

Troop Disband Guide



The troop experience must eventually come to an end and, while the closing down of a troop can be an emotional time, Girl Scout staff and service unit volunteers are here to help you through it. This guide provides all of the steps of the disband process to give girls and volunteers a better understanding of what disbanding looks like, and to ensure that Girl Scout resources are used wisely and that all girls who wish to continue with Girl Scouts are able to do so during the disband process itself. And, if you have any questions, let us know by calling (503) 977-6800 or emailing answers@girlscoutsosw.org.

What is a Troop Disband?

A troop disband is the process of discontinuing an existing troop.

When do Troop Disbands occur?

A troop disband takes place whenever there aren't enough volunteers to be troop leaders or enough girl members in the troop to keep the troop in good standing and continue. A troop disband takes place when:

- one or more troop leaders needs to step down from the role, and the troop is unable to recruit adults to take their place (NOTE: All troops must have *at least* two unrelated adults in the troop leader role, and one of those leaders must be a woman.), or
- the troop has less than three girl members, and/or
- an Ambassador troop bridges to adult.

Who can determine if a troop needs to disband?

Troop disbands can be initiated by the troop leaders or by GSOSW council staff.

Troop Disband Checklist

- Explore Alternatives to Disbanding
- Ensure Girls Know About Options to Continue with Girl Scouts
- Communicate Intent to Disband with Council Staff
- Use Remaining Troop Funds
- Prepare to Close the Troop Bank Account
- Donate Leftover Troop Supplies
- Complete and Submit the Disband Packet

STEP ONE: Explore Alternatives to Disbanding

For Graduating Troops

Email answers@girlscoutsosw.org that your troop will be disbanding due to graduation (congratulations!) and bridging to adults. GSOSW staff will send you the Troop Disband forms and you can skip ahead to Step Three!

Non-Graduating Troops

Do you or other volunteers want to continue with the troop but are facing an obstacle and don't see a way around it? Talk with your service team volunteer mentor or service unit manager for help brainstorming solutions. The troop leadership team should talk as a group (phone, Zoom, or in person if possible) to see if any current volunteers want to continue as troop leaders. Include all current troop volunteers in the conversation (troop leaders, troop product managers, friends and family volunteers).

If none of the current volunteers are able to step into a troop leader role, contact all girls and their caregivers to let them know the situation and ask if any parents/guardians/relatives would like to lead the troop. Here are some tips for making this ask:

- When possible, have the conversation in person (or over Zoom) at a parent meeting.
- If sending the notice by email, try following up individually with a phone call or text if you don't receive replies right away.
- Be positive and encouraging.
- Share what you enjoyed about being a troop leader.
- Remind them that troop leadership could and should be shared amongst multiple volunteers.
- Discuss the first steps they'll need to take to get started (can include a link to [troop leader training](#)).
- Give them a deadline to reply (two weeks is generally sufficient).

Here is an example email:

Dear Troop 17066 families,

As you may be aware, Amy and I are unable to continue as troop leaders due to Amy's upcoming move and my job change. We have loved volunteering as your troop leaders, getting to know all of you, and being part of the girls' lives. We are hopeful that at least two of you excellent folks are ready to step in to keep the troop going! If you're interested, but not 100% sure what volunteering as a troop leader entails, you are welcome to contact me with questions. Please let me know by [two weeks from today] so we can make sure to keep things moving along for the girls.

Has a parent/guardian expressed interest in continuing the troop? Fabulous! The troop will not need to disband. Let your volunteer support specialist know and work together on completing the transition.

If there are not two eligible adults who can take over as troop leaders, continue to Step Two.

STEP TWO: Ensure Girls Know About Options to Continue with Girl Scouts

If no one expresses interest in stepping up as a troop leader, contact all of the girls and their families again to let them know that the troop will be ending, and ask the girls if they wish to continue with Girl Scouts.

- Girls can transfer to another troop or register as a Juliette (Individually Registered Member).
- Troop funds can be used to renew any girls who wish to continue.
- Any questions from girls/families about options for continuing, please refer them to answers@girlscoutsw.org for assistance.

Here is an example email:

Dear Troop 17066 families,

Thank you all for your replies to my previous email about the upcoming changes that will, sadly, keep me and Amy from continuing as troop leaders. I understand from your replies that no one is able to step in as a troop leader at this time, so we will start working on disbanding the troop. Please let me know if your Girl Scout is planning to continue with Girl Scouts, and if she would like to join another troop or register as a Juliette (Individually Registered Member). If you're not sure, you can find more information on finding another troop and/or the Juliette program on the [Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington website](#).

We can also discuss this after the troop meeting next week. In addition to our regularly planned activities, that troop meeting will also be the time when the girls vote on how to use the remaining troop funds.

Give the families an appropriate amount of time to respond (generally two weeks is sufficient) and follow-up with them if necessary. *Continue on to Step Three.*

STEP THREE: Communicate Intent to Disband with Council Staff

Three months before your troop's planned end date, contact council staff to communicate your intent to disband. Council staff may have already supported you in conversations regarding disbanding, such as using troop funds, continuing girl options, or more. This communication will make sure you receive timely support regarding your troop's upcoming disband and connect you with council staff who support the logistics of this process. Here's how you'll communicate this:

- Complete the [contact form](#) on the website or email answers@girlscoutsosw.org.
- Subject line: Troop ##### - Disband Intent Notification
- Description/email body:

Hello Girl Scout staff,

My troop would like to disband. Here are our troop's details:

- *Troop: Troop #####*
- *Intended Disband Date: date*
- *Primary Contact: full name*

Please connect me with the council staff member who supports the troop disband process, so that we can take next steps.

Thank you!

You will receive a response from Girl Scout staff that will include the paperwork to complete for your troop's disband, as well as instructions for paperwork submission

STEP FOUR: Use Remaining Troop Funds

Now that you've communicated the troop's plan to disband, it's time to confirm how your troop would like to use its remaining troop funds. Make sure the girls are driving this conversation and vote on how to use funds.

Here are some examples of ways your troop can use remaining troop funds:

- Purchase annual Girl Scout membership for girls in the troop who are continuing with Girl Scouts.*
- Purchase young alum lifetime membership for graduating girls.*
- Contribute towards troop member attendance at Girl Scout camp or another Girl Scout program.*
- Plan a final outing or activity as a troop while girls and volunteers are still registered.
- Make a contribution to a favorite local charity from the troop.
- Make a contribution to the local service unit or GSOSW. Common areas of need include:
 - Support for a favorite GSOSW overnight camp
 - Uniform assistance
 - Girl membership assistance
 - GSOSW camperships
 - Girl Scout travel
 - Gold/Silver award project funding assistance

*This option may not be available all year or for all girls.

Here are some important things to keep in mind regarding troop fund use:

- Troop funds must be used for the benefit of all girls in the troop and can only be used on approved Girl Scout expenses for currently registered girls.
- Funds must be used prior to a troop disbanding and cannot be held for future usage, e.g. an 11th grade Ambassador troop could not vote to purchase lifetime memberships.
- Funds cannot be given directly to girls/families (no cash, checks, gift cards, etc).

Please contact your SU treasurer with any questions on approved expenses.

If your troop still has remaining troop funds, a portion of those funds will remain available to each girl who continues and joins a new troop. Following the disband, girls who have continued and joined a new troop can contact answers@girlscoutsosw.org to request to have their portion of remaining funds for their new troop. Girl Scout staff will confirm available funds, and complete a bank transfer.

- Girl Scout Juliettes cannot receive a portion of these remaining funds because it would be considered individual girl funds in that case, which is prohibited.

STEP FIVE: Prepare to Close the Troop Bank Account

Once the troop has used remaining troop funds, it's time to prepare to close your bank account. This will either be done by you or by council staff depending on the type of bank account you have – when in doubt, reach out to us at answers@girlscoutsosw.org! You'll want to download a PDF of your final statement and note the following: total expenses this year, total income for this year, and account balance on closing and/or final bank balance. This will be needed for the final step of filling out the Merge/Disband Form.

After you've done that:

- Verify all checks and outstanding transactions have cleared.
- As soon as you have \$0.00 balance in your account or are ready to have the account closed, contact answers@girlscoutsosw.org to request troop bank account closure. Delaying this could result in unnecessary account fees.

STEP SIX: Donate Leftover Troop Supplies

Next, transfer any leftover troop supplies (such as Journey books, craft supplies, extra patches, etc.) to another troop in your area or to your service team. Need help rehoming your troop supplies? Reach out to answers@girlscoutsosw.org for service team contact information.

STEP SEVEN: Complete and Submit the Disband Packet

Lastly, once you've taken all of the steps above, it's time to complete and submit the Disband/Merge Form. You should have received this form from Girl Scout staff in Step 3. If you did not, please reach out to answers@girlscoutsosw.org and they can get a new link sent out to you.

After you've submitted the form, you are all done!

Thank You!

Thank you so much for all of the amazing things you've done to support girls in your community as a troop leader. *You made the world a better place.*

