

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. (GSHH) has listened to its volunteers about the difficulties they face in planning in-person meetings and securing meeting spaces. From these conversations, we understand that some volunteers would like to meet in troop leaders' homes and on their property. Because GSHH strives to assist volunteers in delivering the Girl Scout Program, the Council reached out to its insurance carrier for further guidance on responding to these requests during the COVID-19 pandemic.

GSUSA, GSHH and GSHH's insurance carriers all **discourage** holding Troop meetings and other Troop activities at private residences. This includes outdoor spaces as they present a risk management and liability issue to both the Homeowner and the Council.

GSHH continues to encourage troops and Service Units to hold meetings and activities in public settings that are accessible to all members.

From a risk management perspective, private properties represent an uncontrollable environment that presents many potential risk exposures including but not limited to:

- Pets
- Prescription and Non-Prescription Drugs and Alcohol
- Dangerous cleaning products and other poisonous substances
- Firearms/Weapons
- Trampolines and similar outdoor equipment
- Pools, hot tubs, saunas
- Pornography
- Sexual or Physical Abuse by family members or friends

After reviewing and evaluating the risks, if a troop leader wishes to proceed with holding **outdoor** troop meetings or activities at their residence, they will need to follow the guidelines below:

- Meet the required adult volunteer to girl ratio at all times.
- All current local COVID-19 guidelines regarding group size must be followed; including current guidelines for face coverings and physical distance.
- The meeting/activity can only be held outdoors.
- The home must be the home of a registered volunteer with a current and active background screen on file.
- Girls may not meet at a home where a registered sex offender lives.
- Troop leaders should minimize disruptions from other household members as much as possible.
- Place animals in a separate area from the meeting space.
- Weapons must be completely out of view and stored in a locked space.

- Medication, alcohol, dangerous cleaning products, or any poisonous substances must be stored in a secure space, properly labeled, out of sight, and preferably locked.
- Ensure that there is no accessibility to printed or digital material with images inappropriate to minors or offensive to others.
- The outdoor grounds should be completely safe for children including but not limited to:
  - Pools and or ponds are fenced or otherwise safely sectioned off
  - Equipment and Tools need to be secured away from the meeting area
  - Recreational apparatus (outdoor trampolines, etc.) are not available for use
  - Ensure that both Troop Leader and Co-Leader can clearly see all girls at all times and are able to monitor their whereabouts
  - The buddy system should be used at all times

Additionally, our insurance carrier has indicated that the homeowner/volunteer must notify their homeowner's insurance agent and provide a certificate of insurance for the meeting/activity space for a limit of liability no less than \$1,000,000 and names Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. as an additional insured party. Submit your COI to customer care via email [customercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:customercare@girlscoutshh.org)

This change is temporary and will only be allowed during the COVID-19 Pandemic. As the situation changes we will continue to monitor and evaluate the above.

We appreciate your understanding and patience as we navigate these challenging times together.