Starting Inventory Order Worksheet Help Guide

Before you place a Starting Inventory Order (SIO), you need to know what the SIO is. Simply, the SIO is a supply of cookies the troop orders before the Cookie Program starts. Typically, the order is due the first Friday in January, and cookies ordered-are distributed to each troop by their Service Unit Cookie Program Delivery Chairs the last weekend of January. Girl Scout delivery to customers, direct sale, and cookies in-hand begin the Sunday of the weekend (also known as GO Day).

Girl Scouts begin taking orders in mid-January, either online through Digital Cookie (for Girl Delivery) or in person using their order card (for example, going door-to-door in their neighborhood). The troop will use the SIO cookie order to fulfill and deliver orders they have received via the online platform and/or from their order card. The Girl Scout troop can use their troop inventory for door-to-door sales, lemonade type stands, and additional orders they receive.

The order should be based on the troop's program goals for the year, taking also into account what each individual Girl Scout in the troop has as her sales goal. The troop leader should work with the Girl Scouts and the caregivers in the troop, as well as the troop cookie chair (TCC), to determine what those goals are.

Troops who order a sufficient supply of cookie packages up front minimize their need to return to the cupboard right away. You will have inventory for the troop to keep selling after GO Day, fill those Girl Delivery orders, and keep up their momentum. This is a win-win for the troop, Girl Scouts in the troop, caregivers, and customers. Below are a few things to keep in mind when determining and placing your Starting Inventory Order. Please refer to your *2024 Cookie Program Troop Guide* for complete details.

Step #1 Confirm your troop goals.

The TCC should obtain from the troop leader what the troop's goals are for the year. For example, does the troop have a big trip scheduled for this or a future year? If so, the troop may need to step up their sales effort. Are more or fewer Girl Scouts selling than last year? The troop should be self-supporting and should pay for membership fees, activities, uniform pieces, and Take Action projects. The troop leader(s) should **include the Girl Scouts and their caregiver(s) in the goal setting and decision-making process.** The Girl Scouts in the troop may also have individual goals; the troop cookie chair and/or troop leader should learn what these are, as that will play a part in what the troop will need in their SIO. Inform caregivers that the troop can support their Girl Scout's experience and they should not have to directly support the troop financially – this builds support for Cookie goals!
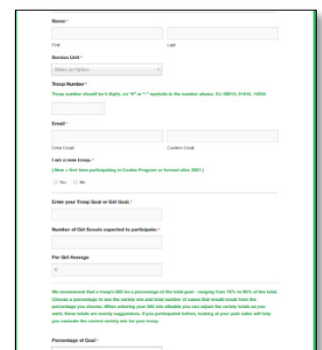
Step #2 Determine your cookie count.

Once your troop goal and/or the total of your Girl Scouts' goals are determined, figure out how many packages of cookies must be sold by your troop. You likely will not want to order *all* your cookies up front, just a significant amount. Think about what your troop will feel comfortable with. If you participated in the previous season, using that data will be helpful as a guide. We have found that troops should consider ordering at least 75% of their goal to be successful. The SIO Worksheet (eform) will help you make this determination (see Step #3).

Communicate this to the members of your troop so everyone is on board.

Step #3 Use the SIO Worksheet eform.

A sample of the [SIO Worksheet eform](#) is shown at right. The first 7 fields capture some basic data about your troop. When you submit this form, a copy is sent to your Service Unit Cookie Program Chair (SUCPC). Next, based on the goal you and your troop determined – either the troop goal or sum of the Girl Scouts' goals – you will enter the total where

indicated. Then enter the number of Girl Scouts you anticipate will participate. The form will automatically show you a per girl average (PGA). This is the average number of *packages* each participating Girl Scout in your troop would need to sell to reach your goal. The PGA is an important data point, but it should not be the sole data point you use to place your SIO.

The next step is choosing what percentage of the goal you wish to order up front – the range available in the eform is from 75% (baseline) to 95%. With each percentage chosen, you will see the total case count, and below that how many cases of each variety goes into that total case count.

This is only a *guideline*. When placing your order in eBudde, the varieties reflected on the worksheet can be adjusted according to what you believe is best for your troop – keeping in mind the overall total you decided upon.

If you participated in 2023, we've included a link on the form to the Troop Variety Mix which details what you sold by different categories last season (SIO, Cupboard, Digital Cookie) (see page 3 here for more on the Troop Variety Mix data).

Step #4 Submit the eform and enter your SIO in eBudde.

Your last step has two parts:

1. At the bottom of the eform, check the Captcha box and then click Submit. A copy of your eform will be emailed to you, summarizing what you entered.
2. Once you have been given access to eBudde by your SUCPC (typically in December), log into eBudde and go to the **Init. Order** tab to enter your SIO. You will enter the data in *cases* using your SIO Worksheet results as a guide. You can adjust the case count of a particular variety (want fewer Trefoils and more Thin Mints?). Once you are satisfied with your SIO entry, you click the **Submit** button.

Reminders:

- The worksheet is a GUIDELINE to get you started. What you order should factor in boothing plans and ultimately the troop's overall commitment level. Your SUCPC can be a great resource for advice, especially if you are a brand-new troop or are participating in the cookie program for the first time this season.

- Troops are responsible for selling AND paying for all packages of cookies ordered. Troops and families are financially responsible for all cookie packages.

- TCCs cannot make the Girl Scouts in their troop sell, require them to sell a certain number of packages, or prepay for cookie packages that the Girl Scout picks up for her personal inventory.

- We understand the drive for the SIO Rewards (that's why they are there), but troops should not enter an SIO just to earn the reward if they are unsure of the troop's overall abilities. Go with what you are comfortable with and keep it motivational. This is supposed to be fun and energizing, not over-the-top burdensome.

  However, ordering too few packages of cookies could jeopardize the troop from having the inventory necessary to be successful in the first two weeks of the sale and to keep up with demand.

- Remember you will still need to enter your SIO into eBudde so that your SIO gets ordered. We suggest troops split their order thusly: enter in OTHER that portion of their SIO that is for girl delivered orders (online or order card) and enter in BOOTH that portion of their SIO that is for their first weekend (or so) of boothing (again, in full cases).

- Have a great 2024 Cookie sale! Let us know what support you need to succeed.

Returning Troop Variety Mix

For returning troops there is an additional tool to help you manage your troop inventory. The Returning Troop Variety Mix takes your sales from the previous season, allowing you to look back. Keep in mind, 2023 was an atypical cookie season, where at times some varieties were turned off for girl delivery and at the cupboard, so this isn't really a complete picture that can use be used wholesale for the coming season. This data is provided for informational purposes. With that in mind, let's review what data is there.

How to use this sheet

To use the form, enter your troop number to see what types of transactions (SIO, cupboard, troop to troop transfers, etc.) make up the sum of your sales. (If your troop number is fewer than 5 digits, use zeros at the beginning to make it five digits – 123 would be 00123, and so forth).

In the top section you will see your overall sales by variety, and the percentage of the total by each variety. *Note, it includes all packages for which you took responsibility, even if they were not sold.*

Next, this data is broken out by category and in each category, total packages and the percentage of the total that equates to. Cupboard transactions are the net of your activity, so it reflects what you had after any exchanges. Again, keep in mind the challenges of 2023; this does not reflect what you might have otherwise picked up, it reflects what was available for you to pick up. Troop to troop transactions are also the net of what you traded or transferred to another troop against what you received from another troop. It also reflects any Service Unit to Troop transactions – in a typical year these are rare, these past couple of seasons it was not so rare.

You will also see here the Digital Cookie activity, including Girl Delivery. As varieties were intermittently turned off, it is only a snapshot in time and does not reflect what your troop's potential sales would have been.

With this data and your 2024 sales goal, you will be able to determine an SIO that best meets your troop's needs. Reach out to your SUCPC if you have any questions or need additional guidance.