

GOLDEN GATE BRIDGING 2010



GGB Frequently Asked Questions

“The work of today is the history of tomorrow,
and we are its makers.”

- Juliette Gordon Low
Founder of Girl Scouts

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General Questions

1. What is Golden Gate Bridging?

- a. Girl Scouts of Northern California (GS NorCal) celebrates the accomplishments of Junior Girl Scouts at Golden Gate Bridging. In this ceremony, the girls “bridge” from the younger girl program to the Older Girl program by ceremoniously crossing the Golden Gate Bridge and celebrating their accomplishments together in the Presidio. The celebration is a West Coast tradition uniting over 5,000 Girl Scouts annually.

2. What age levels are included?

- a. This event is exclusive for Juniors bridging into the Older Girl program (5th or 6th grade). This special bridging ceremony honors their accomplishments in the younger girl program while welcoming them to the next phase of Girl Scouts, the Older Girl program.

3. Can GS NorCal make an exception to that policy for my Daisy, Brownie, Cadette, or Senior Troop?

- a. Unfortunately, we are unable to allow Daisy, Brownie, Cadette, or Senior troops to bridge at this event. Due to restrictions on the number of participants at this event, exceptions cannot be made. We invite Older Girl troops to participate as volunteers!

4. Why is the event on Mother’s Day Weekend?

- a. This was a difficult decision for everyone involved.
- b. Unfortunately, the only available weekend in May for this event is the second weekend. The first weekend in May is California State testing. The third weekend is the Bay to Breakers footrace which involves over 70,000 people participating in this annual race across San Francisco from the Bay to the ocean. The fourth weekend is Memorial Day weekend. This leaves the second weekend, Mothers Day Weekend
- c. This event requires support from over 450 volunteers (we are unable to get that many volunteers in June due to graduations, vacations, Girl Scout camps, etc).
- d. Moms, we know we’re asking a lot for families to move your mother’s day celebration but unfortunately May 8th is the best date. **For your girls, the Golden Gate Bridging ceremony is a once in a lifetime event!**
- e. Leaders, in planning for this trip remember girl/adult partnership...ask the Girls, maybe they can think of a special way to recognize their mothers so they can still celebrate their accomplishments with 5,000 other Girl Scouts in SF on this special weekend!

5. Is this a family event or a Mother/Daughter event?

- a. Unfortunately, this is not a family or a Mother/Daughter event. Technically this is a troop/troop leader event.

6. What is the Girl/Adult Ratio for GGB 2010?

- a. We ask that participating troops do not exceed a maximum of 3 girls for every 1 adult during the event.
- b. At a minimum, we ask that troops follow Safety Wise girl/adult ratios for trips or the ratio set by your home council for out of area trips. Safety Wise ratio for this type of event is 2 adults for 16 girls, plus 1 adult for each additional 8 girls.

7. Why can’t we bring as many adults to GGB as we’d like?

- a. We’re thrilled that GGB has become such a popular event! Over the last three years, Golden Gate Bridging (GGB) has steadily grown in popularity. Unfortunately, though, that also means that many bridging Juniors, who may have looked forward to attending for years, have not been able to attend the event in the past.
- b. GGB 2009 sold out in less than 4 weeks. Over 10,000 people wanted to attend an event which is designed to serve only 5,000 participants. We were able to get special permission from 4 separate agencies to increase the maximum number of participants to 8,000 last year. However, we were disappointed that we still had 2,000 people who

- could not attend. We know of at least 17 troops that stayed in Juniors an extra year just so they could attend GGB 2010 as a troop. How disappointed they must have been!
- c. This year, due to the Doyle Drive Construction project, we have not received special permission to exceed our traditional capacity of 5,000 participants for GGB 2010, although we are hopeful that we may yet be able to do so. We are in close communication with the four separate government agencies while they develop a more accurate timeframe of the construction plans and the possible impact on all events within the Presidio during 2010 - 2012. For more information on the Doyle Drive Construction Project, please visit www.doyledrive.com.
 - d. Our goal is to ensure that all bridging Juniors have the opportunity to attend GGB 2010. Did you know that the required Safety-Wise ratio of adults to girls for this type of activity is 2 adults for 16 girls, plus 1 adult for each additional 8 girls? We're hopeful that by providing a much more generous ratio of 1 adult for every 3 girls that your group is able to enjoy GGB 2010, while still allowing as many girls as possible to participate in this special experience.

8. Is there a free "viewing area" for the event?

- a. Unfortunately, there is NO free viewing area for this event.
- b. Please do not have family members meet your group at the event. **This is a violation of our permit and puts the future of the event in jeopardy.** This event was crashed heavily in 2009 and now our permits for 2011 are at risk if this policy is not maintained in 2010. We must pay the Presidio, National Park Service, and the Golden Gate Bridge for each person that attends the event. We appreciate your support following this policy. This event is a once in a lifetime experience for the girls and we appreciate your effort in helping us ensure we can continue to offer the event for generations to come.

9. If I do not pay what happens?

- a. Due to the public setting of the event, our volunteers and the National Park Police are asked to have anyone not wearing the event indicator leave the premises for the safety of the girls. If an individual is not wearing the event indicator and refuses to leave the event then the National Park Police will escort them off the premises. This rule is strictly followed to ensure the safety of the girls. We do not want strangers pretending to be part of the event. Safety of all participants (especially the girls) is the number one concern at Golden Gate Bridging.

10. Will there be security at the event?

- a. Yes, we hire the National Park Police to oversee the event. In addition, there will be a numerous police officers to assist participants while crossing the street.
- b. Since the Presidio is open to the public, our volunteers and the National Park Police are asked to look for individuals that are at the event and not wearing the event indicator.
- c. Safety of all participants (especially the girls) is the number one concern at Golden Gate Bridging!

11. Can we bring tagalongs?

- a. Unfortunately, we do not allow tagalongs.
- b. Since we are restricted on the total number of participants for the event, we do not allow tagalongs in order to serve more bridging Juniors. Please do not bring younger children to the event. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding to this request.

12. What is the Doyle Drive Construction Project?

- a. "The existing south access road to the Golden Gate Bridge, known as Doyle Drive or Route 101, is structurally and seismically unsafe and must be replaced. The replacement road is known as the Presidio Parkway and is a world-class design to replace the existing roadway that, when constructed, will improve the seismic, structural and traffic safety of Doyle Drive."

- b. This construction plan is scheduled to take 2-3 years and may impact Golden Gate Bridging's 2010 – 2012.
- c. Due to the Doyle Drive Construction project that has started in the Presidio, logistical details about GGB 2010 including what field and trails will be accessed by participants during the event will not be available until 2010. We appreciate your patience as we wait while Caltrans and the Presidio develop a more accurate timeframe of the construction plans and the possible impact on all events within the Presidio during 2010 - 2012
- d. For more information on this project, please visit <http://www.doyledrive.com/about/>

Travel Arrangement Questions

13. What if we rent a charter bus?

- a. If you are driving instead of flying, renting a charter bus may be a cheaper alternative for your group. Charter Buses can be used to transport your group around San Francisco for the weekend. Charter buses are not required to participate in GGB 2010.
- b. If your group rents a charter bus, there are no adult/girl ratio restrictions, which allow your group to bring whomever you choose to attend the event.
- c. To be considered a charter bus group, you must have at least 47 participants and a private shuttle.
- d. Your charter bus must drive your participants to and from the event. Please contact Melanie Johnston at MJohnston@girlscoutsnorcal.org by April 9, 2010 to sign up for a charter bus check-in time and to receive more information on this procedure.

14. Where do we stay in SF?

- a. We suggest asking your girls what they would like to see while visiting San Francisco. It can be easier for groups to stay close to the desired tourist destinations within the city. For example, most troops want to visit Pier 39 and Fisherman's Wharf. This area has numerous site seeing attractions including, Pier 39, Alcatraz, Fisherman's Wharf, Ripley's Believe It or Not, Ghirardelli Square, etc. and is just a cable car ride away from Downtown, Lombard Street, and Chinatown.
- b. Please reference the *Places to Go Things to See* information sheet for more tourist attractions in this area. This information sheet is available online under *How to Plan Your Trip* at http://www.girlscoutsnorcal.org/pages/events/ggb_plan.html

15. Hotel Suggestions

a. GGB Travel Agent

- i. For assistance finding a hotel in SF, please contact Gretchen Gates at gretchen@adventuresamerica.com. Gretchen is our amazing GGB Travel Agent that has special rates worked out with hotels and tourist sites throughout SF for this event! There is NO charge to use this service. If you are traveling to the event, we highly recommend calling Adventures America to help plan your trip!
- b. Special Hotel offer with the **Hilton** at Fisherman's Wharf
<http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/SFOFWHF-GSNG-20100507/index.jhtml>
- c. Special Hotel offer with the **Holiday Inn** and the **Holiday Inn Express** at Fisherman's Wharf
- d. Due to the incredible hotel deals available online, we suggest that troops search online for discount hotels in SF to get an idea of costs.
 - i. Please be advised that the majority of online services do not treat online reservations as "group reservations" resulting in the possibility that reserved rooms will be on different floors of the hotel. Meaning if a troop books four rooms in the same hotel, you are not guaranteed that the rooms will be together.
 - i. Suggested hotel search engines are:
 1. www.hotels.com
 2. www.expedia.com

3. www.hoteldiscountsecrets.com
4. www.dealsonhotels.com

16. GS NorCal Properties

- a. We have some fantastic camping properties that are available to rent for this weekend. Please visit our web site for more information on the following properties:
 - i. **Camp Bothin** – located in Fairfax
 - ii. **Camp Arequipa** – located in Fairfax

17. Hostelling International

- a. GSUSA and Hostelling International have a partnership to provide a less expensive way for troops to stay anywhere in the world. Troops can stay at one of the local hostels throughout the Bay Area.
- b. Hostelling International is a less expensive location to stay in SF, troops can stay at one of our local hostels throughout the Bay Area.
- c. Unfortunately, the local hostels book considerably fast for this weekend, if you are contemplating this option please call Hostelling International for availability.
- d. Please note that the Fort Mason Hostel (a.k.a. Fisherman's Wharf Hostel) is SOLD OUT for GGB 2010!
- e. Hostelling International information:
 - i. www.sfhostels.com
 - ii. www.norcalhostels.org

18. How do we get to the event?

- a. Each group is responsible for getting to and from the event. Once you are at the event, we will provide transportation over the Golden Gate Bridge.
- b. Please use either Public Transportation, or rent a car, taxi, limo, etc.
- c. If public transportation is not possible for your group, there is plenty of parking for paid participants at the Presidio. Directions on where to park in the Presidio will be provided in the GGB Adventure Packet.
- d. If you are being dropped off at the event, please use the designated drop off zones only. Participants are not permitted to be dropped off at the Marin Vista Point or the Golden Gate Bridge Toll Booth Plaza.
- e. Participants will receive information on the drop off location for GGB 2010 via email in the GGB Adventure Packet.

19. Public Transportation

- a. San Francisco is famous for its public transportation! The event is completely accessible by public transportation; however, it takes a lot of time and good planning to make it work.
- b. Due to the number of people attending this event, public transportation to the event can be difficult especially when traveling from the Fisherman's Wharf area.
- c. Please note there are fewer bus lines into the Presidio this year.
- d. The event takes place in the Presidio, a National Park on the San Francisco side of the Golden Gate Bridge.
- e. For your own research purposes (i.e. MapQuest directions or MUNI, bus, and train lines), the address to use is **603 Mason Street, San Francisco, CA 94129**. (please make sure to enter the zip code otherwise you will be directed to another part of SF)
- f. **For the fastest way to plan your public transportation route, please visit** <http://transit.511.org/tripplanner/index.asp>
 - ii. Go to www.511.org
 - iii. Under the *Transit* link choose *Take Transit Trip Planner*
 - iv. Enter the address of your hotel (or your starting point)
 - v. **Select the desired end location by using the 511-Map!**

- a. **Please do NOT use Google Map** – This map feature does not allow you to zoom in on the Presidio and can lead to poor directions.
 - b. Zoom in on the top portion of SF near the Golden Gate Bridge. Then you will see the Presidio. Please reference the Map of the Presidio for a detailed map of this area.
 - c. The address to use for the event is 603 Mason Street, San Francisco, CA 94129. However, 511.org does not allow you to enter the zip code; therefore, if you use this address, you will be directed to another part of SF.
- vi. The web site will automatically map out the public transportation routes needed to get to the Presidio, the cost of each route, and the time needed to make the journey across the city.
- g. If you are flying into town on the day of the event and want to use public transportation, plan on it taking 1-2 hours for you to get from the San Francisco Airport to the event and 2-3 hours from the Oakland Airport to the event depending upon traffic and other events in the Bay Area.
 - h. Please check the *Public Transportation to GGB* PDF for the exact public transportation routes that travel to the event. To ensure accurate information, this document will be released after January 2010.

Logistic Questions:

20. Should we wear our vests?

- a. If you would like to, you can! We suggest wearing matching outfits so you can easily find your troop in a large crowd. Plus, the girls will have a fabulous time designing their matching outfits!

21. Can we carry our troop flag on the bridge?

- a. Unfortunately, the Golden Gate Bridge has asked that troops do not carry troop flags; it is distracting to the drivers.

22. What are SWAPS?

- a. SWAPS stands for: Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere
- a. Click on the link below for GSUSA's official answer on what a swap is and traditional swap etiquette. http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/swaps/
- a. Remember to have fun while making your swaps!
- b. Please include the area you are from on your SWAPS.
- c. For swap ideas, check online! (You will be amazed at all the ideas.)

23. How many swaps should we bring?

- a. This depends on your group.
- b. Ask the girls how many swaps they want to come home with and that will set your swap number. We suggest making inexpensive swaps in large quantity.
- c. The girls will be able to swap with more troops if they make individual swaps versus the same troop swap.
- d. Get creative and have fun.

24. How long is the walk?

- a. The entire day can involve almost 4 miles of walking.
- b. The Golden Gate Bridge is 1.7 miles including the spans leading to the bridge
- c. It takes an average of 60-90 minutes for a troop to cross the bridge. This varies per group depending upon the amount of stops your group makes for taking pictures and time to make new friends!

25. Is the bridge shut down to cars on the day of the event?

- a. No, the east side of the bridge has a 10-foot sidewalk with a fence to keep the pedestrians safe from the traffic and is open 24 hours a day.
- b. For this event, we are required to get a special permit for the number of pedestrians crossing the bridge.

26. Do the girls sign their own waivers?

- a. No, anyone under 18 needs to have their parent or guardian sign the waiver for them. Please include the girls name on the form. Each person has to turn in a signed waiver, adults, and girls. For example, if you are bringing 12 girls and 4 adults you submit 16 signed waivers.

27. We want to park at the Marin Vista Point. OR Where do we park?

- a. You will receive parking instructions for the event in the GGB Adventure Packet. The special parking permit will be mailed to groups in April 2010.
- b. Do not park at the Marin Vista Point, your car will be ticketed and/or towed.
- c. Parking throughout the Presidio is permit and 2-hour parking only. Please do not park in these areas, you **will receive a ticket** and/or be towed. The Presidio makes a lot of money from events such as this.

28. Can I get a map of the field activity booths?

- a. The booth map of field activities will not be available until the week of the event. Until then, the activities are a surprise! 😊

29. Where are the bathrooms?

- a. Bathrooms are available at all areas of the event including the Marin Vista Point, Golden Gate Bridge Toll Booth Plaza, next to the Torpedo Warf, the Main Post, and the Field. Please reference the walking map for exact locations. The Walking Map will be provided via email in the GGB Adventure Packet.

30. What is the local hospital information and closest phone number for emergencies?

- a. UCSF is the closest hospital
- b. Presidio EMS unit will be on site for any medical emergencies
- c. US Park Police – Presidio dispatch
 - i. Non-emergency (415) 561-5055
 - ii. Emergency (415) 561-5656 (Do not call 911)

Have a safe trip. We look forward to seeing you at the event!