

All items with Girl Scout logos/trademarks must meet graphic guidelines and can be approved by the Communications Director at the Girl Scouts – Lone Star Council, 512-453-7391 ext. 136 (only if you are not using a licensed vendor because the item is not for resale). If you are using a GSUSA licensed vendor, you do not need council approval. To become a licensed vendor, vendors should contact Jane Bates at the Girl Scouts – Lone Star Council, ext. 107.

The Girl Scout Trademark

Ownership of Girl Scout Names and Trademarks

The U.S. Congress, in conferring the Congressional Charter on GSUSA in 1950, provided that GSUSA “shall have the sole and exclusive right to have and to use... all emblems and badges, descriptive or designating marks, and words or phrases.” With this right comes responsibility. GSUSA is obliged to use and protect these marks, all of which are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. GSUSA must prevent others from exploiting the marks without permission for their commercial gain. Also, whenever GSUSA grants permission to others to use the marks, GSUSA must control the nature and quality of the goods distributed under those marks. Failing to follow these requirements may cause GSUSA to lose the right to use the marks. In addition, GSUSA could be held liable in a court of law should a defective product bearing GSUSA marks cause someone to be hurt or property to be damaged.

Increased Enforcement of Trademark Policy

Because of various trademark infringements and counterfeits, the National President appointed a task group to study and make recommendations for resolution of this issue. The task group, comprised of council presidents, executive directors, and National Board members, gave clear-cut direction for new procedures concerning use of the trademark. In June 1994, the National Board of Directors approved a policy designed to encourage the proper use of the Girl Scout name, trademark, and insignia.

Trademark Policy

It is acceptable to give away items bearing the Girl Scout name and service mark at events where no fee is charged. If the event charges a fee, however, then the items bearing the Girl Scout name and service mark must be purchased from a GSUSA licensed vendor. Items bearing the Girl Scout name and service mark must also be purchased from a GSUSA licensed vendor if the intention is to resell the items. In addition, the Girl Scout name and service mark must be correctly depicted graphically on all items whether they are for resale or not. *Check with the Council if you will be using the trademark on non-resale items to ensure the logo/trademarks are being depicted correctly.*

Girl Scouts - Lone Star Council

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Licensing Vendors

When a vendor decides to become a GSUSA licensee, he/she is asked to:

- fill out a one-page application
- submit one sample of each product to be sold
- submit financial references and certificates of insurance
- sign a licensing agreement (contract) with GSUSA

If a vendor is too small to meet some of the contractual requirements, GSUSA will, in appropriate circumstances, try to negotiate those requirements and develop an individual agreement suitable for a small business.

The entire application process takes about three weeks to complete. This is necessary so that GSUSA can verify the vendor's information and collect insurance certificates. There is no fee for filing an application. Once a vendor is approved, it takes only three days to approve its designs. The vendor has the responsibility to seek approval of its designs, not Girl Scout councils. When a vendor is licensed, it has the opportunity to expand its business to Girl Scout councils across the country.

List of Girl Scout Trademarks

The official Girl Scout trademark is only one of the trademarks owned by GSUSA. All of the following words and marks are protected by law, and GSUSA is legally obliged to protect and restrict their use in order to safeguard them. Additionally, all Girl Scout merchandise sold in the National Equipment Service catalog is trademarked. Therefore, none of the items may be copied or duplicated and sold under the trademark without authorization from GSUSA.

Trademark Words

Daisy Girl Scout
Brownie Girl Scout
Junior Girl Scout
Cadette Girl Scout
Senior Girl Scout
Girl Scouts
Girl Scouting
Girl Scout Cookies

Trademark Insignia

Daisy Girl Scout pin
Brownie Girl Scout pin (elf)
Contemporary Girl Scout pin
Traditional Girl Scout pin
All GSUSA emblems and earned badges

Trademark Shape

Trefoil

Commonly Asked Questions

Q. Why can't councils have full use of the trademark without seeking permission?

A. The Congressional charter gives GSUSA the sole and exclusive right to use the trademark and the responsibility to protect it as well. This right may not be delegated.

The Application for a Girl Scout Council Charter gives councils the right to use the Girl Scout name and trademark on products or merchandise obtained and used for the day-to-day operations of the council. Any other marks or insignia owned by GSUSA on products or merchandise must be approved by GSUSA.

Q. Must councils use the Girl Scout name or trademark on all resale items?

A. The National Board strongly advises councils to use the Girl Scout name and trademark on all resale items. It is in the best interest of the movement to have our name appear in the public view as often as possible. All products should help promote general recognition of Girl Scouting in the community. Remember, all resale items must be obtained from a licensed vendor.

Q. Why is GSUSA approval not required for items given away or not resold?

A. Through the council charter application, GSUSA gives councils the right to use the Girl Scout name and trademark for day-to-day operations. Giveaway items are considered to be for "internal use" within the organization.

Recognition of volunteers is an important aspect of council operations. At times, the council will have items made up within the Girl Scout trademark to "give away" to volunteers. Recruitment incentives and promotion flyers are in the same category.

These items must still meet graphic guidelines. Check with your local council.

Q. What if a service unit wants to give away T-shirts at no charge to participants at an event for which \$1 admission will be charged?

A. The service unit must get the T-shirts from a licensed vendor because there is a fee involved in the event, even if it is not for the actual cost of the T-shirt.

Q. The council or a volunteer would like to give away pencils with the council name at a recruitment event. Is GSUSA approval necessary?

A. No. The pencils are not for resale and may be purchased from any supplier. The design must, however, follow the graphic guidelines. Check the guidelines with your Council.

- Q. When the council or a volunteer purchases a patch from a licensed supplier, is prior GSUSA approval required?**
- A. Yes. However, the licensed supplier is responsible for seeking approval of the proper use of the trademark, not the council or the volunteer. (This applies to all licensed products.)
- Q. The council is holding a special council-wide event at which girls will be given commemorative patches. Must these patches be purchased from a licensed vendor?**
- A. If the council charges a fee to participants for attendance at the event, the council is obliged to purchase the patches from a licensed vendor. If there is no fee charged, the council may purchase the patches from any vendor it wishes. The patches must still meet the graphic guidelines. Check with your local council.
- Q. What if the council creates bumper stickers to promote Girl Scouts in the community?**
- A. Using the Girl Scout name and trademark on bumper stickers, if those bumper stickers are given away and not sold, does not require approval from GSUSA or purchase from a licensed vendor. However, the design must still meet graphic guidelines
- Q. What about the council or volunteers using the Girl Scout name and trademark on announcements about troop or service unit activities in the community (for example: newsletters, invitations, flyers, banners)?**
- A. Such announcements are considered to be part of the day-to-day operations of the council, and as such do not require GSUSA approval. The items should still meet the graphic guidelines. Check with your local council.
- Q. If we use a licensed vendor, do we still need GSUSA permission?**
- A. Yes. However, it is the vendor's responsibility to obtain permission.
- Q. What if a Girl Scout volunteer or a council employee wants to sell items that she/he has made (such as jewelry, T-shirts, tote bags, etc.) and put the Girl Scout trademark on them?**
- A. The individual volunteer/staff must be licensed.
- Q. What does losing the exclusive rights to the Girl Scout trademark really mean?**
- A. Should GSUSA not follow up on infringements of its trademark, rights to the trademark can be lost forever. In effect, that would mean that any other group, organization, or individual—even without any connection to GSUSA—could use the Girl Scout name and trademark and profit from GSUSA's reputation. GSUSA's right to its own name would cease to exist, and its protection under trademark registration also would cease.