



GIRL SCOUTING DURING COVID-19 **INTERIM GUIDANCE** **for Badgerland Troops and Families** *In-Person Troop Meetings and Activities and More*

July 29, 2021

Innovating Through Tough Times

Girl Scouts are innovators. This emerged loud and clear these past few months as girls, parents, troop leaders and the Badgerland staff discovered creative ways to be Girl Scouts during the stay-at-home phase of COVID-19. Girls designed robots at the kitchen table with Badgerland STEM experts during Zoom calls. Girls built creative bridges then celebrated with hundreds of sister Girl Scouts as they bridged altogether virtually from home and parks. Troops met online. Leaders connected online. So, yes, Girl Scouting may look different but the outcomes are the same...girls earning badges, building skills growing confidence and doing service projects that make this world a better place...all from home.

The Next Phase of Girl Scouting Through COVID

This guidance is developed for Badgerland Girl Scouts based on resources from Girl Scouts of the USA, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the State of Wisconsin.

Our recommendations are for now only and may change based on the ever-shifting impact of the virus. *Girl Scouts will always default to state and federal guidelines and safety protocols as safety is the highest priority.* Expect Badgerland to be agile and modify these recommendations as conditions shift in Wisconsin.

MOST IMPORTANTLY each Girl Scout family must determine what is right for them. Not all recommendations will be appropriate and comfortable for everyone; families will decide what is right for their girl. Troop Leaders will want to connect with families to understand engagement levels as activities are being planned.

Girl Scouts and family members who know they have been exposed to COVID-19, should not attend in-person Girl Scouting activities until the 14-day quarantine period lapses with the impacted individuals showing no symptoms of the illness.

How and When to Return to Troop Activities

Troop Meetings. The current Girl Scout suggested maximum is ten people (eight girls and two unrelated adult volunteers). However, [check your local restrictions](#) for small gatherings. If more restrictive, follow the local restrictions. If your troop is larger, you can break into smaller groups to meet. Use the helpful information in the CDC's [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#) guide to minimize risk and exposure.

A virtual Troop Meeting is an option for larger troops and troops that prefer not to meet in person at this time.

Virtual Troop Meetings. Online meetings are a terrific alternative offering girls and troops lots of connections and benefits. Badge-earning programming and essential girl-to-girl connectivity can easily happen at Zoom meetings.

Badgerland Council has Zoom accounts available for troops to use at no charge.

- [Badgerland Troop Zoom Meetings](#)
- [Girl Scouts Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Meetings](#)
- [Hosting a Virtual Troop Meeting: A Getting Started Guide](#)

In-Person Troop Meeting Locations. Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained are strongly recommended for meetings.

For meetings held in public buildings, contact the facility ahead of time and ask:

- Is the space cleaned, and touch surfaces (i.e., tabletops, light switches, chairs, etc.) sanitized daily?
- Who else uses the space? Is the space cleaned between groups?
- What type of faucets / soap dispensers are available in the restroom (sensory or manual)?

Consider whether you can supplement cleaning practices. For example, plan to bring sanitizing wipes to wipe down surfaces when you arrive. If faucets are manual, take some time to show girls how to shut them off with a paper towel. Use paper towels for doorknobs whenever possible.

NOTES:

- Troop meetings may not be held in fitness centers or gyms, where a greater risk for contracting the virus may exist.
- If your troop meets in a school or church, check ahead to confirm if they are permitting outside groups to meet.

Troop Meetings in the Home. Badgerland and Girl Scouts USA vigorously recommend against in-home meetings.

Transportation To and From Meetings. Individual caregivers should drop off and pick up their own girls. Carpooling and public transportation should be avoided, where possible, to maintain social distancing.

Large Group Gatherings. Currently the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) provided updates guidance for group gatherings. Be sure to follow proper girl-to-adult ratios. Details on how to stay safe in group gathering according to Wisconsin Public Health can be found here: [Staying Safe In Your Community](#).

All gatherings must follow the recommended steps on how to keep vaccinated and unvaccinated participants safe due to the potential spread of COVID-19.

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/protect.htm>

Council members may consider group gatherings after reviewing specifics.

Answers to the following questions will guide this decision:

- Do state and local law permit larger gatherings? How many people permitted?
- Is the event indoors or outdoors? (Outdoors is safer than indoors.)
- Can social distancing be maintained for unvaccinated members from different households?

Day Trips and Activities. In conjunction with [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), follow the same guidance found in the Troop Meetings and Hygiene sections of this document. Call ahead to the facility or vendor to confirm that they are following CDC and state health department guidelines. If activity or sporting equipment is being provided, ask the provider if they wipe down equipment in between uses. Make whatever appropriate accommodations are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

Overnight Stays. Overnight Girl Scout outings are not permitted at this time. The timeframes will vary from state to state and even from county to county in some cases. As always, contact council for prior approval before planning any overnight stays and follow guidance in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Once travel becomes possible again, Badgerland Council will proceed cautiously to integrate overnight travel back into our Girl Scout programs. Beginning May 1st, Badgerland will begin to approve overnight stays and travel. In conjunction with [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), follow the same guidance found in the Troop Meetings and Hygiene and Day Trips sections of this document. When making decisions about whether or not to consider troop travel or proceed with planned council-organized travel, it is important to use all current health and safety guidance available in the Badgerland jurisdiction as well as for the destination jurisdiction to ensure the safety of the girls. In addition, be sure to check all guidance provided by the [CDC Specific To Travel](#), and for international travel, check U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories. Be sure to check the CDC and Department of State advice with respect to US or international travel. Consider using the [Event Risk Assessment Planning Tool](#), published by Georgia tech. This helpful interactive map geographically tracks COVID-19 risk factors by state and county.

Although travel plans are often arranged several months in advance, please recognize that the COVID-19 risk is fluid; it can and will change, and contingencies should be planned ahead of time for re-scheduling, cancelling, or pivoting to a virtual activity. For all planned trips, create a

timeline and identify a drop-dead date when decisions must be made about whether or not to move forward with the planned trip, based primarily on the safety of our girls, along with financial commitment deadlines and/or other factors. You should also consider purchasing travel insurance, but be sure to read all fine print and ask questions to ensure COVID or pandemic-related cancellation is covered; it is often excluded. Consider bringing 1-2 adults beyond the ratio-required number of adults and to pre-book an extra accommodation space, in case it is necessary to isolate a traveler from the rest of the group.

Serving Snacks. It is not recommended that snacks or food be served at Girl Scout meetings or activities. If deemed necessary to serve, only pre-packaged, individual serving food items should be used. Encourage members to bring their own individual snack or food item. Always follow hygiene safety guidelines.

Troop Check-out Resources. Check-out resources will be available for use on a case by case basis. Contact our Customer Care Team at 800.236.2710 or info@gsbadgerland.org.

Hygiene, First Aid and Face-Covering

Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation.

Personal hygiene is one of the best ways to reduce disease transmission. We all need to be attentive to our hygiene practices. To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is strongly recommended everyone follow these requirements:

Follow resources developed by credible public health sources such as [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) or your local [public health department](#). Share these with girls and volunteers and ensure that they are practiced during meetings and activities. Place signs in the meeting or activity space to remind girls and volunteers to engage in [everyday preventive actions](#) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Signs should include:

- **Stay home** if you are sick or have a temperature.
- **Cough and sneeze into a tissue**, throw the tissue in the trash, and wash or sanitize your hands.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.** Wash hands if you do touch.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others.** Remind girls that Girl Scouts wear face coverings (masks) not only to protect themselves but to protect others and be a sister to every Girl Scout. Girls can bring their own face coverings. Have disposable masks on hand for those who need them. Some girls or

volunteers may not be able to wear masks, due to medical conditions such as asthma. Contact Council for guidance on how best to handle these exceptional circumstances as they arise.

- Be sure you understand [How to wear a face covering correctly](#) and [How to care for your face covering](#).
- **Masking**
 - **Mask requirements regardless of vaccination status**
 - Masks may still be required in some places due to federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. Follow requirements posted at each location.
 - All Badgerland Council volunteers, Girls, and staff are required to wear face masks when interacting with or leading meetings and programs where unvaccinated Girl and adult members are present.
 - **If you are fully vaccinated**
 - You are fully vaccinated when it has been at least two weeks after your second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or it has been at least two weeks after your Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
 - Public Health and CDC have issued new recommendations regarding the use of masks, in light of [new guidance from the CDC](#). They strongly encourage and recommend that regardless of vaccination status, everyone should wear a mask in all in-door private and public gatherings.
 - If continuing to wear a mask makes you feel comfortable, please continue to wear it!
 - **If you are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated**
 - Anyone ages two and older that is not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in indoor public spaces. Public Health and CDC also recommends masks outdoors for unvaccinated people in [certain circumstances](#).

Be Prepared. Be prepared with first aid supplies including COVID-19 prevention items such as hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), tissues, disposable facemasks, and disinfectants. Easily accessible trash baskets or bags should be supplied for meeting and activity spaces, if not already available. Disposable or no-contact thermometers may be added to supplies if available and not cost-prohibitive, however, parents should be checking temperatures and allowing their girl(s) to join group activities only when temperatures are normal.

[Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces](#) and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., table tops, markers, scissors, etc.). Use a household cleaner, or see the [EPA's list of effective cleaners](#) approved for use against COVID-19. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and

disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.). See the [CDC's website](#) for more on cleaning and disinfecting community facilities.

Personal Contact. Hugs, handshakes, “high-fives,” and even activities like the friendship circle or squeeze may transmit disease. Instead, create a safe way for girls and volunteers to greet and end meetings instead. Maybe your troop can develop a special secret wave that only you know?

Prep Girls in Advance. Share your plan for the first in-person troop meeting with families. Ask caregivers to go over it with their Girl Scout before the meeting so she understands that there will be some differences. For example, she may be asked to use hand sanitizer when she arrives at the meeting. If girls know what to expect it will be easier for them to adapt to the new troop meeting style.

Vaccines. Badgerland Council strongly encourages adult volunteers and staff members to voluntarily vaccinate. Vaccinations for children under the age of 12 years old are not yet available. Badgerland will continue to monitor this fluid situation and will provide subsequent updates as they become available.

Badgerland Service Centers & Shops

Retail Shops. Badgerland Retail Shops is offering curbside pickup 8:30a-4:30p Monday through Friday at La Crosse, Contact our Customer Care Team a day or two in advance of your preferred pick-up time at 800.236.2710 or info@gsbadgerland.org. We will take your order and card payment over the phone and arrange a convenient time for curbside pickup.

In-person shopping is available by appointment at our La Crosse shop! Please call our customer care team at 800.236.2710 a few days in advance to set up your appointment. Don't forget to practice safety first:

- Girls can shop with an adult. (One adult, one girl per appointment)
- Must wear mask.
- Must sanitize hands when entering building.
- Please, only touch items you will be purchasing.
- Pay by card or check. No cash.

Prefer to have your items shipped? Order online at girlscoutshop.com and your items will come directly to your door. Bonus! Free shipping is available on orders \$25.00 or more placed with Badgerland Customer Care Team via phone or email.

Service Center Offices. We're both here and not here. Our offices remain closed to the public but be assured the Badgerland team is working through the pandemic. Our business hours are 8:30-5 and we are here to support you. If you need assistance please contact Customer Care at info@gsbadgerland.org or 800.236.2710. We are here for you!

Property Reservations. All Badgerland sites are currently closed to the public for safety considerations. Reservations are not being accepted until further notice. We will announce when they are available for usage.

Reporting Covid-19 Positive Incidents

Reporting and Communicating a Positive COVID 19 Test For volunteers and Girl Scouts.

In the event of a COVID-19 positive test result, promptly contact [Wisconsin Department of Health Services DHSwebmaster@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSwebmaster@wisconsin.gov) or 608-266-1865 or TTY: 711 or 800-947-3529.

Department of Health Services (NOT volunteers), will be responsible for:

- Confirming and tracing the positive tester
- Contacting anyone who may have been exposed
- Notifying the facility where a troop has met

Let other volunteers and parents know that DHS, NOT volunteers, will notify parents and others about a positive test result and that the **tester's identity is confidential.** Remember that girl and volunteer health information is private and confidential and should be only shared on a need to know basis with Council Staff.

Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding

All participants of Girl Scouts of Wisconsin—Badgerland Council (GSWIBC) acknowledge that COVID-19 is a contagious virus that spreads through person-to-person contact. As with any social activity, participation in Girl Scouts could present the risk of contracting COVID-19. While Badgerland takes every safety and preventative precaution, Badgerland can in no way warrant that COVID-19 infection will not occur through participation in Badgerland programs.