

Standard Unit Capacity Changes

FAQ Guide for Leaders – January 2020

Why are we growing units across Canada?

Many units are either full and/or have a waitlist and are below the standard capacity, leaving girls behind who are eager to join Girl Guides and experience fun, friendship, and adventure.

Increased capacities across Canada will allow up to **14,000** more girls – based on current Unit Guider placement – to join Girl Guides and take the lead as part of our exciting girl-driven program by the 2021-2022 Guiding year.

What is the new minimum capacity requirement?

Some units will be increased to an interim minimum capacity for the 2020-2021 Guiding year, and will be raised to the standard minimum capacity by the start of the 2021-2022 Guiding year:

Branch	Minimum number of leaders needed	Interim minimum capacity for units outside of Ontario for TNJL & 2020-21
Sparks	2	10
Brownies	2	10
Guides	2	14
Pathfinders	1	7
Rangers	1	15

In Ontario, most units already exceed the interim minimum capacity and will be implementing the new standard minimum capacity for the 2020-21 Guiding year. By 2021-22, all active Guiding units across Canada will be brought up to the following standard minimum capacity levels by branch:

Branch	Minimum # of leaders needed	Standard minimum capacity for ALL UNITS by 2021-2022
Sparks	2	16
Brownies	2	16
Guides	2	30
Pathfinders	1	15
Rangers	1	15

We're working with our Safe Guide team to determine a standard minimum capacity level for multi-branch units which will be shared as information becomes available during this transition.

Why is Ontario's capacity requirement different for the 2020-2021 Guiding year?

Most Ontario units already exceed the interim minimum capacity, and most are already meeting or exceeding the new standard minimum capacity. By implementing the changes as a soft launch for Try Now, Join Later, it sets units up for success in making the full transition by the start of the 2020-21 Guiding year.

How will my unit be affected by this change?

Every unit will be sent an email outlining whether the unit's capacity is either above/meeting or below the minimum capacity requirement.

All units that are below their respective minimum capacity requirements will automatically be changed in iMIS for the launch of Try Now, Join Later 2020 and for the start of online registration for 2020-2021.

Units that are above/meeting the minimum capacity requirement will not be affected.

Will there be exceptions (i.e. can my unit stay below the new minimum requirement)?

Requests to lower a unit capacity below the standard minimum are subject to approval on a case by case basis and are not guaranteed.

If you want to change your unit's minimum capacity to below the new minimum requirement your case will need to be discussed with either your District Commissioner or Administrative Community Leader. Your situation may also be discussed with an Area Commissioner, ACL Adviser or Provincial Commissioner to determine if a change to the lower capacity will be granted.

My unit has three leaders – will my unit capacity automatically be changed to a 3 leader to girl ratio?

The eventual goal is that all units are accommodating girls based on their leader capacity. However, our priority is to ensure that all units are operating at the minimum capacity based on the minimum number of leaders. Therefore, units will only be adjusted to the minimum capacity and can be increased beyond that over time based on the number of leaders.

What if my unit has part-time leaders?

Units are expected to maintain the minimum number of leaders for every unit meeting or event, regardless of part-time or full-time status. For example, a Spark unit with one full-time Guider and two part-time Guiders would still be increased to the minimum capacity based on the two-leader minimum requirement.

What if my meeting space is too small for a larger capacity?

Units are encouraged to work with their volunteer and staff teams to focus on changes that can be made to accommodate the new unit minimum capacity.

If the current meeting space is too small and cannot accommodate a larger capacity than what is already set, you can:

- Source out other potential meeting locations in your community which may suit a larger unit capacity
- Consult your fellow Guiders or your provincial staff team in your area for alternate locations they may know of
- Consider whether the unit can accommodate the larger capacity while also finding a larger space

If there's a safety restriction on the size of your meeting space which prevents a larger unit capacity:

1. Contact your District Commissioner or Administrative Community Leader to request an exception to remain below the minimum capacity requirement



2. Your DC or ACL will discuss alternatives with you and better understand your concern and any implications of a larger capacity within your current meeting space
3. She can also consult your Area Commissioner or ACL Adviser for a final decision
4. If approved, this requested capacity will be communicated to your provincial office and recorded in iMIS

What if our unit has girls with special needs?

Units are encouraged to work with their volunteer and staff teams to focus on changes that can be made to accommodate the new unit minimum capacity, but we recognize that in some cases, a lower capacity may be in the best interest of some of the girls participating.

Depending on the nature of the needs of the girls, units are encouraged to consider ways in which to support their girls through this change. However, if you have concerns about the well-being of the girl(s)'s and their experience in Guiding, you're welcome to contact your District Commissioner or Administrative Community Leader to further discuss a possible decrease of the unit capacity.

1. Contact your District Commissioner or Administrative Community Leader to request an exception to remain below the minimum capacity requirement
2. Your DC or ACL will discuss alternatives with you and better understand your concern and any implications of a larger capacity to the girl's experience in Guiding
3. She can also consult your Area Commissioner or ACL Adviser for a final decision
4. If approved, this requested capacity will be communicated to your provincial office and recorded in iMIS

What if my unit is a specialty unit or has a specific focus (i.e. adventure, skills, etc.)?

Some units may currently base their unit capacity on several different criteria such as fundraising efforts, supervisory safety, and interests of the girls.

These units offer very exciting opportunities for girls, but we still recommend that they follow the minimum capacity guidelines. However, you might also consider advertising the unit as a specialty unit on the Unit Finder so that parents can see this explicitly at the time of registration – provincial offices can help you with this. Talking to the parents in your unit at the beginning of the year will also help make sure that everyone has the same expectations.

What if my unit cannot accommodate the new minimum capacity requirement and we want a lower capacity?

You can submit a request to your District Commissioner (DC) or Administrative Community Leader (ACL) to discuss a request to decrease the unit capacity below the new minimum.

DCs and ACLs will assess the request and determine the appropriate unit capacity based on the unit's individual circumstances. Should the DC or ACL require support to make a final decision, she can work with her Area Commissioner or ACL Adviser, or in some cases the Provincial Commissioner, to assess the facts and calculate an appropriate unit capacity.

Note that not all requests to lower a capacity below the new minimum may be approved.

Our capacity has been raised to the new minimum, but our unit isn't full – does this mean our unit will be closed?

No – the minimum capacity requirement helps us focus on the number of spaces we're making available to girls who are interested in joining Guiding. We know that not all units may be filled to this



new capacity and want to reassure you that there will be no penalties if a unit does not get filled to the new capacity.

We recognize that girl recruitment in some areas (or sometimes specific branches) can be challenging and can also vary year to year. In those instances, we would turn our focus to recruitment strategies that can be tailored to the branch or the specific area.

The new minimum capacity for Guide-aged units seems high – how can I ensure the girls feel like they are getting the most out of the program even in such a large group?

At the Guide-level, patrols are a great tool to engage girls in a smaller group dynamic within the larger unit. Patrols allow girls to work together towards making decisions and gain practical leadership experience. You may engage the second-year or third-year Guides to help with planning or leading some of the unit activities. Additionally, taking time to do special patrol activities allows for girls to deepen their friendships within their patrol.

1. For activities that work better in smaller groups, consider setting activities up in a round-robin style so that the activity can be dedicated to the smaller group
2. You can split your unit up by year for program work to allow first years to focus on learning the history of Guiding while second years can be introduced to the Lady Baden Powell requirements and third years can complete outstanding requirements

Large activities as a whole group – games, singing, program work – allows the unit to connect, while working in smaller groups facilitates the opportunities for girls and Guiders to deepen their friendships.

Watch for more resources to help ensure a successful rollout of this initiative!

What if my unit is already full at the higher capacity and the capacity is approved to be decreased?

Our system is designed so that we can record a lower capacity even if the unit is full.

The provincial staff team will record the revised capacity and when/if a girl leaves the unit, the change in capacity will prevent a new girl from taking her place, allowing the unit to be decreased each time a girl leaves the unit until the new capacity is reached.

Please do your best to accommodate any girl who registers in your unit before the lower capacity is recorded.

What if I want to request a capacity decrease for Try Now, Join Later?

We'll be sending an email specifically about Try Now, Join Later and the number of available spaces in each unit during the second week of February. Please hold your request until this information is released.

My unit is a multi-branch/multi-level Guiding unit (i.e. Sparks and Brownies, Guides and Pathfinders). Will my unit capacity be changing?

Currently no changes are being made to unit capacities for multi-branch units.. Guiders will be notified as more information becomes available if or when their multi-branch unit capacities will be affected.

