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## Alabama Girl Scouts Earn Preparedness Patch

The Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) in Anniston, Ala., hosted more than 30 Girl Scouts Dec. 4. The goal of the visit was to assist the future leaders in earning the Preparedness Patch; a new program developed by the Girl Scouts of America and partnered with the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

According to the Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital, the program is designed to equip Girl Scouts with skills to protect their families, friends and communities when disaster strikes. The scouts have encouraged girls to take preventive steps and actions toward being safe. "Be Prepared" is the organization's motto, and as far back as the 1917 edition of the Handbook for Girl Scouts, girls were asked to write articles to learn how to use a fire alarm and be knowledgeable on other topics of public health and safety.

The CDP instructed the girls, who ranged from the ranks of Brownies to Cadets, to properly decontaminate from chemicals, poisons, or radiation; how healthcare workers use Human Patient Simulators to train and treat the injured; and they were briefed regarding personal responsibility, the importance of having a 'Go Kit' in the home, and developing an emergency plan.

"This gave the girls a better understanding and grasp of the concept of what an emergency is, and how to stay prepared," said Heather Mills, troop leader. "They learned what response personnel do everyday, to include better preparing their family in the event of an emergency. I feel the Preparedness Patch provides the girls knowledge and prepares them personally for emergencies. It was great for the [CDP] to help out."

The CDP visit was the final step in earning the Preparedness Patch for some, but the first step to achieve the goal for others. The individual's rank or level determines the number of activities required to qualify for the Preparedness Patch.

"I enjoyed earning the Preparedness Patch," said 9-year-old, Olivia Davis. The junior Girl Scout added, "My troop started a few weeks ago, and I learned a lot. I never thought we'd need a small bag or personal belongings in the car or ready to go in the house. I also learned a lot about chemicals and that people need to be washed and sterile to stay safe. This patch is cool, not everyone has it, and I'm proud of it."

Entering its 12<sup>th</sup> year as the nation's only federally-chartered Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) training facility for civilian responders, the CDP focuses on training to ensure communities across the nation are prepared. The CDP is a component of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and features a unique hands-on training experience for state, local, and tribal emergency responders.

Learn more about the CDP at <http://cdp.dhs.gov>.

*Center for Domestic Preparedness*  
Anniston, Alabama



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