 13.
  - Added: Girls should never deliver cookies alone. Adults need to be present at booth activities with girls at any program level. Parents, guardians, or caregivers must approve all girl-delivered online orders and supervise all communications and product delivery.
- **Indoor Trampoline (p. 105):** Corrected that Daisies cannot participate with indoor trampoline. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons specifically states that trampoline jumping is unsafe for the skeletal frame of children *younger than six years old* as opposed to “six years old and younger”. For this reason, Daisies may not be permitted to participate in indoor trampoline activities, *depending on their age*.

- **Paddling and Rowing Sports (p. 130).** Deleted references to ARC certification training and replaced with Girl Scout Small Craft Safety Training throughout related water and boating activity chapters.

**Reminder:** *The American Red Cross (ARC) decided to sunset its small craft water certification in 2020. GSUSA adopted the ARC certification training material and has shared it for councils to access on gsLearn. SAC now refers to that training as “Girl Scouts Small Craft Safety Training.” Completing the Girl Scout Small Craft Safety Training will satisfy the former requirement of an ARC training certification “or equivalent” as a standard for instructors.*

## 2022-2023 Edition | Volunteer Essentials

Volunteer Essentials is designed to provide details and information to help Troop Leaders begin their journey as a Girl Scout volunteer and connect them to the resources and support they need to get started.

The items below detail updates to the 2022–2023 edition of Volunteer Essentials.

- **Sections reordered** for clarity.
- **G.I.R.L. references** and content removed.
- **Section added, “Additional Resources and Support,”** at the end of the document to provide a logical “closing” for the reader.

## Formatting Updates: Both Documents

The following formatting updates were made to align Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials as ‘partner’ resources and a fresh look that reflects our new branding.

- **Covers refreshed** to reflect new brand standards and ‘connect’ the two as partner resources and essential documents for volunteers and Troop Leaders.
- **Both documents reviewed** for grammar, continuity, and consistency.
- **Font changed** to Girl Scout brand font throughout both documents.
- **All links tested** to ensure they are still active; broken links were reviewed and re-linked to the correct website/s or resource/s.
- **Layout and formatting changes made throughout both documents** to standardize the overall look and feel of these resources.