

How do I establish documented experience?

A certified instructor or one with documented experience in a particular activity is required for most aquatic activities and for certain activities that demand specialized skills, equipment, and supervision. The following list provides some guidance on how to develop proper documentation for equivalent training/experience and determining competence of leadership:

- Course requirements that match those specifically listed in Safety-Wise
- Performance reviews from prior employers, mentors, and/or the council
- Prior work experience including dates and job descriptions
- Results of training/testing/review provided by certified staff with proper documentation
- Grades in appropriate courses (with course contents attached)
- References from people with documentation indicating that they are competent to make statement(s) about the applicant's competence
- Certified translations of certificates/references in languages not understood by the supervisor

Adult-to-Girl Ratios:

**The following updates are effective October 1, 2008
and should be used with the existing *Safety-Wise*.**

Girl Scout Grade Levels

The New Girl Scout Leadership Experience provides direction for Girl Scout program that is adapted to meet the developmental, educational, emotional, and social needs and interests of girls at the six Girl Scout Grade Levels.

It is a National Standard that Adult to Girl Ratios are as follows:						
Girl Scout Grade Level	Grade	Troop/group size # of Girls	General Troop/group meetings: Two non-related adults (at least one of whom is female) for each # of Girls	Plus One adult for each additional # of Girls	Events, trips and camping: Two non-related adults (at least one of whom is female) for each # of Girls	Plus One adult for each additional # of Girls
Girl Scout Daisy	K–grade 1	5–15	12	6	6	4
Girl Scouts Brownie	Grades 2–3	10–25	20	8	12	6
Girl Scouts Junior	Grades 4–6	5–30	25	12	20	10
Girl Scout Cadette	Grades 6–8	5–30	25	12	20	10
Girl Scout Senior	Grades 9–10	5–30	30	15	24	12
Girl Scout Ambassador	Grades 11–12	5–30	30	15	24	12

Girls with mental retardation should be registered as closely as possible to their chronological age. They wear the uniform of that grade level. Make any required adaptations to the ongoing activities of the Girl Scout Grade Level to which the troop/group belongs. Young women who are mentally retarded may retain their girl membership through their 21st year and then move into an adult membership category.

Girl Scout Grade Level is determined by the current membership year beginning October 1st.

Daisies and Camp:

Under the leadership of an adult, a Girl Scout Daisy troop may participate in an occasional overnight camping experience lasting up to three nights.

Girl Scout Daisies who have completed kindergarten may independently participate in day camp and resident camp experiences lasting up to 3 nights.

Girl Scout Daisies who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences 4 or more nights.

Sleeping Accommodations:

- One bed per participant. If it is necessary for girls to share a bed, it should be noted on the parent/guardian permission slip. Adults and girls will never share a bed.
- Males, with the exception of family camp or similar program, will have separate sleeping accommodations (tent, cabin or designated area).
- During Family or He and Me type events where the girls will be sharing sleeping accommodations (tent, cabin or designated area) with their significant adult males, this unique opportunity will be clearly explained in the parent/guardian permission slip.
- It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping accommodations (tent, cabin or designated area) with the girls. If an adult female does share the sleeping accommodations, there should always be two adult females present.

How do you facilitate an outdoor experience if you have little or not training or experience?

- Get outside! You might consider holding a portion or all of your meeting outdoors. Simply step outside of your regular meeting place and find an outdoor space to hold your meeting. What did you discover? What challenges presented themselves? What was really successful?
- Here are a few quick activities that can be done outside with little or no equipment and can be modified for age and/or group size:

Texture Scavenger Hunt

This scavenger hunt doesn't require girls to remove anything from nature (of course it would be great if they can draw/sketch what they see/find). Have girls find something:

- Soft
- Rough
- Dry

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- Damp
- Pointy
- Rounded
- That goes "crunch"
- That goes "swoosh"
- Smooth
- Shiny
- Glossy

Which one is mine?

In a natural space, have all girls collect one of the same items from nature (fallen leaf, pine cone, acorn, etc.). Have girls sketch their item and pay particular attention to any unique features it might have (a leaf may have a bite out of it, an acorn may be unusually long, a pine cone may have some animal fur stuck in it, etc.). Encourage girls to touch, look and observe. Have all the girls put their items in the center of where the group is sitting; talk about what they learned about their item, any surprises? Tell the girls to see if they can pick their item out of the pile (they should use their sketches, etc.). This is a great activity to introduce the idea of careful observation as well as using all your senses.

Observation Activity

Objective: girls sit and observe a small part of a natural environment, record and reflect.

Have you ever wondered what goes on in the grass? Take a break and investigate! Grab a piece of rope, a shoelace or a scarf. Find a spot outside that looks interesting; lay your rope, shoelace or scarf on the ground in a circle and observe what goes on inside... Are there things moving? Are they moving on their own or is a breeze moving them? What colors do you see? Shapes? Unusual things? Things you expected? Sketch your observations or capture them in a journal entry. Think about how you might travel across the grass differently in the future.

Solo Hour in Nature

Take some time to experience all that a natural environment has to offer. Find a place where you will feel comfortable sitting for an hour or so; this could be in a park, a camp, your backyard, etc. Be comfortable; you may want to sit on a blanket, chair or bench. Sit for awhile and watch what is going on around you, then close your eyes and experience the natural world through your other senses. What do you hear? Smell? Is anything touching the backs of your legs or hands? Are you tasting anything? Relax and focus on the world around you. As your quiet time comes to a close, ask yourself? How did that quiet time make me feel overall? What did you learn about your new surroundings? How did it make you feel to close your eyes and rely on your other senses?

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces (one of the seven Leave No Trace principles)

This activity would be a great activity to do if girls were heading out to take a hike or spend time in an outdoor setting

As you prepare to head out for your hike, you have probably thought about taking enough water, snacks, sunscreen, a map, binoculars, etc. Take some time to think

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about where you will step when you are outside. There is so much to see; interesting flowers, wildlife and maybe even a stream. You'll probably be so amazed that you'll tell all your friends about your experience, but there are few things you should be aware of so that your friends will be able to enjoy the natural place you visited.

Background info on durable surfaces from LNT:

Travel on Durable Surfaces: The goal of backcountry travel is to move through the backcountry while avoiding damage to the land. Understanding how travel causes impacts is necessary to accomplish this goal.

Travel damage occurs when surface vegetation or communities of organisms are trampled beyond recovery. The resulting barren area leads to soil erosion and the development of undesirable trails. Backcountry travel may involve travel over both trails and off-trail areas.

Travel on Trails: Concentrate Activities When Traveling in Heavily Used Areas Land management agencies construct trails in backcountry areas to provide identifiable routes that concentrate foot and stock traffic. Constructed trails are themselves an impact on the land; however, they are a necessary response to the fact that people travel in the back country. Concentrating travel on trails reduces the likelihood that multiple routes will develop and scar the landscape. It is better to have one well-designed route than many poorly chosen paths.

Trail use is recommended whenever possible. Encourage travelers to stay within the width of the trail and not short cut trail switchbacks (trail zigzags that climb hill sides). Travelers should provide space for other hikers if taking breaks along the trail. The principles of off-trail travel should be practiced if the decision is made to move off-trail for breaks.

(Hikers in the same group should periodically stop to rest and talk. Avoid shouting to communicate while hiking. Loud noises usually are not welcome in natural areas.)

Travel Off-trail: Spread Use and Impact in Pristine Areas (except in some desert areas) All travel that does not utilize a designed trail such as travel to remote areas, searches for bathroom privacy, and explorations near and around campsites is defined as off-trail. Two primary factors increase how off-trail travel affects the land: durability of surfaces and vegetation, and frequency of travel (or group size).

Durability refers to the ability of surfaces or vegetation to withstand wear or remain in a stable condition.

Frequency of use and large group size increase the like hood that a large area will be trampled, or that a small area will be tram pled multiple times.

Surface Durability: The concept of durability is an important one for all backcountry travelers to understand. The following natural surfaces respond differently to backcountry travel.

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- Rock, sand and gravel: These surfaces are highly durable and can tolerate repeated trampling and scuffing. (However, lichens that grow on rocks are vulnerable to repeated scuffing).
- Ice and snow: The effect of travel across these surfaces is temporary, making them good choices for travel assuming good safety precautions are followed and the snow layer is of sufficient depth to prevent vegetation damage.
- Vegetation: The resistance of vegetation to trampling varies. Careful decisions must be made when traveling across vegetation. Select areas of durable vegetation, or sparse vegetation that is easily avoided. Dry grasses tend to be resistant to trampling. Wet meadows and other fragile vegetation quickly show the effects of trampling. Trampling ensures new travelers to take the same route and leads to undesirable trail derailment. As a general rule, travelers who must venture off-trail should spread out to avoid creating paths that encourage others to follow. Avoid vegetation whenever possible, especially on steep slopes where the effects of off-trail travel are magnified.
- Cryptobiotic crust ("Crypto"): Cryptobiotic crust, found in desert environments, is extremely vulnerable to foot traffic. Cryptobiotic crust consists of tiny communities of organisms that appear as a blackish and irregular raised crust upon the sand. This crust retains moisture in desert climates and provides a protective layer, preventing erosion. One footstep can destroy "crypto". It is important to use developed trails in these areas. Travel across "crypto" should only be done when absolutely necessary. Walk on rocks or other durable surfaces if you must travel off-trail. In broad areas of "crypto", where damage is unavoidable, it is best to follow in one another's foot steps so the smallest area of crust is affected, exactly the opposite rule from travel through vegetation. (Cryptobiotic crust is also extremely vulnerable to mountain bicycle travel.)
- Desert puddles and mud holes: Water is a precious scarce resource for all living things in the desert. Don't walk through desert puddles, mud holes, or disturb surface water in any way. Potholes are also home to tiny desert animals.

Camp on Durable Surfaces: Selecting an appropriate campsite is perhaps the most important aspect of low-impact back try use. It requires the greatest use of judgment and information and often involves making trade-offs between minimizing ecological and social impacts. A decision about where to camp should be based on information about the level and type of use in the area, the fragility of vegetation and soil, the likelihood of wildlife disturbance, an assessment of previous impacts, and your party's potential to cause or avoid impact.

Before heading out, think about which surface would be the best surface to travel/camp on, discuss the choices you made.

- A rock covered with moss or a rotting log
- An open meadow peppered with wildflowers or a grassy knoll
- A snow covered area or a pebbled path
- A marked trail or what appears to be a trail made by previous users of the site
- A dry grassy area or an area still wet with morning dew

Do you need to make any adjustments to your trip plan? Are there things you will be more mindful of? After you have completed your trip, think about what choices you made

Progression

As you work with girls and begin to facilitate their planning an outdoor experience, here are some skills you'll want to target:

- How to work with others in a group setting by setting goals and carrying out activities together
- How to dress properly for different kinds of weather
- Experience a variety of outdoor activities such as a hike, nature walk or even a backyard sleepout
- Learn about the environment using their senses
- Learn safety rules for outdoor activities
- Try some simple food preparation

Girls tend to get very excited about the idea of a camp experience. As one who is helping to facilitate a successful experience you'll want to ensure that they have the prerequisite skills to be successful at what they have planned.

Meals are an area that can be quite overwhelming. As the girls menu plan, think of all the required skills necessary to prepare the meal. How much chopping, measuring and cooking is involved? Is there a way to simplify the recipe (less time, ingredients, prep work, etc.)? If the girls are more experienced is there a way to incorporate an alternative cooking method (pie iron, dutch oven, box oven, solar cooker, etc.)? Does the entire meal need to be cooked over the fire or can just dessert be cooked over the fire?

Another aspect of a camp experience that can be overwhelming are the activities the girls are engaged in while at camp. As you assist girls with the planning of activities, make certain there is a blend of active and passive activities as well as group and individual activities. If crafts are planned, make sure that they can be completed in the time you have allotted; girls often need to experience a completed project to feel successful. Consider the humidity and how quickly glue will dry, how many steps, pieces and length of time. If the girls are used to being physically active, a hike might be a great idea; if they aren't, maybe a short hike.

Taking the Journeys to Camp:

Getting away from it all by heading out on camping trip is a great way for girls to get immersed in some of the journey themes and explorations.

It's Your Planet-Love It!

You'll quickly find that there are many ideas about enjoying the great outdoors tucked right into the girl books and adult guides in the It's Your Planet-Love It! series. After all, loving nature is generally the best motivator for protecting it! So get the Daisies hiking and observing all that grows at camp, involve the Brownies in the water issues, offer the Juniors an "off the grid" adventure, invite Cadettes to enjoy "a square inch" of silence as they Breathe, get the Seniors checking the soil-and preparing a meal of locally grown food and have the Ambassadors do the math as they consider the footprint on a weekend at camp.

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It's Your World-Change It!

It's easy to use the It's Your World-Change It! series at camp too! Whether planning a day at camp for younger girls or a weekend or longer for older Girl Scouts, here are some ideas to get you going.

Daisies

Invite Daisies and their families to a day at camp. Have fun with activities like "What's In the Bag?" on page 68 of the Guide and "Secret Garden Stuff" on page 73. Take a moment to say the Girl Scout Promise and Law together too and enjoy a round of "Sandy's Song for Girl Scout Daisies" on page 75. Depending on time and interest, perhaps there is even an opportunity for girls and their families to do a simple Take Action project that improves how things are growing out at camp? Got an imaginative crew? Make up characters (along the lines of the Flower Friends) for some of the flora and fauna found at camp. Get every involved in creating the adventure for these friends.

Brownies on Quest have their Quest Maps. How about a chance to learn to follow a map of a Girl Scout camp or trail? Consider too, the opportunity to do the "Going ELF: Search to Discover the Values of the Girl Scout Law" on page 47 of the guide at camp. And, how about a focus on teamwork with a special Brownie Team Agreement (page 61 of the guide) for camp time?

Juniors on Agent of Change could come with a "herstory" to share or even act out (page 16 of their books). Or, they can enjoy this time together to make up their own "power" story, with an outdoor twist (page 68 of their books). While telling stories, how about making up a list of funny things "Dez Says" about camp? Don't forget to practice the power of team—with an obstacle course the girls can invent at camp (page 36).

Cadettes:

The freedom from usual cliques and routines that camp can provide makes it a great space to engage Cadettes on aMaze in the "Where Do You Stand" exercise on pages 52-53 of the adult guide. After trying out some of the scenarios provided, give girls time to partner up and come up with some of their own.

Seniors

GIRLtopia invites girls to envision the perfect world for girls. What better place to start than the "mini world" of a weekend (or longer!) at camp? Use the "Shared Visions" (Guide, page 39) and "What's Our Ideal Group" (Guide, page 45) to get started. Add the imagination of girls and go from there! Time outdoors can also be great inspiration for the art projects girls choose to "illustrate" what the perfect world for girls looks like. Perhaps camp time can include photography, watercolor and other art media girls want to try.

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Ambassadors

Girls at the end of high school have so much going on. How about clearing the calendar for a weekend away from it all. Try these exercises from the girl book for a great weekend: "Discover the Many Moods of You" on page 47; and, "Discover Your Inner Child" on page 55. Don't forget the gourmet s'mores on page 24. While around the campfire, it might be nice to talk about the timeline of women who have advocated throughout history. What entry will the Ambassadors make?

Additional Resources:

Outdoor Education in Girl Scouting

[Transforming Leadership: Focusing on Outcomes of the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience](#)

[Transforming Leadership Continued: A Guide to Understanding the Girl Scout Processes](#)

The web has a vast array of resources, you might consider using some of the following words as you create your searches:

Outdoor, environment(al), education, camp, camping, etc.

Search 'Camp Activities'

<http://wilderdom.com/games/IdeasSummerCampActivities.html>

<http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activities/camp-games.html>

Search 'Nature Activities'

<http://www.outdoor-nature-child.com/>

<http://richardlouv.com/children-nature-resources>

Search 'Outdoor Education Activities'

<http://fun.familyeducation.com/play/outdoor-activities/33394.html>

<http://aeoe.org/resources/games/>