

### **What constitutes a contract or agreement that I need to send in for signing?**

A contract or agreement (for signing purposes) is any document that commits GGC (or parts therein) to do something, allow something, or be responsible for something — now or in the future — and could have legal, financial, reputational, or operational consequences.

If a document creates an obligation or gives permission on behalf of the organization, it needs an authorized signature.

### **Where do I send an agreement/contract to?**

Please send all of these documents to NL Contracts at [nl-contracts@girlguides.ca](mailto:nl-contracts@girlguides.ca).

### **Who is authorized to sign contracts/agreements?**

The only people that can sign contracts are those that have taken the applicable training with the GGC Legal team. This is a relatively short list of staff as, under GGC governance, volunteers are not able to take on this responsibility. These individuals have a responsibility to the organization and all of its members to approach this work with integrity and consistency, maintaining good sense, and following through on policy, even when it may not be well received.

### **Are there dedicated NL Contracts staff?**

Not at this time. While the staff are definitely dedicated, they are not in roles solely responsible for NL contract activities. Contracts staff hold other roles and manage the inflow of contracts as part of their larger portfolio. This helps ensure alignment with Girl Guides of Canada's guidelines on secularism and risk mitigation best practices.

### **How soon do I need to send a contract to NL Contracts before it is required?**

A minimum of two weeks is required for a submission timeline. However, we know things happen, please send the contract you need signed in to NL Contracts still with a brief note as to the urgency and/or reasons for time constraints. It is rare that an agreement would get rejected simply due to a delayed submission.

### **What is the turnaround time for a contract to be signed?**

A window of two weeks is required to ensure there is enough time to correspond with different parties should there be problematic language within the agreement. This might mean checking with Legal, connecting with the venue/business we are working with, or asking clarifying questions to Guiders. It could also mean a combination of those things.

### **What do I do if it's getting close to the date of the event/space use/reason for the contract and I haven't heard back yet?**

Feel free to connect with NL Contracts via email to inquire about the status of a contract. Staff always endeavour to have them completed in a timely way to avoid volunteers having to follow up, but things do happen and it's okay to ask.

### **What if it's been more than two weeks since I've heard anything about the contract?**

Please follow up. It's never the intention to delay anything, and we will put our eyes on it immediately if something like this is brought to our attention.

### **What if there is something problematic with the contract I submitted, will I be notified?**

Often, no, it will not be necessary to provide every update to the Guider. Staff will manage these instances as quickly as possible to mitigate delays and additional emails to volunteers. The submitter of the contract will be notified if Contracts staff run into difficulties making the needed edits, contacting the right people, or if there is a possibility the contract will not move forward. This is not always right away as time and steps are needed to know when to engage the submitter.

Sometimes edits are best supported by the submitter themselves due to the relationship or the type of edit that is required. Contracts staff may reach out to the submitter to get support. In these cases, it is critical that the volunteer responds as quickly as possible to support the timely return of a signed contract.

### **What happens when the contractor/lessor/venue will not change the language that GGC has deemed non-compliant with our policies or best practices?**

Contracts staff will work closely with GGC Legal to correspond with the organization to try to find a way through the concerns and end up with a signed contract. However, that's not always the case. There can be principled views and rigidity to changing legal contracts to suit GGC policy, and in those cases, we have to consider if they are the right fit for us going forward.

### **I've heard we are not allowed to rent space from churches any longer. Is this true?**

No. In fact, there are a significant number of religion-based facilities that welcome our girls across the country to utilize their space. However, there are some that have their own perspectives that go against GGC policy. It's crucial that we provide a safe space for girls and volunteers, including ensuring inclusivity and secularism during all activities under the GGC umbrella. This is a promise we have made to girls everywhere and we have a duty to uphold this, regardless of the financial opportunity in front of us, or the historical relationship.

### **What is secularism in relation to Girl Guides and contracts?**

Girl Guides of Canada is defined as secular, meaning:

- Guiding is not affiliated with any religion
- Guiding does not promote, privilege, or practice any religious beliefs, traditions, or observances
- Girls and volunteers of all religions and no religion are equally welcome

GGC states explicitly that being secular helps ensure Guiding is a safe, inclusive space for everyone, regardless of belief or non-belief.

Simply stated, Guiding is a religion-neutral space where no belief system is promoted, so that every girl can fully belong.

Sometimes, religion-based facilities or organizations have clauses in their contracts that indicate GGC must agree to subscribe to and/or advocate for the beliefs of said facility/organization. We also see clauses that indicate that at any time, representatives can join the group to discuss and share information about their beliefs. These clauses are strict no-go as they go directly against GGC secularism policy.

### **Can an exception be made when a contract goes against GGC compliance and policy?**

For the most part, no exceptions will be made to GGC compliance and policy as it would be an illogical way to proceed given these boundaries and requirements have been deeply discussed and put into place for a reason, with intention to set up the organization and all of its members for a successful and sustainable experience. However, there are times when we need to look at the risk associated with individual contracts and how it balances with the benefit of what it is needed for. Those assessments will be conducted as part of the process of signing a contract and are the responsibility of staff to work through.

### **Can we identify the problematic contracts ahead of time to avoid operational impact?**

GGC is making strong efforts to work through problematic contracts, but with thousands of units, events, properties, initiatives, trips, etc. it's going to take awhile to sift through to find them all to be able to address proactively. While contracts are being looked through to do as much pre-work and identification as possible, we will inevitably come across some as we go and staff will work with volunteers to navigate each situation accordingly.