

# Financial Responsibility

## Summary of Cookie Finances

Troop Cookie Chairs are challenged to motivate girls to sell as many packages as possible AND to keep an eye on the flow of cash, checks, and credit card payments as well as the cookie product, all at the same time. If TCCs place too many restrictions on how troop funds flow into the treasury, they risk suppressing the eagerness of girls to sell their hearts out. If no guidance is given for financial responsibility, the troop can risk losing the entire Cookie Season to a careless parent who didn't know how to handle lots of cash on the kitchen table.

Every TCC should set logical, attainable goals for depositing all funds into the proper troop bank account as promptly as possible. When in doubt, please ask your Troop Leader or SUCPC for additional guidance.

## Troops' Financial Responsibility

- All cookies ordered as part of SIO and picked up.
- All cookies picked up at cupboards under the troop number.
- Any lost, stolen, or counterfeit money.

## Troop Chair's Financial Responsibility

- All girl payments received for cookies and all monies collected at booth sales.
- All Girl Rewards earned by the troop/group.
- Troop Chairs must distribute all Girl Rewards to Girl Scouts with no outstanding debt upon receipt.

## Each Family's Financial Responsibility

- All cookies received by each Girl Scout.
- All money received from customers.

## Receipts

- Always complete a receipt whenever a girl receives cookies or a payment is made to the troop. Both parties should sign and keep a copy of the receipt.
- Get a signed receipt from the troop treasurer/leader if you give them the money to deposit into the troop account. If you deposit the money to the troop account, be sure to keep copies of the bank receipts to turn in to the leader at the end of the program.
- When distributing cookies for a booth, receipt the cookies going to the booth, and cookies and money returned at the end of the booth sale.
- Log receipts on the **GIRL ORDERS** tab daily.

## Money Mondays

Troops can have a lot of cash floating with their girls' parents. TCCs are personally, financially responsible for all cookie money. Protect yourself and your troop's financial integrity.

Set the expectation to collect from girls/parents every Monday. After a weekend of boothing, work together to get that money into the troop bank account and safeguard it. Do not let cash linger without collecting and depositing it promptly and frequently. Communicate with your Troop Leader if a family is late turning in money.

# Monetary Policies

1. Cookie Program funds should be submitted for deposit to the troop treasurer, and must be in their original form (e.g. cash and checks from customers), promptly and frequently. Retain a receipt from the troop treasurer of monies turned in.
2. Troops must deposit all Cookie Program funds promptly and frequently into their troop bank account.
3. **Parents must never deposit program funds into their personal bank accounts and then write a check or submit a Paypal/Venmo payment for the amount.** All funds for products sold must be turned in to the troop and deposited in their original form. Funneling money through a parent's personal account is never allowed under any circumstances.
4. Payment is collected only when girls deliver cookies (COD). However, for Gift of Caring orders, payment should be collected immediately.
5. Girls may accept cash and/or checks made payable to "Girl Scout Troop XXXX" as payment for cookies. Girls should accept only preprinted checks with issuer's address. The telephone number of the issuer must be recorded on the face of the check. The driver's license number is recommended, if possible. GSGLA cautions against accepting out-of-state checks. Girls' first name and last initial should be recorded on the check in case of any issues.
6. Credit cards may be accepted by troops via a smart phone if they have set up an account with a major credit card reader company. Payments must go straight into the troop bank account. Fees are paid by the troop and may not be transferred to the customer.
7. Troops may use PayPal and Venmo to accept payment directly from customers for cookies. These accounts must be linked to the troop's checking account. See #3 above for additional clarification.
8. Girls should not accept \$50 or \$100 bills. Girls have received counterfeit bills in the past, and it is not GSGLA's responsibility. Counterfeit bills cost the girls. Likewise, GSGLA suggests that troops and girls do not accept large checks. See guidelines for preventing counterfeiting at [www.girlscoutsla.org](http://www.girlscoutsla.org).
9. Cookie Program funds should be collected from girls and safeguarded by parents immediately. GSGLA encourages girls to write their first name and last initial on the front of the check to help identify payments.
10. Troops should receipt every transaction (e.g. cookies given to girls, money received from girls, cookies sent to and returned from a booth, money from booths, money given to the troop treasurer for deposit) for clarity and reconciliation.
11. All council proceeds will be collected from troops via ACH debit. GSGLA reserves the right to require a certified check/money order for troops who are delinquent. Troops that are delinquent may be prevented from participating in future product programs.
12. Troops must pay in full, on time, in order to receive Early Renewal or troop PGA rewards.



# Collection Issues

## Parent/Guardian Collection Issues

1. Should payment concerns arise with a parent/guardian in the troop, troop leaders and/or TCCs are asked to document the situation and first try to resolve the issues within their own troop.
2. If problems persist, notify your SUCPC as soon as possible.
3. If the matter has not been rectified by the end of the program, troop leaders/TCCs must submit a Discrepancy Report to their Product Programs Manager as soon as possible. This form contains all pertinent information and a detailed documentation of collection attempts, e.g. signed receipts for cookies, emails with requests for cookies or attempts to collect, dates when parent was called for re-payment, etc. Troops should exhaust every effort to collect the funds before submitting a Discrepancy Report.
4. Troops should understand that it is critical that a Discrepancy Report is submitted to GSGLA as early as possible. **DO NOT WAIT!** It becomes progressively more difficult to collect as time passes. Please note: submission of a Discrepancy Report is not a guarantee that funds will be recovered; refer to the Credit Limit Guideline section below for ways to mitigate loss to the troop.
5. GSGLA will contact the parent/guardian and try to collect the debt. Payment plans and/or promissory notes may be used, or in extreme cases the debt may be referred to a collection agency or law enforcement. Any funds collected will be returned to the troop. Please note that GSGLA has had limited success in recouping funds, so troops should make every effort to collect the funds before submitting a Discrepancy Report. If an account is submitted to a collection agency, the agency's fee will be deducted from any funds recovered.

## Credit Limit Guideline

The troop is responsible for all money owed to GSGLA for cookies picked up. As TCC, you should set clear expectations with parents and guardians during your girl/parent training. You can facilitate this as you see fit, but we strongly suggest that you collect money from girls soon after the SIO delivery so the troop can pay the first debit to GSGLA. Girls should remit to the troop promptly and frequently –at least once a week.

GSGLA recommends using caution in how much product you distribute to a parent before collecting money. **Until you are comfortable with a parent's payment patterns, a best practice is to limit the troop's liability to \$300;** always keeping in mind that the troop is financially responsible for all cookies picked up.

Remember *Money Mondays* and *Touch Base Tuesdays* to keep in touch with parents to avoid loss.

## Returned Checks

If a customer's check is not honored for any reason:

- If you know the issuer of the check, respectfully contact the issuer to see if the item can be redeposited. You may be able to redeposit the "legal copy" of the check if this is the first time returned.
- If the issuer of the check is a stranger or if the check can no longer be presented to the bank, you should forward the original or bank "legal copy" to your Product Programs Manager within three days of the return date for collection. Troops should include troop number and contact information with the returned check.
- GSGLA staff will attempt to collect the amount of the check, plus bank charges, through a succession of phone calls and letters to the issuer of the check. GSGLA will refund the troop 100% of any recovered funds.
- All amounts not collected within 45 days will be forwarded to a collection agency. If the collection agency is able to recover funds, GSGLA will refund to the troop recovered funds up to the face value (only) of the check.
- The troop should understand that **collection may be more difficult if the telephone number and/or driver's license number is not recorded on the face of the check.**

# ACH Debits

1. Troops will be debited twice by GSGLA, on February 21 and March 28.
2. \$2 per package from the Starting Inventory Order will be debited from troop accounts. GSGLA will follow up on troops who do not submit a payment as part of the first debit until a payment is completed. Troops who do not make a payment will be placed on hold at the cupboards until this is resolved.
3. Troops must deposit sufficient funds in their troop bank accounts in time for funds to be available for each debit.
4. Troops must deposit remaining Cookie Program funds into troop accounts in time for funds to be available for the second debit.
5. The final balance due of all council proceeds will be debited from troop accounts at the second debit.
6. If troops need to adjust their payment amounts, they must submit a Debit Adjustment Request form by the due dates listed in this guide, so there is time to modify the bank's instructions. GSGLA will not charge NSF fees to troops that act in good faith. If you do not notify the PPM in time, and the ACH debit is not honored by your bank, the ACH debit will be rejected. See #8 below.
7. Additional ACH debits will occur at GSGLA's discretion during both payment periods to accommodate missed troops, troops with collection issues, and ACH returns.
8. Troops will be charged for all NSF fees related to the ACH debit on the troop bank account. Due dates are well published, and troops need to be aware of their financial obligations. GSGLA will automatically process the ACH debits according to the calendar, and troops need to plan for it. Negligent troops who allow an ACH debit to be rejected will be charged for GSGLA's bank fee.
9. Troops that are delinquent are subject to intervention by GSGLA. Rewards will be withheld and girls will not be allowed to attend any reward events. Troops will forfeit their Early Renewal or troop PGA incentives if they do not make their payments on time. Certified checks may be required for late payments. Troops that are delinquent in their payments may be prevented from participation in future product programs.

