



## Sleeping Arrangements for Troop and Service Unit Events

Sleep time can be a time when girls and adults can feel vulnerable and uncomfortable with their surroundings due to changing into sleepwear and sleeping in areas with people they may not be familiar with.

Also, through our association with the American Camp Association (ACA), Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys has become more aware of the increase in camper-to-camper abuse.

Stated in an article in the ACA Fall 2008 issue of The CampLine concerning camper-to-camper abuse: "Unfortunately, the incidents of children abusing other children – whether sexually, physically, or emotionally – continue to grow in this country. Prevention of situations when campers are alone without staff is CRITICAL – we cannot stress that enough. The most vulnerable time when camper-to-camper abuse can happen is when staff are engaged elsewhere. Sleeping time, overnights in tents, trips to the bathroom, and times when campers are changing clothes for the pool are clearly the times when camps need to be ever more attuned for the possibilities of camper-to-camper inappropriate activities. Provide training and policies that do not allow campers to be alone without staff supervision – ever."

The following guidelines are to help minimize any unwanted behavior or uncomfortable feelings from happening.

### Adult Chaperones

- All adults chaperoning a Girl Scout overnight must be registered members and must have completed a volunteer application and criminal background screening process. Non-members should not be supervising sleeping areas unless the group is sleeping in family units.
- The supervision ratio of adult to girls should follow the guidelines found in Safety-Wise, with at least two unrelated registered adult volunteers (at least one must be female) present at all times.

### Supervision of Sleeping Areas

- Only female adult registered volunteers supervise girl sleeping area.
- When possible, two unrelated female adults sleep in the sleep area with the girls. If this is not possible adults should:
  - Let girls know who to go to and what to do if they are not feeling comfortable
  - Work with girls to set ground rules for what is appropriate behavior
  - Remain present until girls are in their beds sleeping; i.e. be able to check on girls from time to time and always be in hearing distance
  - Adults always remain in close proximity to girl sleeping area to monitor what is happening.
- For hotel or hostel stays requiring separate, unconnected rooms use the following guidelines:
  - Helpful tactics for hotel stays, as well as all overnight situations, are to work with the girls to set up ground rules, provide check in time, let girls know who to go to and what to do if they are not feeling comfortable, and give girls permission to seek help from an adult leader

- All participants should know how to contact the adult volunteers whether through the room phone numbers and/or extensions or cell phone
- Each participants should have contact information for all the participants, especially the adults (list of room and/or cell phone numbers)
- If girls need to leave their room to go to a leader's room, go as buddies
- Have clear guidelines as to where the girls can and cannot travel within the hotel facilities.
- When using hostels or hotel rooms, the rooms should not be shared with non-Girl Scout groups
- Hotel stays without adult presence in the sleeping rooms or connected rooms is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies and Girl Scout Brownies. For Girl Scout Juniors consideration should be made to the experience of the girls and whether they are ready and prepared to stay in a hotel room or hostel without an adult present.

### **Bed Space Guidelines**

- Each participant has her own bed or sleeping space. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a double bed, such as in the case of staying in a hotel or home-stay.
- Girls and adults do not share a bed, with the exception of mothers and daughters. The bed should be a double bed or larger

### **Adult male chaperone guidelines**

- Adult males do not supervise sleeping areas
- Adult males should have separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms whenever possible
- In circumstances where only one large sleeping space is available, such as at museum and mall sleepovers, there should be a separate designated area for adult males
- If there is only one bathroom available, assign times to use the bathroom, as well as have a sign that can be turned over to designate whether it is being used by a male or female

### **Family or parent-daughter event guidelines**

During a family or parent-daughter overnight where both male and female parents are participating, either:

- Have three areas: one for girls, one for female adults and one for male adults, with at least two of the female adults registered volunteers supervising the girl sleep area; or
- Sleep in family units, with each family unit having their own separate space; or
- Have girls and female adults sleep in one area and the male adults sleep in a separate area with at least two of the female adults registered volunteers supervising the girl sleep area