



HONORING GIRLS WITH NATIONAL LIFESAVING AWARDS

COUNCIL PROCEDURES

The 1913 handbook, *How Girls Can Help Their Country*, lists two medals girls could earn for meritorious deeds related to saving a life: the Bronze Cross—presented when a girl had shown special heroism or had faced extraordinary risk of her own life to save another’s life—and the Silver Cross—presented for gallantry with considerable risk to a girl’s life. Today, girls continue to earn Lifesaving Awards: the Bronze Cross and the Medal of Honor, for these deeds.

Girl Scouts of the USA has designed procedures to help Girl Scout councils formally recognize acts of heroism by Girl Scouts. As part of the Lifesaving Award procedures, councils will approve the recommendation for the award as well as purchase the medals.

Councils needing additional copies of these procedures can visit Pearl, [Life Saving Awards](#) Procedures.

Please submit entire application, including signature page, to:

Girl Scouts of the USA
420 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10018-2796
Attn: Lifesaving Awards, 15th Floor

RECOGNIZING GIRLS

Recognition may be given to any registered Girl Scout from 5 through 17 years of age, where evidence presented in accordance with prescribed regulations shows that she saved or attempted to save a life under circumstances that indicate heroism or risk of her own life. Recognition cannot be given to anyone who was in any way the cause of or contributory to the incident, or where it appears that the risk involved was merely in the performance of duty or in meeting of an obligation.

BRONZE CROSS Given for saving life or attempting to save life with risk to the candidate's own life.

MEDAL OF HONOR Given for saving life or attempting to save life without risk to the candidate's own life.

Applications for Lifesaving Awards must be requested within **60 days** of the incident and submitted within **six months** after the accident occurred.

Applications must meet the following requirements:

- Application form must be completed giving full details of the incident.
- Application must be accompanied by a personally signed statement from
 - the rescuer
 - the rescued person
 - the witnesses (not more than three)Each statement must describe the details of the rescue as the person making the statement recalls them.
- Application must be signed by the adult volunteer.
- Application must be approved by the council before being submitted to GSUSA.

LIFESAVING AWARDS

Part of the Girl Scout program since the beginning of the movement in the United States, Lifesaving Awards are national awards given to a registered Girl Scout who has saved or attempted to save human life under circumstances that indicate heroism or risk of her own life. These awards are *reserved* for those Girl Scouts who have performed heroic acts beyond the degree of maturity and training to be expected at their age.

Training in health and safety is inherent in the Girl Scout program. Volunteers are expected to see that girls receive proper instruction in how to take care of themselves and others in emergencies. A Girl Scout, because of the Promise, Law, motto, and slogan to which she has subscribed, is *expected* to be resourceful, skilled, and competent—to have presence of mind and to be of service to others. Whether or not an act of unusual bravery is beyond that which is expected of a Girl Scout is often difficult to determine; each situation has unique factors, and many things need to be taken into consideration.

The initial judgment on the merit of an act that could qualify for a Lifesaving Award is a responsibility of the local council. The local council is best able to gather the facts rapidly, check them for accuracy of detail, and use judgment in determining whether an act really merits a Lifesaving Award. Councils must review the application and make the final decision to approve the act of heroism and submit for approval to GSUSA. The completed application must include the appropriate council signatures. The application and supporting materials must be sent to GSUSA. If approved, GSUSA will send the council two copies of a letter (one for the council and one to be sent or give to the rescuer) signed by the GSUSA CEO as a national recognition.

KINDS OF AWARDS

BRONZE CROSS Given for saving life or attempting to save life with risk to the candidate's own life.

MEDAL OF HONOR Given for saving life or attempting to save life without risk to the candidate's own life.

When a rescue does not qualify for either of these awards under the criteria given below, the council may still give the girl some form of recognition. The type of recognition awarded should be determined by the nature of the rescue.

BASIC CRITERIA FOR ALL LIFESAVING AWARDS

- The girl must be a registered Girl Scout at the time of the rescue. (No award is given to adults.)
- Awards are given for saving, or attempting to save, human life *only*.
- A girl who has caused or contributed to the circumstances necessitating the rescue is automatically ineligible.
- Consideration of the girl is paramount. The acclaim accompanying such an award might even be detrimental. If the rescue (or attempted rescue) has been a particularly harrowing experience or publicity is not desired, it might not be appropriate to give an award. Parents, friends, and teachers should be helpful in making a wise decision.

- If a girl meets the above criteria, then the following should be considered in determining whether her act of rescue really merits a lifesaving award:
- Age, maturity, and training of the girl, as well as that of the person(s) rescued.
 - Degree of difficulty of the rescue.
 - Nature of risk to the girl's life.
 - Degree of danger to the life of the person(s) being rescued.
 - Amount of assistance received from others.
 - Whether first-aid and emergency-care procedures or proper techniques for water, ice, or fire rescue were used.
 - Extent of good judgment shown by rescuer.
 - Circumstances surrounding the incident (e.g. site, weather).
 - Rescuer's compliance with principles and standards outlined in *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

Once it is determined that a girl should be considered for a Lifesaving Award, please complete the following procedures.

PROCEDURES FOR LIFESAVING AWARDS

1. An act of rescue is brought to the attention of the council by the adult volunteer.
2. An appropriate person in the council is appointed to work with the volunteer in collecting full information—such as signed statements by the rescuer, rescued person, and at least two witnesses—as rapidly as possible; to draft a summary; and to present these documents to whoever the council has designated to review the case.
3. It is important that the documentation process begin *immediately* after the rescue and proceed as quickly as possible. The decision to recommend a girl for an award must be reached no longer than **six months** after the event. If more time is allowed to elapse, persons involved may not be available and the facts recalled may become less accurate.
4. A recommendation is made by the council for final approval by GSUSA. The council forwards the entire application and supporting documents to GSUSA and maintains a copy for its files.
5. Upon receipt of the paperwork from the council and GSUSA approval, the GSUSA CEO sends a congratulatory letter to the council for presentation to the girl.
6. Council orders the Bronze Cross, UPC #09971, or the Medal of Honor, UPC #09972, from Girl Scout Merchandise and grants the award to the girl.



APPLICATION FOR LIFESAVING AWARDS

This application is made on behalf of rescuer (name of Girl Scout):

Parents'/Guardians' Names

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Address (street, city, state, zip code) | Date of birth | Height | Weight |
| Date of rescue | Time of rescue __ am __ pm | | |

Brownie
 Junior
 Cadette
 Senior
 Ambassador

Check which of the following occurred:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal bite _____ (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical accident | <input type="checkbox"/> Poisoning _____ (specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auto accident | <input type="checkbox"/> Fall | <input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory failure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle accident | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire | <input type="checkbox"/> Shock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cave-in | <input type="checkbox"/> Flood | <input type="checkbox"/> Tornado |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drowning (water/ice) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hemorrhage | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ (specify) |

| | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Name of person rescued | Sex | Age |
| Address (street, city, state, zip code) | Approx. height | Approx. weight |

Relationship to rescuer, if any

DATA REQUIRED REGARDING ALL ACTS OF HEROISM
(SEE “ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED ACCORDING TO TYPE OF RESCUE”)

I. Diagram of place where rescue occurred—(please submit on separate sheet).

II. Description of place where rescue occurred and its environs, insofar as they contribute to an understanding of circumstances surrounding the event.

III. Description of exact nature of risk run and extent of good judgment shown by rescuer in performing the rescue.

IV. Physical effect of rescue upon the rescuer; if injured, the extent of the injuries.

V. Description of weather conditions, insofar as they contribute to an understanding of circumstances surrounding the rescue.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF RESCUE

I. AQUATIC RESCUE/ICE RESCUE

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Swimming ability of rescuer <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | | Does the rescuer hold a swimming badge or Red Cross certificate? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| If yes, indicate type of badge or certificate | | Clothing worn by rescuer during rescue | |
| Swimming ability of rescued person <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | | Clothing worn by rescued person during rescue | |
| When brought ashore, what was condition of rescued person? <input type="checkbox"/> Unhurt <input type="checkbox"/> Injured <input type="checkbox"/> In shock <input type="checkbox"/> Unconscious <input type="checkbox"/> Dead | | | Did rescued person live? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Was artificial respiration given? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Name of person who gave artificial respiration | | Name of body of water where rescue occurred |
| Type of body of water <input type="checkbox"/> Lake <input type="checkbox"/> Pond <input type="checkbox"/> Stream <input type="checkbox"/> River <input type="checkbox"/> Sound <input type="checkbox"/> Bay <input type="checkbox"/> Ocean <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming Pool | | | |
| Composition of Bottom <input type="checkbox"/> Sand <input type="checkbox"/> Mud <input type="checkbox"/> Rocks <input type="checkbox"/> Weeds <input type="checkbox"/> Cement | | | Type of water flow <input type="checkbox"/> Still <input type="checkbox"/> Running |
| Speed of current | Depth of water where rescue was made | Distance covered: To rescued person To safety | |
| Method of rescue <input type="checkbox"/> Buoy <input type="checkbox"/> Line <input type="checkbox"/> Pole <input type="checkbox"/> Boat <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ (specify) | | | |
| If swimming rescue, was any equipment available that was not used? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | If yes, indicate equipment | | Did rescuer dive to make rescue? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Was rescue squad or doctor summoned? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Time summoned | Time arrived | Was treatment given? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Name of Doctor | | | |
| Address (street, city, state, zip code) | | | |

II. ICE RESCUE

| | |
|--|--|
| Did ice break under the rescuer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Did rescuer fall into water? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| If rescuer fell into water, how did she get out? | |

Method used by rescuer to move
over the ice

Equipment used in rescue

Board Ladder Rope Other _____

III. FIRE RESCUE

How was rescued person taken to safety?

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| How near the flames did the rescuer pass? | | What was the denseness of smoke through which the rescuer passed? |
| Was the fire in a room? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | If fire was in a room, what was the rescuer's knowledge of interior arrangement? | |
| Outer clothing worn by rescuer | Outer clothing worn by rescued person | Aid received by rescuer, if any |

FOR AQUATIC/ICE RESCUE INCLUDE A DIAGRAM SHOWING THE FOLLOWING:

1. Thickness of ice near point of rescue
 2. Distance from place accident occurred to safety
 3. Distance covered by rescuer to point of rescue
 4. Location of boards, ladders, or ropes, if any were at hand
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FOR FIRE RESCUE INCLUDE A DIAGRAM SHOWING THE FOLLOWING:

1. Dimensions of room or rooms through which rescuer passed in performing rescue
 2. Location of doors, windows, stairs, elevators, and fire escape
 3. Location of fire at time of rescue
 4. Location of rescued person when reached by rescuer
 5. Course followed by rescuer in performance of rescue
 6. Distance from place of rescue to safety
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DIAGRAMS FOR AQUATIC/ICE/FIRE RESCUE

The foregoing facts and accompanying statement of the rescuer, rescued person, and witnesses are, in our opinion, correct. We hereby recommend that _____, on whose behalf the application is made, should be awarded the following:

MEDAL OF HONOR

BRONZE CROSS

Name of rescuer

Signature of volunteer

Date

Address (street, city, state, zip code)

Name of council

Authorized signature (Girl Scout council)

Position

Date

Address (street, city, state, zip code)

Name, telephone and email of contact person

Council: Please check

- Girl's Membership Confirmed
- Publicity Not Desired

