



Service Unit Encampment Manual

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What is an Encampment?

An encampment is generally a girl-planned and girl-driven weekend (or longer) event for multiple troops to attend, usually hosted at council-owned camps. These troops are generally all within the same Service Unit but may also invite troops from other Service Units. The encampment is sometimes based around a theme, with older girls (or troops) leading activities done in rotations for the younger girls. Full days begin and end with a flag ceremony. The end of encampment is usually marked by a Scout's Own ceremony.

Volunteer Requirements for an Encampment

At least one adult per unit is required to have completed the in-person Outdoor Education training and have an up-to-date Camp Policies Exam on file. One adult per unit must also have an up-to-date First Aid/CPR/AED certification.

If your encampment is situated more than 30 minutes from EMS (Emergency Medical Services), be sure you have an approved volunteer with Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder training.

If your encampment is hosting 200 or more people, there should be one first-aider per 200 people. The following healthcare providers may also serve as a first-aider: physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic, and emergency medical technician.

Any adult that is chaperoning a group of children must be a registered Girl Scout adult member and an approved volunteer. It is strongly recommended that all adults participating in the encampment be registered Girl Scout adult members.

Encampment Planning Guidelines

Step 1: The Plan

Who

Think about who you want to be the audience for your encampment. Do you want all program levels there or just one level (a Brownie encampment)? Are family members invited? Mothers? Fathers? Ask girls and adults for their suggestions on what should be included in the event. If tagalongs are allowed at the encampment, your event description must say that families and family members are allowed. Feel free to invite participants from other Service Units to join you.

Who will be in charge of the event? Who will be needed for supervision or for "staffing" the event? Who will receive the registrations for the event? Do they know what information to record for the Encampment Chair to use? What will they do with the money that comes in? They will need to keep accurate records.

Look at the adult-to-girl ratios as stated in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

What

What is the reason for having the event? A lot of encampments have a theme and that helps decide what kind of activities to do. How does it tie in with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience?

What will take place during the event? Can everyone do everything all at the same time, or is a schedule needed?

Have you consulted Safety Activity Checkpoints for the activities you plan on having? Have you considered all the activities? What about council Volunteer Policies and Procedures?

If people need to be put in smaller groups, how will that be done ahead of time? By grade level? By troop? By alphabetical order? By first come, first served? By random selection? What kinds of materials do you need?

Food? Napkins? Toilet paper? How many people will be there? Craft supplies? Props for activities? Special consultants? Who will do the purchasing? Who will contact the consultants? Time for delegation and sharing responsibility.

When

When will the event take place? What season of the year is best? What day of the week? What time of day is best for the girls? Are the day and time convenient for parents for attending the event or for delivering and picking up the girls? Are there any other events (council-sponsored events, football games, holidays, proms, etc.) taking place that might affect the event you're planning?

Where

Where will the event take place? How many people can you accommodate? What size of facility will you need for the size of group you're hoping for? Don't forget to make proper reservations to use the site. What kinds of equipment are at the location? What will you need to take with you that the facility doesn't provide? What will each participant need to bring? How will you tell them? Are there enough restrooms or latrines for the number of people you plan on having? Will there be males present? How will this be accommodated? Will everyone need to use the restrooms at the same time? If so, you'll need a lot of them! Is the site location convenient to use? Can people easily get there? Is it accessible for people with disabilities? Is there enough parking space? Check out Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Step 2: Money? Time to Plan a Budget!

Expenses

Before an event fee can be set, you must know the cost of every expense — even expenses that are taken for granted.

Things to consider:

1. How much exactly will the food cost? Don't guess. Take the time to figure it out.
2. Are you going to incorporate camp activities like archery, swimming or boating, that require a fee? You will need to reserve these well in advance.
3. Do you need paper towels? Matches? Cleaning supplies? Craft supplies? Paper, pens, and pencils?
4. Will you be copying any handouts? How much will the copying cost?

5. How about postage? Do you need to send something to the participants? A letter or a postcard?
6. Envelopes? Cards? How many?
7. Will the girls work on badges or other activities to enhance their Journeys? Will they be provided to the girls? How much will they cost?
8. Will some things need to be purchased for people who are not paying a fee? If so, how will you cover the cost?

Event Fee

The fee is established by dividing the total cost of the event (all expenses) by the number of participants.

Income

You will need to use the service unit bank account. Deposit all income in the account and write checks for the expenses or use the service unit debit card. Careful and accurate record keeping is a must.

Keep copies of deposit slips and get a receipt for every purchase. Attention to detail can be your very best friend. The **Encampment Budget Worksheet** in this resource will help you.

You'll need a deadline for registrations set early enough so you can adjust your budget and purchasing according to the number of people who are actually participating.

Step 3: What's happening during the Encampment?

1. **Safety Activity Checkpoints must be consulted during your planning.**
2. Assign housing depending on troop size and special needs. Ask for troops who prefer tents vs. cabins. People need to be flexible and sometimes troops need to share lodging.
3. At check-in, be sure the **Emergency Contact Roster** is complete and accurate. Cross off names of people who decided not to come and write in the names of people who were added.
4. Explain to encampment volunteers what they are responsible for.
 - o Give them a "job description" and be sure they are comfortable with what they are doing.
 - o If troops are hosting an activity session, be sure they are prepared and have all the available supplies.
 - o Incorporate some free time (as an activity session) so everyone has a chance to relax.
5. Give the troops a sample schedule but **let them know that it is subject to change.**
 - o The schedule can change based on weather (let's reschedule horses to the afternoon from the morning based on when rain is moving through); staff availability (reschedule archery to a different time because archery instructor has stomach bug), or other unforeseen needs to change schedule (tree fell and has to be removed before activity can happen.)
6. Review the emergency plans with all troop volunteers before the event. Post emergency information and let everyone know who the First Aid Person is.

7. If you are providing your own food, be sure to include time to cook food in your schedule. Are troops cooking their own food or are encampment volunteers cooking for the whole crowd? If you are going to be at Camp Tanasi, food service is available for all meals.
8. If you're including swimming in your event and you are hosting your event at a public location, you need to arrange for Certified Lifeguards if they are not provided. See the [Swimming Safety Activity Checkpoint](#).
9. If you are at a council-owned camp, you can schedule activities such as boating, swimming, pony rides, climbing tower, etc. Keep in mind that although most activities are one hour long, some require more time and will change how you will have to schedule your weekend.
10. Include enough time to walk from one activity location to the next. A walking time of 15 minutes is a good block of time.
 - o If your activities are rotating be sure to look at a map to see where they will be walking to/from. You don't want people to be crisscrossing all over camp.
11. When assigning activities, it works much better to sign up as a troop. Splitting large troops or combining small troops together is easy compared to getting a list of 100 girls and the 6 activities that they want to do.
12. Be sure that ALL parents/guardians fill out the Permission Form before their daughter comes to the event.
 - o If you have an encampment registration form, be sure to include a photo/video release statement on the registration form for the event.
13. Assign Kapers to troops and post in a public space.
14. Have an encampment volunteer at check-in to answer any questions a troop volunteer might have.
15. Introduce the encampment volunteer team to the participants at Opening Campfire so volunteers and girls know who to go to with questions.
16. Think about offering Outdoor Education on the Saturday of your encampment. Encourage new leaders to come if they want to take the training and experience camp before taking their entire troop on their own. Check with your service unit manager to see if you have an Outdoor Facilitator in your area, if not, you can request one through council.
17. If you would like, the council Program Manager can review your schedule with you and offer suggestions for locations of activities and other helpful information.

Step 4: How will the Encampment close?

1. Assign a troop to lead a Girl Scout's Own closing ceremony or have the encampment volunteers run it.
2. What arrangements have been made for everyone to leave the event at the same time? Have traffic problems been considered? Have parents been notified of the appropriate time for picking up the girls? How will the adults make sure all the girls go home in their correct cars? If a bus was used, has a Bus Monitor been assigned to check the girls off as they board?
3. What will you do with lost and found items?
4. Have people been assigned to help with clean-up? To return equipment? To gather up materials and props?
5. Have kapers been assigned?

6. What about evaluations? Will the girls be given a chance to write down their evaluation of the event? **That needs to happen!**
7. What kind of evaluations will the adults do? Verbal? Written? Individually? As a group? As an after-the- event activity? Who will keep the evaluations to use in planning another event?
8. Have all money records been finalized? Who is in charge of the bank account?

When your planning is solid and you're well organized, your event will run smoothly. Good luck! You're off to a good start!

Service Unit Encampment Checklist (*Suggestions*)

9-12 Months Before

- Recruit volunteers and girls to serve on an encampment planning committee.
- Form planning committee.
- Gather Girl and Service Unit input on a concept or theme for the event.
- Reserve encampment site.
- Schedule planning sessions for the Encampment committee.
- Delegate responsibilities.
- Determine tentative number of participants. (include adults)
- Determine the supplies, food, patches, site costs, etc. for the budget.
- Confirm a cost per person (using the Encampment Budget Worksheet) and payment schedule.
- Review GSUSA [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Set a firm registration deadline around two months before the encampment weekend.
- If this is a service unit event, fill out the [Troop and SU Activity Approval Form](#)

6-9 Months Before

- Remind all required volunteers to attend mandatory training for the encampment (Outdoor Education AND CPR, First Aid, etc.)
- Research sources for potential program information or people that can help deliver the program.

4-6 Months Before

- Present ideas to leaders including patch/t-shirt designs.
- Gather girl input on ideas, title, activities, etc. Make the encampment as Girl-Led as possible.

2-4 Months Before

- Make sure all adults attending have completed a current Girl Scout Membership and are an approved Volunteer. If you have non-member children and adults attending, you need to purchase additional insurance for them.
- Develop tentative schedule. (Include a rain plan)
- Develop registration/cancellation procedure.
- Create flyers or other forms of advertisement to distribute to leaders.
- Address any transportation or parking control needs.
- 3 Months: If you are requesting food service at Camp Tanasi, give the camp Program Manager your tentative numbers.
- Finalize schedule.
- Confirm which troops are attending. Ensure you invite the Juliettes/IRMs in your service unit.

Six Weeks Before

- Arrange for Juliette and day only participants; house them with other troops.
- Send event schedule, directions, and map to any consultants or program partners.
- Confirm in writing what your expectations are for the consultants or program partners.

- Distribute information packets to troop leaders with check-in information, directions, troop volunteer encampment checklist, suggestions for personal gear sheet, and emergency information should inclement weather come on the day of the event.
- Verify check-in times, facilities reserved and equipment needed.
- Finalize number of participants.
- Order patches and/or t-shirts.
- Confirm transportation.

Four Weeks Before

- IMPORTANT:** If you are requesting activities or food service at camp, you **MUST** give your final participation numbers to the camp Activities Manager at this time.
- Collect all troop payments.
- Turn in all remaining activity and food service fees to council.
- Finalize and communicate plans for check-in procedures with the Encampment Committee.
- Create any signs needed
- Prepare packets with evaluations, site rules, patches, etc.
- Host an informational meeting for all participants.
- Send the Emergency Contact Roster to participating Troops to fill out and return to you.

Two Weeks Before

- Follow up with consultants/special guests/program partners.
- Collect any last minute items needed.
- Pay for additional activity insurance.

During the Encampment

- Give a copy of the Emergency Contact Roster to the Camp Master or other staff on site. Cross off campers who decided not come and write in names of those taking their place.
- Bring checkbook for any bills that will be paid that day **if using an off-site camp**.
- Set up equipment and post signs before visitors arrive.
- Welcome and direct consultants and any instructors.
- Set up activity stations.
- Facilitate registration and allow troops time to get settled in their units.
- Give verbal affirmation and appreciation to your consultants and volunteers helping throughout the event.
- Hold evening meeting of one adult per group for last minute updates.
- If you have any issues or concerns throughout the encampment, notify the Camp Master.
- Before everyone leaves camp, collect the following forms:
 - o **Camp Checkout Report** to the Camp Master

After the Encampment

- Make sure site is left better condition than it was found. Check out with Camp Master.
- Return any borrowed or rented equipment (be sure they are clean).
- Pay any remaining bills and reimburse volunteers for expenses.
- Complete the **Encampment Budget Worksheet** and submit it to the SU Manager.
- Compile a summary of the evaluations and submit to the SU Manager.

- Write and mail thank you letters.
- Return any stock patches, if possible.
- Submit pictures with encampment information to council for possible media coverage.
- Make notes on successes and weaknesses of the event for next time and give to the SU Manager.
- Hold an assessment/celebration meeting with the Encampment Committee within two weeks of the event.

Sample Weekend Encampment Schedule 1

Below is a sample schedule when hosting an encampment at Camp Tanasi and using food service in the dining hall. This schedule is if all your activities run one-hour long whether they are council staff-led or your troops are leading activities and girls rotate through stations. Please contact the Program Manager for assistance with scheduling.

Friday

After 3:00 pm Check with the camp Program Manager to see if certain Service Unit Encampment Volunteers can check-in early.

5:00-7:00 pm Check-in for troops and unpacking

6:00-7:30 pm Dinner

8:00 pm Opening Campfire: Announcements, S'mores, songs, etc.

Saturday

8:00 am Hoppers (to help set up breakfast)

8:15 am Opening Flag Ceremony

8:30-9:30 am Breakfast

9:45-10:45 am Activity 1

11:00 am-12:00 pm Activity 2

12:15 pm Hoppers (to help set up lunch)

12:30-1:30 pm Lunch

1:45-2:45 pm Activity 3

3:00-4:00 pm Activity 4

4:15-5:15 pm Activity 5 or Free Time or Troop Time

5:30 pm Hoppers (to help set up dinner)

5:45 pm Closing Flag Ceremony

6:00 pm Dinner

7:30 pm All Camp Activity, Campfire, etc.

Sunday

8:30-9:30 am Breakfast. Participants fill out evaluations and receive their patch(s).

9:45-10:00 am Closing Ceremony

10:00-11:00 am	Participants check-out with Service Unit Encampment volunteer(s), clean units and fill out Camp Checkout Report
11:00 am-12:00 pm	Service Unit Encampment Volunteers collect all program materials, pack up and check out with Camp Master.

Sample Weekend Encampment Schedule 2

Below is a sample schedule when hosting an encampment at Camp Tanasi and using food service in the dining hall for breakfast and lunch and the units are cooking their own dinners. This schedule is if all your activities run in two-hour long blocks whether they are council staff-led or your troops are leading activities. Please contact the Program Manager for assistance with scheduling.

Friday

After 3:00 pm	Check with the camp Activities Manager to see if certain Service Unit Encampment Volunteers can check-in early.
5:00-7:00 pm	Check-in for troops and unpacking
6:00-7:30 pm	Dinner
8:00 pm	Opening Campfire: Announcements, S'mores, songs, etc.

Saturday

8:00 am	Hoppers (to help set up breakfast)
8:15 am	Opening Flag Ceremony
8:30-9:30 am	Breakfast
10:00 am- 12:00 pm	Activity Block Not every girl will do all the activities, maybe they just choose one: Dock/Climbing Tower/Horses/Archery and Craft
12:15 pm	Hoppers (to help set up lunch)
12:30-1:30 pm	Lunch
2:00-4:00 pm	Free Swim for everyone
4:30-6:30 pm	Cook dinner at units
6:30-7:00 pm	Clean up after dinner
7:15 pm	Closing Flag Ceremony
7:30 pm	All Camp Activity, Campfire, etc.

Sunday

8:30-9:30 am	Breakfast. Participants fill out evaluations and receive their patch(s).
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9:45-10:00 am	Closing Ceremony
10:00-11:00 am	Participants check-out with Service Unit Encampment volunteer(s), clean units and fill out Camp Checkout Report
11:00 am-12:00 pm	Service Unit Encampment Volunteers collect all program materials, pack up and check out with Camp Master.

Sample Weekend Encampment Schedule 3

Below is a sample schedule when hosting an encampment at any GSCSA camp and cooking all your own meals. This schedule is if all your activities run 30 minutes long. Please contact the Program Manager for assistance with scheduling.

Friday

After 3:00 pm	Check with the camp Activities Manager to see if certain Service Unit Encampment Volunteers can check-in early.
5:00-7:00 pm	Check-in for troops and unpacking
6:00-7:30 pm	Dinner (sack lunch from home)
8:00 pm	Opening Campfire: Announcements, S'mores, songs, etc.

Saturday

8:00-10:00 am	Breakfast at Units
10:15 am	Opening Flag Ceremony
10:30-11:00 am	Activity 1
11:15-11:45 am	Activity 2
12:00-1:30 pm	Prepare and eat Lunch
1:45-2:15 pm	Activity 3
2:30-3:00 pm	Activity 4
3:15-3:45 pm	Activity 5
3:45-4:30 pm	Free Time or Troop Time
4:30-7:00 pm	Cook, eat dinner and clean up
7:15 pm	Closing Flag Ceremony
7:30 pm	All Camp Activity, Campfire, etc.

Sunday

8:00-9:30 am	Cook, eat Breakfast and clean up
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9:45-10:00 am	Closing Scout's Own Ceremony
10:00-11:00 am	Participants check-out with Service Unit Encampment volunteer(s), clean units and fill out Camp Checkout Report. Fill out Encampment Evaluation and receive patches.
11:00 am-12:00 pm	Service Unit Encampment Volunteers collect all program materials, pack up and check out with Camp Master.

Encampment Budget Worksheet

Part A

To establish the per girl/adult fee, fill in the costs in Part B first and then divide the total expenses by the total number of people coming.

Proposed		Actual	
Total Number of People	_____	Total Number of People	_____
Encampment Per Girl Fee	\$ _____	Encampment Per Girl Fee	\$ _____
Encampment Per Adult Fee	\$ _____	Encampment Per Adult Fee	\$ _____
1. _____ Girls @ \$ _____ =	\$ _____	1. _____ Girls @ \$ _____ =	\$ _____
2. _____ Adults @ \$ _____ =	\$ _____	2. _____ Adults @ \$ _____ =	\$ _____
3. Incidental Income	\$ _____	3. Incidental Income	\$ _____
(include donations and money used from SU account)		(include donations and money used from SU account)	
TOTAL INCOME (1+2+3)	\$ _____	TOTAL INCOME (1+2+3)	\$ _____

Part B

Proposed Expenses		Actual Expenses	
Food	\$ _____	Food	\$ _____
Activity Fees	\$ _____	Activity Fees	\$ _____
Office Supplies	\$ _____	Office Supplies	\$ _____
Health/First Aid	\$ _____	Health/First Aid	\$ _____
Program Supplies	\$ _____	Program Supplies	\$ _____
Patches/Badges	\$ _____	Patches/Badges	\$ _____
T-Shirt	\$ _____	T-Shirt	\$ _____
Site Rental	\$ _____	Site Rental	\$ _____
Postage	\$ _____	Postage	\$ _____
Gifts of Appreciation	\$ _____	Gifts of Appreciation	\$ _____
Other _____	\$ _____	Other _____	\$ _____
Other _____	\$ _____	Other _____	\$ _____
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ _____	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ _____
Income	\$ _____	Income	\$ _____

Minus Expenses \$ _____

Minus Expenses \$ _____

Balance \$ _____

Balance \$ _____

Encampment Girl Evaluation

Service Unit _____ Troop # _____ Girl Scout Program Level _____

Please answer the following questions using the scale:

1=Excellent 2=Good 3=OK 4=Needs improvement 5=Doesn't apply

During this encampment I showed respect for the environment. 1 2 3 4 5

During this encampment I worked well with others 1 2 3 4 5

During this encampment I developed positive relationships with adults. 1 2 3 4 5

During this encampment I showed respect to others. 1 2 3 4 5

During this encampment I worked as part of a team. 1 2 3 4 5

During this encampment I shared my opinions with the group. 1 2 3 4 5

During this encampment I gained confidence in my abilities. 1 2 3 4 5

During this encampment I challenged myself to develop new skills. 1 2 3 4 5

My favorite thing about the encampment was _____

My least favorite thing about the encampment was _____

Service Unit Encampment Reservation Process

This is a short guide showing the necessary steps needed to make a reservation for your Service Unit Encampment at one of our camps.

1. Call 1-800-474-1912 and speak to the Program Manager that oversees the camp where you are wanting to camp to see what dates are available. **Camp reservations are on a first come first served basis and you may reserve a weekend up to one year in advance. The reservation form, fees and deposit due within 5 business days of the initial reservation. Check in time after 5 p.m. and check out time by noon.**
 - a. Pay the lodging fees in full at the time of registration
 - b. Rental per two nights (Fri./Sat.) unless otherwise noted
2. The [Troop and Service Unit Activity Approval Form](#) must be filled out and additional insurance purchased at least six weeks prior to your camp visit.
3. Any staffed program requests and final numbers must be made six weeks prior to your camp visit and payment due four weeks prior to your camp visit.
 - a. Availability of activities are on a first come first served basis dependent on the instructor's availability.
4. If you are requesting special equipment, be sure to indicate that on your reservation.
5. Food service requests (Camp Tanasi only) must be made a minimum of six weeks in advance and payment due four weeks in advance and payment due two weeks in advance.
 - a. 40 people minimum to request food
 - b. Make sure to discuss any special dietary needs (gluten allergy, etc.) with the Activities Manager
6. Camp confirmation will be emailed prior to your visit. Please make sure to have a valid email address that you check often.
7. **REFUND POLICY:** All fees are non-refundable three months prior to Service Unit Encampment date.
 - a. Weather refund policy: we will refund all fees **only if camp closes due to weather.**
 - b. Activity fees will be returned if GSCSA deems the weather condition unsafe to participate.
 - c. Refund requests must be submitted to Program Manager in writing.