Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines

Troop Finances & Banking Guidelines

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I. Girl Scout Policies

Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines Policy

Girl Scouts of the USA's Blue Book of Basic Document and Council Volunteer Policies state – *"All money raised or earned, and other assets received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting, must be authorized by a Girl Scout Council or Girl Scouts of the USA and used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Such monies and other assets become the property of and are administered by the Girl Scout Council or Girl Scouts of the USA. Such assets are not the property of individuals, geographic units, or communities within a Girl Scout Council."*

Each troop is required to establish a troop bank account under the name of "Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines, Girl Scout Troop #____" and using the Council's Federal Tax Identification Number. At least three adult signers are required to open an account.

All troop account signers are responsible for safeguarding and maintaining the troop's treasury. This includes ensuring there are adequate funds to cover any payments drawn on the troop account and maintaining good troop financial records. As with any banking account, signers are legally responsible for all account transactions and should verify account balances before disbursing funds.

If the troop has difficulty finding a third signer within the troop, then a Service Unit volunteer can be an additional signer on the account.

Only one signature is required on a troop check.

II. Opening a Troop Bank Account

In response to the Patriot Act and changing rules in the banking community, the Council developed a centralized system for opening troop bank accounts at BB&T and Wachovia. (See Comparison Chart for the different bank terms.) All new troop accounts must be opened at one of these banks. This centralized system ensures that all troop accounts are set up consistently within the bank system, which is important because of the volume of troop accounts in our jurisdiction and the risk of errors in the account set up.

Although the banks do not charge a monthly service fee, charges can be incurred for overdrafts, returned checks and additional services on the account. These fees are appropriate fees for the bank to charge; therefore it is important that you are reviewing bank activity often.

Please allow at least 10 business days to open the new account.

The Process

- The troop leader must complete the Girl Scout Troop Bank Account Request Form and submit it to the local Membership Staff for approval. Note- the bank will no longer accept handwritten forms, so please complete the form on the computer and email it to the Membership Staff.
- The Membership Staff authorizes the troop's request and forwards it to the Council Finance Department for processing.
- The bank notifies the Finance Department when an account has been established and provides them with the account number.
- The Finance Department then sends the troop leader (by email or mail) bank account information and further instructions based on the bank.
- To activate the account, the troop leader must visit the bank branch to show proof of identity, sign signature card, and make the initial deposit. Contact your designated branch in advance to see if all signers must be present together to sign the card.

A. Online Access

Troops can have online access to view their account balances, download transaction history, and print copies of checks and statements. There will only be one user ID/password established per troop account. Because all signers are responsible for maintaining the troop account, the user ID and password for access to the account should be shared with all signers and the troop treasurer. This will facilitate monitoring the account activity and balance and help to prevent cardholders/signers from inadvertently overdrawing the troop account.

Passwords should be changed whenever there is a change in signers on the account. To reset passwords, please use the bank web site's instructions. The council does not have the ability to reset or manage passwords for troop accounts.

B. Debit Cards

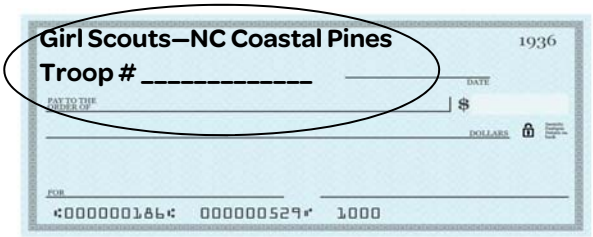
- The troop may obtain debit cards to be used for deposits and payments.
- The Council will allow a maximum of two debit cards per troop.
- It is critical that each cardholder is in communication with the other cardholder/signers before spending funds to prevent overdrafts on the account. There may be timing issues with the online balance since typically there can be a day lag in posting transactions to the account. When using the debit card, always select "credit" rather than "debit" and avoid using pin numbers for a higher level of security.
- Since many credit cards look very similar, put a Girl Scout sticker or colorful label on the Troop debit card to avoid using the wrong credit card.
- Cash withdrawals should only be made *if absolutely necessary* – i.e. tips for taxis or hotel maid
- Always keep the Troop debit card in a secure place with your other troop information. Do not carry the pin number with debit card.
- If the troop debit card is lost or stolen, report it immediately to the bank, using the bank's emergency 800 number. Do not send an email or leave a voice message to the Council to report a lost or stolen credit card. The bank is the primary contact.
- Never use the debit card for personal purchases.
- Never share the debit card with other individuals. The card owner is legally responsible for the transactions posted to the card.

IMPORTANT - When debit card holders are no longer involved with the troop, the debit card should be cancelled immediately with the bank and the signature card should be updated.

C. Ordering Checks

- Troop checks should not have an address printed on them because they are the property of the troop, not the individual signers.
- Only one signature line is now required on checks.
- Troops have the option of using outside check vendors for better rates.
- For new accounts some of the banks have a unique troop check order form which must be completed when the troop comes to the branch to complete the new account process.
- Be sure to request that the checks are shipped directly to the troop and not to the Council.

Required Format



III. Maintaining a Troop Bank Account

Troop funds are for the benefit of all girls in the troop and should be spent in the year the funds are earned, unless the troop has a long range plan for spending the funds.

A. Fund Management

- All expenses should be paid for by troop check/debit card.
- Blank checks should not be pre-signed by troop signers, nor should debit cards be used by anyone other than the person they are issued to.
- Each account signer should make sure that there are funds in the account to cover the amount of the transaction before writing a check or making a purchase with the troop debit card. Communication between cardholders and check signers is key
- All money received from parents or cookie customers should be deposited as soon as possible. For security, the troop should not hold money in a house, car, or other location.

B. Record Keeping and Budget

- All checks and deposits should be recorded in a checkbook or spreadsheet, and the bank statement should be reconciled on a monthly basis. To prevent mismanagement of funds, a separate individuals should be responsible for receiving the bank statement and reconciling the account, from the person (s) spending and collecting the funds.
- No personal expenses should be paid for using the troop account and no troop money should be deposited in personal bank accounts.
- Signers are responsible for any fees or charges for overdrawing the Troop account.
- A file should be maintained with receipts and records supporting all financial transactions.
- Two adults should count money collected and initial the completed deposit slip, especially when the amount is significant or when it involves cookie money. Note in the account register or on the deposit slip what the deposit is for (i.e. troop dues, event registration, cookie payment, etc.)
- All troop financial records (deposit slips, receipts, account register, etc.) should be available for review by your troop's parents/guardians, Service Unit Manager, or Council staff.
- The Troop Treasurer should prepare periodic financial reports for the troop members and parents with a copy of the bank statement.
- Each troop should prepare an annual budget at the beginning of the program year and set goals for both revenues and determine an allocation of expenses that all the girl agree on. I.E does the troop want to do one large trip at the end of the year, several events or mostly projects and needs supplies. Some troops create multi-budget plans and save for international travel trips. Refer to Volunteer Essentials for complete budget plans.

C. Annual Reporting

- Troops are required to submit the Annual Troop Financial Report with their April bank statement by May 31st to the Service Unit Manager.
- The annual report should cover the period May 1st through April 30th.
- If the troop account has in excess of $250 at the time of the report, the troop must submit its plan for spending the funds on page one of the Annual Report, as indicated.
- The annual report should be shared with all troop members.

D. Changing Signers

Troops should follow the centralized process for changing troop account signers. Please allow 10 business days for processing new signature cards.

The Process:

- The Troop Leader must complete the Girl Scout Troop Bank Account Signature Change Form and submit it by email to the local Membership Staff for approval.
- The Membership Staff authorizes the troop's request and forwards it to the Council Finance Department by email.
- The bank will mail the new signature card directly to the troop leader to sign and return to the bank.

Whenever there is a change of signers on the account, it is highly recommended that the password to Online Access is changed. One of the remaining signers should request a password change through the bank's online service. The leader should collect and destroy any debit cards from person(s) who are no longer signers on the account and request that the bank discontinue access for those debit card(s).

Note to Existing Troops: If the troop has an existing account at a bank that is not at BB&T or Wachovia, please contact the Finance Department immediately at 800-284-4475 or 919-782-3021.

E. Closing an Account

- When a troop is no longer active and its members do not plan to re-register, the Troop Leader should complete a Disbanding Troop Report and the troop bank account should be closed. The signers on the account can close the account at the bank or notify Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines to close it on their behalf
- The Troop account should be closed even if the balance is zero.
- If the troop disbands and some of the girls transfer to another troop, the Troop Leader should provide this information on the Disbanding Report and the council will transfer the funds to the designated troops when the girl transfers are complete.
- Any remaining funds in the troop account other than funds associated with girl transfers will revert to the council in accordance with Girl Scouts of the USA bylaws. The Council uses these funds to subsidize financial assistance to girls and adult volunteers.
- The Disbanding Troop Report should be completed and remitted to directly to the Finance Department.

F. Tips for Collecting NSF Checks

- **Step 1:** Immediately contact the customer or payer to notify them of the problem and try to obtain payment quickly in a respectful manner.
- **Step 2:** Contact the bank to see if funds are available to cover the check. If funds are available, redeposit the check.
- **Step 3:** If funds are not available, send a letter to the payer requesting payment. A sample letter is included in the guidelines. A fee can be charged to cover bank service charges on the troop account. The fee should correspond to the cost incurred by the troop.
- **Step 4:** If the check exceeds $30, and the troop has followed the steps listed above without results, send the actual NSF check to the Council Finance department with the Troop #, leader's name, and contact information. If it is a cookie related check, follow the troop cookie guidelines. The Council will submit the check to a collection agency and will reimburse the troop if the agency collects the funds. Note- the Agency may withhold a percentage of the recovered funds.

G. Fraud

Unfortunately, fraud happens even within Girl Scouting. Please follow the practices outlined in these guidelines to help prevent unauthorized use of troop funds. The Troop funds belong to the girls and should remain as such. If a Leader or parent within the troop suspects that troop funds are being mismanaged, first discuss the matter with the Troop Leader. Try to collect the facts and proper documentation. If there is a possibility that the Leader has mismanaged funds, contact the Membership Staff person. The Membership Staff person can initiate a preliminary inquiry and audit. If the matter is still not resolved or involves significant dollars, please contact the Finance Department. If the situation involves cookies, the Product Sales staff person, should be notified as well.

The key to successful recovery of funds and resolution of financial problems is documentation and timeliness. If the records are poor and the bank statements have not been reviewed for months, the chances for a positive outcome are very low. Please make every effort to be proactive and establish good financial procedures and controls. Provide a good example to your girls.

IV. Troop Banking and Finance Forms:

All forms can be downloaded from the Council Website, www.nccoastalpines.org.

⇒ **Girl Scout Troop Bank Account Request Form TP400**

⇒ **Girl Scout Troop Bank Account Signature Change Form TP401**

⇒ **Annual Troop Financial Report & Detailed Transaction Log TP411**

⇒ **Disbanding Troop Report TP415**

V. Refer Questions to:

Local Bank Branch

- Issues about fees
- Not receiving bank statements
- Debit Card Issues
- Reset Debit Card Pin Number
- To Reorder checks
- Errors on Bank Statements

Council Finance Department

- Status of new account/signature changes
- Unresolved issues with local bank
- Suspected fraud on account
- Email Questions to: troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org

Main Bank

- Lost/Stolen Debit Card (Bank Hotline)
- Change in Password (Bank's Web site)

Local Membership Staff

- Approvals on New Accounts
- Approvals of Change in Signers
- Suspected Fraud on Account

VI. BANK TERMS COMPARISON CHART

Checking Account Costs:	BB&T	Wells Fargo
Account Type	Community Banking	Free Business Checking
Check Order Cost (fees are subject to change)	$12.79	$18.00
# Checks with order (pocket style with 1 signature lines)	150	150
Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines Logo on Checks	yes	no
Other Check Order information	Must order through branch using special code	First order must be through branch, Special code: WWEX
Monthly Service Charges	none	none
Minimum Balance	none	none
# of free transactions (debits, credits, items deposited) per month	150	150
Charge for each excess transaction	0.35	0.25

If there are fees that are unrecognized on the bank statement, please contact your local branch to inquire about the nature of these charges.

Although the banks do not charge a monthly service fee, charges can be incurred for overdrafts, returned checks and additional services on the account. These fees are appropriate fees for the bank to charge; therefore it is important that you are reviewing bank activity often.

VII. Sample NSF Check Notification Letter

Date

Debtor's Name
Debtor's Address

Dear Debtor's Name,

You are hereby notified that your check dated MM/DD/YYYY, in the amount of $$$, has been dishonored.

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 6-21.3, you have thirty (30) days from receipt of this notice to tender payment in the full amount plus a processing charge of $25.00 authorized under G.S. 25-3-506. Unless this amount is paid in full within thirty (30) days, we will initiate collection procedures.

Payments are to be made payable to Troop #### by either certified check or money order only. If there are any discrepancies, please call me at: (###) ###- ####.

Thank you,

Membership Staff's Name
County Name, Membership Director/Specialist

Cc: Troop Leader's Name