



Volunteer Response to Noncompliance Concerns

There are times that we encounter situations where it seems that Girl Scout troops, adults or volunteers may not be acting in compliance with known expectations and guidelines. Here are some best practices and protocols regarding how these instances should be handled. Above all, it is important that we always assume good intent - mistakes happen and we never want to go looking for problems.

When a parent or volunteer observes a possible violation of Council guidelines or expectations (as outlined in training materials, Volunteer Essentials or other written guidance):

- First, directly address the situation immediately and in-person whenever possible. Involving a third party will escalate the issue, sometimes needlessly.
- If the concern persists or warrants escalation, report it to the appropriate administrative volunteer (Service Unit or Association team members) and/or Council staff.
- When reporting, try to include any identifying information such as a troop number, date/time/location of the concern, and detail what was occurring. Without any identifying information, it is very difficult to follow up on reports.

Administrative Volunteer Protocols:

1. Exercise good judgement and neutrality when investigating the situation.
2. Never make accusations without seeing evidence first-hand.
3. Any evidence that is collected should be presented in a transparent manner. Anonymous sources reporting via word of mouth without concrete and detailed evidence is not sufficient.
4. When addressing a troop or individual about reported behavior, ask questions rather than making accusations. Ask for the individual's/troop's perspective on what was reported. With any allegation, remember that those involved are innocent until proven guilty and there are always multiple sides to every story. *Never carry out these conversations in the presence of youth.*
5. Use all information gathered to assess whether there was a violation of guidelines and if consequences need to be applied. Not all situations will necessitate consequences and a conversation with corrective guidelines may suffice.
6. If it is determined that consequences need to be applied, the volunteer should work with Council staff and the Service Unit or Association team to discuss next steps.
7. Parties involved in reporting or witnessing a violation should not expect to learn about the outcome. Please trust the integrity of the process and know that administrative volunteers and Council staff will address concerns appropriately.