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## Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints

When preparing for any activity with girls, always begin with the Safety Activity Checkpoints (SACs) written specifically for that particular activity, as well as this Introduction. In this Introduction you will find specific information for the checkpoints that are common to all activities (e.g. Communicate with council and parents), as well as an overview of the format for all SACs. Additional information can also be found in the Girl Scout Safety Guidelines (a copy of which is included at the end of this Introduction). **Note:** In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can also e-mail to or print them for girls, co-volunteers and parents/guardians.

**CAUTION:** When activities involve unpredictable safety variables, they are not recommended as Girl Scout program activities. These include but are not limited to:

- Bungee Jumping
- Flying in small private planes, helicopters or blimps
- Go-Carting
- Hang gliding
- Hot air ballooning
- Hunting
- Motor biking
- Parachuting
- Parasailing
- Riding all-terrain vehicles
- Riding motorized personal watercraft such as jet skis
- Skydiving
- Stunt skiing
- Outdoor trampolining
- Zorbing

**Know where to do the activity.** Brief summary of the most common places girls carry out the activity.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Information, including web sites, on including girls with disabilities.

### Gear

**Required Gear** includes clothing and equipment girls will need in order to take part in the activity

**Recommended Gear** includes clothing and equipment girls may need, but are not required to have, in order to take part in the activity.

### Prepare for the Activity

- Communicate with council and parents.** Inform your Girl Scout council and girls' parents/guardians about the activity, including details about safety precautions and any appropriate clothing or supplies that may be necessary (see Required and Recommended Gear). Follow council procedures for activity approval, certificates of insurance and council guidelines about girls' general health examinations. Make arrangements in advance for all transportation and confirm plans before departure.
- Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.

- **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** The recommended adult-to-girl ratios are two non-related adults (at least one of whom is female) to every:
  - 6 Girl Scout Daisies
  - 12 Girl Scout Brownies
  - 16 Girl Scout Juniors
  - 20 Girl Scout Cadettes
  - 24 Girl Scout Seniors
  - 24 Girl Scout Ambassadors
  -
 Plus one adult to each additional:
  - 1-4 Girl Scout Daisies
  - 1-6 Girl Scout Brownies
  - 1-8 Girl Scout Juniors
  - 1-10 Girl Scout Cadettes
  - 1-12 Girl Scout Seniors
  - 1-12 Girl Scout Ambassadors

It should be noted that some high-adventure activities may require a lower adult-to-girl ratio than stated above. If this is the case, the SACs for that activity will provide this ratio. Also, some activities are not appropriate for all levels of Girl Scouts, particularly Daisies and Brownies. For those activities, the adult-to-girl ratio can be ignored for girls not permitted to participate. **Note:** For mixed grade level troops, use the ratio for the lowest grade level in the troop. For example, if the troop consists of Daisies and Brownies, the Daisy ratio should be followed.

- **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensuring the volunteers or on-site instructors possess the proper skill set, knowledge, training/certification and/or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*.
- **Compile key contacts.** Give an itinerary to a contact person at home, and call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls' parents/guardian contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and council contacts—keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location.
- **Activity specific guidelines.** Guidelines covering such things as safety precautions, proper dress, routes and maps, etc.
- **Respect the environment.** Tips for ensuring environmental responsibility.
- **Prepare for emergencies.** First-aid requirements and other emergency precautions.

### On the Day of the Activity

These checkpoints include important final reminders on the day of the activity. Not every category is listed here, and not every activity includes these categories.

- **Get a weather report.** Ways to monitor the weather for any outdoor activity and/or activity requiring transportation.
- **Use the buddy system.** Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.
- **Safeguard valuables.** Store equipment and other valuables in a locked storage area.
- **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Precautions to take during warm-weather, outdoor activities.

**Links** guide you to the activity related websites.

**Know-How for Girls** offers ways to expand girls' knowledge of the activity.

# Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

## 1. Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from your council. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents and girls before engaging in activities with girls.

## 2. Points common to all Safety Activity Checkpoints include:

**Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.

**Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary (this is dependent upon the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls). Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by your state, if it is older than 18), and must be screened by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.

**Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.

Communicate with council and parents. Follow council procedures for activity approval, certificates of insurance, and council guidelines about girls' general health examinations. Make arrangements in advance for all transportation and confirm plans before departure.

**Be prepared for emergencies and compile key contacts.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults and site security. Give an itinerary to a contact person at home; call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls' parents/guardian contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and council contacts—keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories and contact information for girls' families. Check Safety Activity Checkpoints to determine the type of first aider needed.

**Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, and/or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

**Use the buddy system.** Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

- Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching and sexual activity of any kind with girl members, as well as physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is strictly forbidden. Follow your council's guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.
- Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.

5. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
6. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls, unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.
7. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior and discrimination.
8. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, planning and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
9. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group websites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.
10. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or are not Girl Scout-approved product sales and efforts.

**CAUTION:** When activities involve unpredictable safety variables, they are not recommended as Girl Scout program activities. These include but are not limited to:

- Bungee Jumping
- Flying in small private planes, helicopters or blimps
- Go-Carting
- Hang gliding
- Hot air ballooning
- Hunting
- Motor biking
- Parachuting
- Parasailing
- Riding all-terrain vehicles
- Riding motorized personal watercraft such as jet skis
- Skydiving
- Stunt skiing
- Outdoor trampolining
- Zorbing





## Adventure and Theme Parks: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Adventure and Theme parks take a wide variety of forms depending on where they are located and the audience they are geared towards. Adventure and theme parks are a commercially operated enterprises that offer rides, games, activities and other forms of entertainment. To ensure a safe park experience, it's important to look at the various activities individually for safety, communicate with girls about ride and crowd safety, and to encourage girls to act responsibly. Search for [U.S. theme parks](#) by state at About.com. Remember that some activities have age, height and weight restrictions.

**Caution:** Girls are not allowed to operate motorized vehicles, such as go-carts, without council permission. Any activities with uncontrolled free falling such as bungee jumping are not allowed.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls of all abilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Disabled World](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Park Gear

#### Recommended Gear

- Casual and comfortable clothing suitable for the weather (long, flowing garments are not worn)
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and sunglasses as needed
- All hats, glasses, purses, and other such items are secured during activities or not taken on activities
- Comfortable footwear appropriate to the conditions

### Prepare for the Park Activity

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

- ❑ **Girls plan the activity.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Arrange transportation and adult supervision.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*.
- ❑ **Ensure safety of theme-park rides\*.** Obtain full information about the rides and other activities and evaluate them for safety. Discuss with the park manager or safety officer safety procedures, maintenance programs, insurance coverage, and other matters of concern. Verify in advance that the park carries liability insurance.
- ❑ **Select a safe location.** Inspect the site to be sure it is free of potential hazards, and make sure emergency medical care, first-aid equipment and supplies are easily accessible. In the event of illness or accident, notify the nearest park attendant.
- ❑ **Encourage girls to plan the trip.** Girls and adults determine the appropriate time of day and length of the visit to the park.
- ❑ **Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in activities.
- ❑ **Be prepared in the case of an emergency.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of abrasions, sprains, and fractures. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of the Park Activity

- ❑ **If an outdoor park get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Review plans upon arrival.** Adults obtain a copy of the park guide—to facilitate the visit and gain important information on park policies and the location of restrooms and the first-aid station. Adults pay special attention to any safety tips or warnings and share this information with the girls. Adults discuss plans for the visit with girls, and set a place to meet in case of separation from the group.
- ❑ **For Water Parks.** Follow Swimming Safety Activity Checkpoints paying particular attention to water park safety rules.
- ❑ **Girls respect park rules and take general safety precautions.** Each girl is instructed to consider her own personal limitations with regard to rides and activities :
  - How she is affected by height, speed, movement, flashing lights.
  - Parks have policies and signs restricting access to certain rides and activities because of height, weight, or other criteria.
  - Adults instruct girls to look for and comply with all safety-related signs and instructions given by ride operators.
  - In extremely hot weather, girls go on rides and do other outdoor activities in the morning and late afternoon hours, and go inside for meals, stage shows, and so on during the warmest time of the day.
  - On rides, girls and adults remain seated and always keep their arms and legs inside the car at all times.
  - Seat belts or restraint bars are always used and are never removed during rides.

- Any unsafe conditions, such as slippery floors, broken seat belts, and nonfunctioning exit signs are reported to the nearest park attendant.
  - Girls and adults use all provided safety equipment including harnesses, auto belay, goggles, etc.
- Keep track of girls' whereabouts. Conduct a head count before and after activities. Ensure that girls know where to go and how to act when confronted by strangers or intruders.

#### Park Link

- International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions: [www.iaapa.org](http://www.iaapa.org)

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Archery: Safety Activity Checkpoints



One of the oldest weapons and hunting methods, archery is still used for its traditional purposes, but is common today as a recreational and competitive activity. There are a variety of styles and sizes of bows and arrows, but they're all used for one purpose: to hit a target. Archery is not permitted for Girl Scout Daisies. Girl Scout Brownies can participate in some archery activities if the equipment is designed for children of that grade level and body size. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others. Ensure that bows and arrows are appropriate to the age, size, strength, and ability of the girls.

**Know where to participate in archery.** Look for organized indoor and outdoor archery ranges. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information for people with disabilities at [Disabled Sports USA](#).

### Archery Gear

#### Required Gear:

- Bows Arrows
- Target

#### Recommended Gear:

- Sunscreen and (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Quivers
- Wrist, finger, and arm protection, such as finger tabs and arm guards (right- and left-handed models)

### Prepare for Archery

- ❑ **Communicate with council and parents.** Make provisions for safe handling of archery equipment to and from the range. *For additional information see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- ❑ **Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- ❑ **Arrange for adult supervision.** *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- ❑ **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** One adult is a certified [USA Archery](#) instructor or has equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines. The instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand, and posts safety rules at the site. Ensure that there is a ratio of 1 instructor for every 10 girls. Archery games away from a regular course are well supervised and appropriate to age, skill level, and location of shooting.
- ❑ **Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- ❑ **Girls learn about archery.** Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, such as stringing the bow, nocking the arrow, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices. Before archery activity, girls learn the following:
  - Archers straddle the shooting line to shoot.
  - Girls waiting to shoot stay well behind the archery line. A quiver for holding arrows is provided for each line of shooters. Never point a bow and arrow at a person, even when not drawn.
  - Arrows are not picked up until the "load" command is given.
  - Never shoot an arrow until the "fire when ready" command is given.
  - Never draw the string and let go without an arrow; this is called dry firing and can break the bow.
  - When aiming arrow, keep tip pointed toward the target. Shoot only at target and never at anything else, including trees, animals, etc. Never shoot an arrow straight up into the air.
  - Wait until the all-clear command is given before retrieving arrows.
- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Also have girls tie back long hair.
- ❑ **Ensure that equipment is in good condition.** Make sure that arrows are not warped and do not have cracked nocks or loose or missing feathers; bowstrings do not have broken or loose strands, and bows do not have loose or broken arrow rests; backstops for targets are in good repair. A beginner uses arrows that extend one to two inches in front of the bow when the bow is at full draw. Only target tip arrows are used, never broadhead/hunting tips.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with certificates in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of severe sunburns and puncture wounds. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of the Archery Activity

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** On the morning of an outdoor archery activity, check [weather.com](#) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the archery activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- ❑ **Safeguard valuables.** Archery equipment is stored in its proper storage container and locked when not in use (*see also the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*).
- ❑ **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- ❑ **Practice safe archery\*.** The following are required for all ranges:
  - Archery equipment is stored in box/closet/cabinet and locked when not in use.

- Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity at the firing line and during the retrieval of arrows
- Arrow stop and a supplementary back stop or specific safety zone behind the targets
- Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers, known to the entire facility population
- Clearly defined shooting line

At an outdoor range:

- Targets are not placed in front of houses, roads, trails, or tents.
- Avoid areas with pedestrian traffic.
- Clear areas of brush; a hillside backstop is recommended.
- Be sure the shooting area and the spectator area behind the shooting area are clearly marked.
- In the shooting area, ensure a distance of at least 50 yards behind the targets and 20 yards on each side of the range. An outdoor range is not used after nightfall.

At an indoor range:

- Targets are well-lit, and doors or entries onto the range are locked or blocked from the inside.
- Do not block fire exits.

### Archery Links

- National Field Archery Association: [www.nfaa-archery.org](http://www.nfaa-archery.org)
- USA Archery: [www.usarchery.org](http://www.usarchery.org)
- World Archery Center: [www.worldarchery.com](http://www.worldarchery.com)

### Archery Know-How for Girls

- Learn how to string a bow. Read a step-by-step guide at [Archery World U.K. Web site](http://Archery World U.K. Web site).
- Learn archery safety basics. Learn tips such as “Never put an arrow into a bow unless you are on the shooting line” on the [www.kidbow.com](http://www.kidbow.com)

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**





## Arts and Crafts: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Whether girls are painting, knitting, bookbinding, sculpting, making origami or jewelry, or doing any one of a number of arts-and-crafts projects, the options for artistic self-expression are endless. Girls are encouraged to plan details of arts-and-crafts activities, and it's important that activities are appropriate to each girl's age, experience with tools, attention span, and the complexity of the project. Also keep environmental impact in mind; for instance, when doing arts and crafts outdoors, don't use materials such as glitter that will pollute campgrounds.

**Know where to do arts and crafts. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Ensure that the location is well-ventilated.**

**Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Institute of Art and Disabilities](#) and [National Arts and Disability Center](#) provide to people with disabilities.**

### Arts and Crafts Gear

#### Required Gear

- Protective face- and eye-safety equipment, such as masks, shatterproof lenses, eyeglass guards, or goggles are worn, when appropriate, for protection against sparks, dust, fumes, and debris.
- Due to a potential for extreme allergic reactions to latex, Girl Scouts recommends the use of vinyl or nitrile gloves when such gloves are necessary for an arts-and-crafts project.

- Any safety equipment indicated by industry standards. For example, heavy gloves when handling hot or sharp objects. For specific guidelines, see the [Consumer Product Safety Commission's Art and Craft Safety Guide](#).
- Long hair is tied back; girls do not wear loose clothing or jewelry when using machinery or tools with moving parts
- First Aid kit

### Recommended Gear

- Age-appropriate materials (for example, with younger girls, use water-based paints and products that are easily removed from clothes, and scissors with blunt ends).
- Clothing appropriate for the activity.

### Prepare for Arts and Crafts

- **Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Girls plan the activity** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*. In addition, supervision is increased when advanced equipment, such as soldering irons, burners, or power saws, is used. Use of cutting tools, hammers, and spray paints is carefully supervised.
- **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** For activities beyond those described in Girl Scout publications, the instructor must have skill in teaching arts and crafts and documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*. The instructor teaches girls the basic skills and demonstrates the safe use and care of equipment—for example, cutting tools are used with the blade away from the body.
- **Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Select a safe arts-and-craft site.** Ensure that:
  - Girls have sufficient space to move around while working, and there is enough space for table work for each girl, when appropriate.
  - Work sites are well ventilated for activities involving hazardous materials and spray paints (for example, turpentine, spray fixatives and varnishes) or ceramic dust.
  - Flammable material is used only in work spaces away from ignition sources such as open flames, heaters and candles.
  - Provision is made for proper and safe disposal of all waste materials.
  - Fire exits are clearly marked, and fire safety equipment is on hand.
  - Food and beverages are not consumed in activity areas.
- **Prepare for emergencies.** When specialized equipment, power machinery, or chemicals are being used, ensure the presence of a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED; ensure a first-aid kit is available. Emergency procedures are clearly posted for swallowing a chemical, getting a chemical in the eyes, skin contact with a chemical, and so on. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
- **Use safe equipment and materials.**
  - Art materials are purchased from reputable sources, such as school-supply houses. Product labels clearly indicate what the material is and how to write or call the manufacturer.
  - Girls never use donated or discarded material whose ingredients are not known, and very old or unlabeled materials may be toxic and are not used.
  - Care is taken to protect girls from dyes, pigments, preservatives, and other chemicals that may provoke allergies.
  - Girls who are physically or psychologically disabled, or who are on medication, may be at greater risk from toxic materials.
  - Kilns are ventilated, and children using them are directly supervised.
- **Educate about potentially hazardous materials.** The following materials may be used only after girls have received adequate safety instruction:

- Dusts or powders that can be inhaled or that can get in the eyes
- Organic solvents, volatile glues, or solvent-containing products such as aerosol sprays
- Anything that stains the skin or clothing (or that cannot be washed out of clothing)
- Acids, alkalis, bleaches, or other irritating or corrosive chemicals
- Review the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) of any chemicals before deciding to use the chemical. Follow instructions provided.
- Ensure that girls wash their hands after using supplies that are labeled as hazardous.
- If transferring hazardous materials to another container, ensure this container is labeled “hazardous.”

### On the Day of the Arts-and-Crafts Activity

- **Get a weather report.** If the activity will take place outdoors, on the morning of the activity check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if weather conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan, alternative activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm with lightning, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them..
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Safeguard valuables.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Exercise caution when handling and storing equipment and supplies.**
  - Equipment and supplies are locked in a storage area whenever possible. Safety and operating instructions for dangerous equipment (for example, power tools and kilns) are reviewed and posted.
  - Scissors, knives, and other cutting tools are cleaned, oiled, and sharpened, as needed.
  - Flammable materials, such as paints and solvents, are labeled and stored in a dry, well-ventilated area out of the reach of young children. Equipment and supplies are used for their intended purpose only. Turpentine or paint thinner may be used as a paint solvent with adequate ventilation. Gasoline is never used as a paint solvent.
  - Solvent- or oil-soaked rags are kept in waste cans that meet fire safety codes and are emptied daily.
  - Containers of solvents are covered. They evaporate quickly, and inhalation can be hazardous.
  - Manufacturers’ labels on paints, chemicals, and aerosol cans are read before product use. These substances are used only in well-ventilated areas away from any open flames.
  - When transferring substances into other containers, label each container as to content and procedures for use and disposal.
  - When girls gather natural materials (such as leaves), conservation principles are taught and practiced.

### Arts-and-Crafts Links

- <http://lessonplans.craftgossip.com/>
- [www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts)
- <https://www.pinterest.com/>

### Arts-and-Crafts Know-How for Girls

- **Select cool craft projects.** After discussing themes, available supplies, and techniques, create a list of potential projects and begin researching how to create the project. Perform keyword searches for the craft projects. These sites (among others) provide arts-and-craft projects: <http://lessonplans.craftgossip.com/> , [www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts) and [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com).





## Backpacking: Safety Activity Checkpoints



By some definitions, backpacking entails a low-budget method of travel in just about any part of the globe, particularly in urban areas. By other definitions, backpacking is specific to front-country or back-country environments in parks or wilderness areas. No matter the destination, a backpacker's primary mission is to explore on foot, while carrying all her gear in a backpack and being a good steward of the land. These checkpoints focus on preparing for backpacking in remote areas, but the recommendations can be used in urban areas, too. For information about backpacking and backpacking with children, visit [rei.com](http://rei.com), [trails.com](http://trails.com) or [backpacker.com](http://backpacker.com). Backpacking is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies.

**Caution:** Girls 12 years old and older must follow the Shooting Sports Safety Activity Checkpoints in order to use firearms, and must have both council and parent/guardian permission. Girls are never allowed to hunt, go on high-altitude climbs or to ride all-terrain vehicles or motor bikes.

**Know where to backpack. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions, such as Girl Scout camps. Also, for information about hikes and trips in the United States and national and regional parks, visit [backpacker.com](http://backpacker.com) or [trails.com](http://trails.com).**

**Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Contact national parks to inquire about their accommodations for people with disabilities. To find resources to adapt various sports including backpacking to persons of all abilities visit [Disabled Sports USA](http://DisabledSportsUSA.org). To find backpacking programs for youth of various abilities contact [Global Explorers](http://GlobalExplorers.org) and [Wilderness Inquiries](http://WildernessInquiries.org).**

### Backpacking Gear

Backpacking requires various equipment dependent on the length of trip, location, weather, etc. Below is a basic list of required gear but for a comprehensive list go to [rei.com](http://rei.com).

### Required Gear

- Lightweight, layered clothing and outerwear appropriate for weather conditions
- Water bottle or hydration pack (each girl carries at least one quart)
- Nonperishable, high-energy foods such as fruits and nuts
- Wash kit (hairbrush, biodegradable shampoo and soap, toothbrush, toothpaste)
- Flashlight
- Whistle
- First Aid Kit
- Backpack appropriate for size and experience of user
- Sturdy hiking/trail footwear with thick soles (soft-soled shoes to wear on campsite after removing hiking footwear)
- Map and compass or compass and global positioning system (GPS)
- Sleeping bag and sleeping pad
- Potable water and water purification supplies to remove potential contaminations from natural water sources; use water filter designed to remove *Giardia lamblia* (see the “Outdoor Cooking” Safety Activity Checkpoints for purification tips).
- Unbreakable, lightweight knife/fork/spoon combo and bowl and cup
- Portable cook stove and fuel, whenever possible (to reduce the use of firewood)
- Waste-management supplies (toilet paper, garbage bag, plastic trowel to dig cat hole, hand sanitizer)
- Food storage (rope and waterproof bag; check local regulations to find out if a bear-proof canister is required)

### Recommended Gear

- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Hat or bandana

### Prepare for Backpacking

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Girls plan the activity.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. In addition, encourage girls to plan routes, activities, rules for group living, and guidelines for dealing with problems that may arise with other groups of backpackers..
- Obtain backpacking training and arrange for adult supervision.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios, keeping in mind that Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies do not participate in backpacking*. In addition, the backpacking adult volunteer has taken council-approved training in backpacking. One adult is in front of the group of backpackers, and the other is in the rear of each group.
- Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls share resources.** Encourage girls to make a list of gear and supplies, and determine what items can be shared.
- Choose an appropriate backpacking route.** The route chosen is within the ability of every person in the group, and the pace accommodates the slowest backpacker. Determine the length of the trip by the backpackers’ ages, level of experience and ability, physical condition, nature of the terrain, weight of the load to be carried, the season and weather conditions, the water quantity and quality and the activities planned along the way.
- Be prepared for primitive campsites.** If backpacking in primitive areas with little to no modern conveniences, observe these standards:
  - Choose and set up campsite well before dark.
  - Use a previously established campsite if available.
  - Make sure the campsite is level and located at least 200 feet from all water sources and below tree line.
  - Avoid fragile mountain meadows and areas of wet soil.

- Avoid camping under dead tree limbs.
  - If a fire is necessary, use existing fire rings when possible. Where no fire ring exists, follow local regulations about ground fires.
  - If a latrine is not available, use individual cat holes—holes for human waste that are at least 200 feet away from the trail and known water sources—to dispose of human waste (visit [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org) for more information). Note: cat holes are not permitted in some areas, so follow local sanitary codes in those areas.
  - Do dishwashing and personal bathing at least 200 feet away from water sources.
  - Store food well away from tents and out of reach of animals. Where necessary, hang food at least 10 feet high from a rope stretched between two trees. If the site is in bear country, check with local authorities on precautions to take.
  - See that garbage, tampons, sanitary supplies and toilet paper are carried out.
- **Assess the safety of backpacking sites.** The route is known to at least one of the adults or a report is obtained in advance to assess potential hazards. Ensure that a land-management or similar agency is contacted during the trip-planning stage to help with available routes and campsites, recommended group size, water quantity and quality, and permits (if needed).
  - **Assess backpack quality and do a trial run.** Ensure that backpacks and all equipment (including food and water) weigh no more than 20 percent of each person’s ideal (not actual) body weight. Guide girls in choosing backpacks, adjusting straps, and taking them on and off. Have the girls plan and conduct a series of conditioning hikes before the backpacking trip.
  - **Ensure that backpackers have a comprehensive understanding of the trip.** Group members are trained to be observant of the route, the surroundings, and the fatigue of individuals. Instruction is given on the safety rules for backpacking, such as staying together in a group, recognizing poisonous plants and biting or stinging insects and ticks, respecting wild animals, and behaving effectively in emergencies. Ensure that girls know how to read maps, use a compass, navigate a route, and estimate distance.
  - **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases from extremes of temperature, such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke, frostbite, cold exposure, and hypothermia, as well as sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. Emergency transportation is available, if possible; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
  - **Take safety precautions.** Search-and-rescue procedures for missing persons are written out in advance, reviewed, and practiced by girls and adults. Methods of communication with sources of emergency care, such as police, hospitals, and park and fire officials, are known and arranged in advance.

## On the Day of Backpacking

- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if weather conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan, alternative activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm with lightning, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. TKTKTKTK
- **Respect the environment and keep trails clean.** Use principles of minimal-impact camping, a philosophy of respect for the natural environment that involves minimizing environmental and sociological impacts. Store garbage in insect- and animal-proof containers with plastic inner linings, and cover it securely when there is a campsite garbage-pickup service. When there is no garbage-pickup service, remove garbage from campsite in plastic bags and discard, as appropriate. Recycle whenever possible. Do not bury food; carry out all garbage.
- **Practice safe backpacking.** Hiking off-trail and after dusk is not permitted. The group must hike away from the edges of waterfalls, rock ledges, and slopes with loose rocks.

## Backpacking Links

- *Backpacker* magazine: [www.backpacker.com](http://www.backpacker.com)
- Trails.com: [www.trails.com](http://www.trails.com)
- Leave No Trace: [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)
- Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI): [rei.com/learn](http://rei.com/learn)

## Backpacking Know-How for Girls

- **Maximize available backpack space.** What are the absolute necessities? What backpacking gear can girls share? For tips, read [trails.com](http://trails.com) and [rei.com/learn](http://rei.com/learn).
- **Select ideal energy sources.** Backpackers take rest breaks to drink water and refuel with nutritious, easily digestible, and lightweight foods that don't take up too much space in backpacks. Consider packing nuts, dried fruits, and energy bars.
-



## Bicycling: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Whether you're riding a mountain, racing or hybrid bike, it's important to ensure that bikes are the proper size for the rider and in good working condition. Make sure that the seat height is adjusted properly; when seated, girls should have a slight bend in the knee, and in other words their legs should never be fully extended. A seat set too low is a common problem and causes significant discomfort. Helmets should fit comfortably but snugly, be worn level on the head, and not move in any direction when the chin strap is securely fastened.

Bike races, mountain-biking, and long-distance cycling trips can be strenuous, and it's essential for girls to condition themselves beforehand. Also, long-distance touring involves many hours of cycling, sometimes in difficult terrain, and requires girls to carry more gear and supplies than on short day trips. When training for lengthy bicycle trips, set realistic goals for mileage, and gradually increase the distance; for instance, one week, aim to ride 10 miles, and the next, strive for 12.

**Caution:** Girls are not allowed to do aerial tricks on bicycles.

**Know where to bike.** Learn about American road bike trails at [adventurecycling.org](http://adventurecycling.org). Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions when using vendor supplied bicycles.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Center of Health, Physical Activities and Disabilities](http://www.nationalcenterofhealthanddisability.org) provides to people with disabilities.

### Bicycling Gear

## Required:

- Bicycle (padded handlebars and gel-padded seat recommended)
- Reflectors
- Protective bicycle helmet with properly fitting safety harness that meets the American Society for Testing and Materials ([ASTM](http://www.astm.org)) F1163-88 requirements, displaying the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal <http://www.helmets.org/standard.htm>
- Wear comfortable, close-fitting clothing (such as bicycle shorts or aerobic exercise tights when cycling in temperatures below 68 degrees) that cannot catch in bicycle gears or chain

## Recommended, depending on conditions:

- Sunscreen and (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Nonperishable, high-energy foods such as fruits and nuts
- Daypack to carry personal belongings
- Headlamp and taillight if bicycling at dusk
- Horn or bell
- Pant clips or bands if necessary
- Biker pack
- Cycling gloves
- Stiff-soled athletic shoes such as court shoes or cycling shoes with clips on pedals for racing or long trips as needed
- General map and/or bike-route map
- Compass
- Cycling repair kit: Each group carries a tire pump, tire patch kit, tire irons, screwdriver, adjustable wrench, pliers, hex-head (Allen) wrenches, lubricating fluids
- Two water bottles per person

## Prepare for Bicycling

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Organize cycling groups and arrange for adult supervision.** Except when riding on bicycle paths, participants travel in groups of five or six, allowing at least 150 feet between groups so that vehicles may pass. Participants ride one to a bicycle except when riding tandem. In tandem riding, each girl has her own seat and the number of riders doesn't exceed the intended limits of the bicycle. For every two groups, there is an adult at the head and another at the rear. Ensure that the length (day or extended) and terrain of the route, as well as the time of day, weather and equipment available are appropriate to the girls' experience and physical condition. Review the route and practice map-reading skills. Make careful plans for the type of road to be traveled. For example, secondary roads are quiet, but may have trees, curves and hills that obstruct visibility. Ride only during daylight hours.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Select safe cycling site or route.** Observe all state and local regulations, and notify jurisdictional authorities about the group's trip, when necessary. Use designated bicycle trails whenever possible, select bicycle trails with even surfaces, and avoid routes involving heavily trafficked streets and highways. Know in advance the location of emergency and medical services along the route.
- Ride safely.** Cyclists ride with the flow of traffic and obey applicable traffic regulations, signals, lane markings and local ordinances pertaining to bicycle operation. Girls learn to:
  - Recognize and avoid common roadway hazards, including drainage grates and manhole covers, sand, gravel, glass, wet leaves, litter on road shoulders and other road-surface hazards
  - Communicate and cooperate with other road users
  - Ride defensively.
  - Motor-vehicle traffic presents the greatest danger to cyclists; hazards such as oil, wet leaves, parked cars, parked cars that open their doors in front of a cyclist, and rocks cause the majority

of cycling accidents. Girls practice bicycling with a load comparable in weight to the load on the trip and learn to brake before they have to, especially on curves and down hills.

- Girls are instructed in and practice bicycle-riding skills in traffic including signaling, scanning ahead and behind (especially before moving left), yielding to oncoming traffic and making left turns. Emergency braking techniques are taught. Girls ride single file with traffic, though it is acceptable to ride briefly two abreast when passing a slower bicyclist.
  - Light gear is stored in bicycle panniers (foldable carriers) or packs on the back of the bike. Bicyclists make a full stop and look left, right, and left again, especially at the end of a driveway and before entering a street or roadway. Cyclists walk their bikes across busy intersections. Bicyclists use hand signals to indicate turning or stopping to let other cyclists as well as vehicles know their intent. Girls should also let other cyclist know they are passing prior to passing them. Bicyclists keep a safe distance between themselves and the vehicle ahead. Bicycles have lights and reflectors. When bicycles are not on segregated paths, lights are on to increase visibility
  - While an adult is prepared to change a flat tire and make basic repairs on bicycles, girls should also be taught basic repairs based on their age.
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Dressing in layers in colder temperatures so that layers can be shed as you get warmer.
  - Other Bicycle clothing:** avoid cotton and use synthetic fabrics that wick perspiration away from skin more comfortably; reflective or light-colored clothing is recommended when cycling at dusk; wear bright-colored or fluorescent clothing during day; on extended trips in cooler weather, wear layers and carry extra clothing and rain gear
  - Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of soft tissue and bone injuries, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of Bicycling

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the bicycling activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the bicycling activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, and/or postpone the cycling activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. Do not hold on to your bike.
- Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Be prepared in the case of an emergency.** Provide a detailed itinerary and an established call-in schedule for each day. Carry identification and a list of emergency phone numbers and contact information for bike-repair shops.
- Prepare for the long haul.** Adjust bicycles frequently for comfort, and check handlebars after adjusting the seat for proper leg extension. Girls should not stop cycling abruptly; instead, after stopping, make sure they cool down gradually by walking around for a few minutes. Girls do not push past their endurance levels.

## Bicycling Links

Adventure Cycling Association: [www.adventurecycling.org](http://www.adventurecycling.org)

USA Cycling: [www.usacycling.org](http://www.usacycling.org)

Tread Lightly: [www.treadlightly.org](http://www.treadlightly.org)

American Bicyclist site: [www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org)

Bicycling Magazine: [www.bicycling.com](http://www.bicycling.com)

## Bicycling Know-How for Girls

- **Stretch your muscles.** Before cycling, always warm up. Try walking or jogging or cycling slowing before going faster. Gently stretch your hamstrings, quads (against a wall), and calves, before riding and especially after. Learn how at <http://grouptrails.com/fitness/7-common-stretches/>
- **Learn emergency maneuvers.** Read about and practice the quick stop, rock dodge, and instant turn on the League of American Bicyclists site, which also provides tips for beginners.





## Camping: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Camping, a great Girl Scout tradition, is one of the very first activities that Girl Scouts founder Juliette Gordon Low encouraged for girls. The key to an enjoyable camping experience is being prepared by packing just enough gear, supplies, and clothing that are appropriate for the weather, sleeping situation, and cooking meals. Girl Scouts advocate for the [Leave No Trace](#) method of camping, which involves leaving a campground the way it exists in nature, free of garbage and human impact. *For travel camping, where you camp as you travel, note the additional safety precautions listed.*

**Caution:** Girls 12 years old and older must follow the Shooting Sports Safety Activity Checkpoints in order to use firearms, and must have both council and parent/guardian permission. Girls are never allowed to hunt, go on high-altitude climbs or to ride all-terrain vehicles or motor bikes.

**Camping with Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies:** A Daisy troop may participate in an occasional overnight camping experience. Daisies who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Daisies who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights. Travel camping is not recommended for Daisy and Brownie Girl Scouts. Know where to camp. Girl Scout camps, public, private, state, and national parks and sites deemed appropriate by local and state authorities. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions and for information on using a non-council-owned site. Search for campground locations at [Reserve America](#).

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls of various abilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about adapting camping activities at [Disabled Sports USA](#).

### Camping Gear

#### Required Gear

- Clothing and rain jacket or poncho that can be layered and is appropriate for the weather
- Socks with sturdy shoes, hiking boots, or sneakers (no sandals, clogs, flip-flops, or bare feet)
- Sleeping bag (rated for the anticipated temperature)

- Towels and basic personal hygiene supplies (shampoo, soap, comb, and so on)
- Flashlight and other battery-powered lights (no candles, kerosene lamps, portable cook stoves, heaters, or other open-flame devices are used inside tents)
- First Aid Kit

### Recommended Gear

- Insect Repellent
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15)
- Hat or bandana
- Hat, gloves and thermal underwear for cool temperature
- Flame-resistant tents or tarp (no plastic tents)
- Compass and map or map and global positioning system (GPS)
- Mosquito netting where necessary
- Cooking supplies (pots, pans, utensils, mess kit and dunk bag, and so on)
- Cooler for food storage
- Portable cook stoves and fuel whenever possible (to reduce the use of firewood)
- Lantern fueled by propane, butane, kerosene, or gas (for outdoor use)
- Water-purification kit

### Prepare for Camping

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Girls plan the activity.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. In addition, keeping their program-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activities, planning routes, menus and rules for group living.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases from extremes of temperature, such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke, frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, as well as sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. When possible a vehicle is available or an ambulance is on call at all times to transport an injured or sick person. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
- Verify leader/instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that at least one adult is trained or possesses knowledge, skills, and experience in the following areas:
  - Outdoor program activities and leadership
  - Progression and readiness including homesickness
  - Trip planning in a girl-led environment
  - Safety management
  - Judgment and maturity
  - Program activities specific to the trip
  - Group dynamics and management
  - Supervision of girls and adults
  - Outdoor cooking (if doing so)

For travel camping ensure that at least two adults are additionally trained or have documented experience, in the following areas:

- Participation in similar trips
- Familiarity with the area in which the trip is conducted
- Physical fitness and skills necessary to lead the group
- Mode of transportation
- Site orientation
- Emergency procedures
- Minor maintenance for equipment and vehicles, as appropriate

- **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*. In addition, see “Camping with Girl Scout Daisies” in this checkpoint’s introduction for additional information.
- **Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. In addition, if camping in backcountry or traveling while camping, girls and adult participants carry a card and wear an identifying bracelet or similar device that contains name, council name and emergency-contact phone number.
- **If travel camping (using campsites as a means of accommodations)\*.** Verify the following adult certifications and standards:
  - For trips by small craft, one adult is currently certified as required by the Safety Activity Checkpoints for the particular mode of transportation being used (canoe, kayak, etc.).
  - For trips that involve swimming, an adult currently certified in basic lifeguarding or the equivalent is present.
  - Each driver of motorized transportation is at least 21 years old and holds a valid operator’s license appropriate to the vehicle. The Girl Scout council checks the operator’s driving record.
  - No adult drives more than six hours in one day, with rest breaks every two hours. There is a relief driver for trips of more than six hours. The relief driver holds a valid operator’s license for the vehicle operated, and her or his driving record is checked by the council. Plan to drive only in daylight hours.
  - If a trailer is used, it is in compliance with all state, local and federal regulations for the areas of travel. The assigned driver is experienced in pulling a trailer. No girls or adult leaders ride in the trailer.
  - No caravanning (cars following closely together, with the lead vehicle in charge) is allowed. Each driver must have information about route and destination in addition to cell-phone numbers of other drivers.
- **Ensure the safety of sleeping areas\*.** Separate sleeping and bathroom facilities are provided for adult males; many councils make exceptions for girls’ fathers. Ensure the following:
  - Each participant has her own bed. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed.
  - Adults and girls never share a bed.
  - It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area (tent, cabin, or designated area) with the girls. If an adult female does share the sleeping area, there should always be two unrelated adult females present.
  - During family or “He and Me” events (in which girls share sleeping accommodations with males), ensure the details are clearly explained in parent/guardian permission slip.
- **Girls share resources.** Encourage girls to make a list of the gear and supplies, and determine what can be shared. Support girls in creating a checklist of group and personal equipment and distribute to group members.
- **For travel camping arrange a pre-trip orientation.** Ensure that girl and adult participants receive information about first-aid procedures, emergency and rescue procedures, environmental awareness, program plans for mode of travel and geographic area, and operational procedures (water purification, food preparation, camping equipment, sanitation, and food-storage procedures).

## On the Day of Camping

- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if weather conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan, alternative activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm with lightning, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them.
- **Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Respect the environment and keep campsite clean.** Use the principles of minimal-impact camping described by [Leave No Trace](#). Store garbage in insect- and animal-proof containers with plastic inner linings, and cover it securely when there is a campsite garbage-pickup service. When there is no

garbage-pickup service, remove garbage from campsite in plastic bags and discard, as appropriate. Recycle whenever possible. Do not bury food; carry out garbage, grease, and fuel canisters. Do not remove natural materials such as leaves or branches.

- **Be prepared for primitive campsites.** For sites that don't have electric lights and toilet facilities, observe these standards:
  - Choose and set up campsite well before dark.
  - Use a previously established campsite if available.
  - Make sure the campsite is level and located at least 200 feet from all water sources and below tree line.
  - Avoid fragile mountain meadows and areas of wet soil.
  - Avoid camping under dead tree limbs.
  - Use existing fire rings if a fire is necessary.
  - If a latrine is not available, use individual cat holes—holes for human waste that are at least 200 feet away from the trail and known water sources—to dispose of human waste (visit [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org) for more information). Note: cat holes are not permitted in some areas, so follow local sanitary codes in those areas.
  - Do dishwashing and personal bathing at least 200 feet away from water sources.
  - Store food well away from tents and out of reach of animals. Where necessary, hang food at least 10 feet high from a rope stretched between two trees. If the site is in bear country, check with local authorities on precautions to take.
  - See that garbage, tampons, sanitary supplies, and toilet paper are carried out.

### Group Camping Links

- American Camp Association: [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org)
- Go Camping America: [www.gocampingamerica.com](http://www.gocampingamerica.com)
- Leave No Trace: <http://www.lnt.org>
- Recreational Equipment Inc.: [www.rei.com/learn](http://www.rei.com/learn)

### Camping Know-How for Girls

- **Create a camp caper chart.** Divvy up cooking duties and get creative about pre-planning [outdoor meals](#).
- Be ready with camp entertainment. Before you go camping, read about camping stories, [songs](#), activities, and [games](#).

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**





## Canoeing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Canoeing is a great team-building activity and an enjoyable and relaxing way to experience the outdoors. Compared to kayaks, canoes tend to be larger and uncovered, and usually accommodate several people kneeling or sitting on a seat. Canoeists use either a single- or double-bladed paddle, and kayakers almost always use a two-bladed paddle. Canoeing is not allowed for Girl Scout Daisies. Girl Scouts of any age are not permitted to paddle Class III or higher rapids.

**Caution:** You must seek council permission for activities with uncontrollable and highly changeable environment conditions, such as unclassified rivers and some watercraft trips, keeping in mind that girls are never allowed on Class III and above whitewater.

**Know where to go canoeing.** Just about any body of water (lake, stream, river or ocean) is suitable for canoeing, as long as the proper equipment, instructions and safety precautions are used. Canoeing is done only on water that has been approved by your Girl Scout council or that has been run and rated. For whitewater, only Class 1 & II difficulty, as defined by the American Version of the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#) may be used for canoeing. The [American Whitewater Association](#) provides information about American and some international river locations, classes and levels. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information for people with disabilities provided by the [International Canoe Federation](#), [British Canoe Union](#), the [American Canoe Association](#) and [Disabled Sports USA](#).

### Canoeing Gear

#### Required Gear

- Participants wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).

- Safety helmet (with flexible, strong, plastic shell with a chin strap and openings for drainage) when canoeing in waters that are Class II.
- Paddles (select [appropriate size and style](#) for the canoeists and the activity). Have extra paddles on hand as follows: on longer trips or trips involving whitewater, one extra paddle per canoe is carried; on trips of 48 hours or less on flat water, each group carries two to three extra paddles.
- Emergency repair kit, as needed for longer trips: duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers
- Emergency survival packet (recommended items include: raincoat, waterproof matches, emergency food supplies, lightweight/space blanket, and pocket knife, minimum of 10 X 10 tarp, rope, drinking cup, food and appropriate liquids. Food and water bottles should be secured in the canoe.
- Bailer (a bucket used to remove water from a boat), secured to the canoe
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, compressed air horn.
- Line for towing or rescue

### Recommended Gear

- Layered clothing that's easily changeable depending on temperatures (wool, nylon, or polypropylene pile)
- Waterproof jacket and pants
- Hat
- Change of dry clothing (store in waterproof bag)
- Boat shoes, closed-toe and nonslip hiking/sport sandals with heel strap, or water socks or shoes (no flip-flops)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15)
- Sunglasses with retainer strap
- Protective clothing is recommended when the water temperature is below 70 degrees.
- Painter Line (a strong line that floats and is used for securing or towing a canoe) is secured to each end of the canoe recommended to be at least half the length of the canoe.
- Flashlight (and extra batteries)
- Dry box/bag
- VHF Marine radio
- Rescue sling to get paddlers back into canoe
- Compass and chart of the area (for each adult)
- Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, raincoat, pocket knife, minimum of 10 X 10 tarp, rope, drinking cup, food and appropriate liquids. Food and water bottles should be secured in the canoe

### Prepare for Canoeing

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoint.*
- Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- Practice capsiz e and recovery procedures.** . The instructor demonstrates effective self-recovery and righting techniques and allows girls to practice them, so suddenly being pitched into the water does not disorient or frighten them.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the skill level of the adults is higher than the difficulty of the intended activity and that they have firsthand knowledge of the hazards and rapids on the river to be run. For each of the following types of canoeing, one instructor or qualified adult is currently certified by the American Canoe Association, the American Red Cross, or other sponsoring organization approved by your council with the following certification(s) appropriate for

the activity, or equivalent certification, or has documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined under Experts in Volunteer Essentials:

- **Flat water canoeing:** Ratio of instructor to participant is 1 to 12, plus an additional adult watcher/helper.
    - **American Canoe Association** – Canoe Touring Level 1 or higher instructor appropriate to the activity
    - **American Red Cross** – Small Craft Canoeing or Lifeguard Training with Waterfront Module
  - **Whitewater canoeing:** Ratio of instructor to participant is 1 to 8, plus an additional watcher/helper.
    - **American Canoe Association** – River Canoeing Level 2 or above instructor. The level required is determined by activity and Level 5 Advanced Swiftwater Rescue Skills assessment.
    - **American Red Cross** – Small Craft Canoeing or Lifeguard Training with Waterfront Module
  - **Canoe trips—flat water and whitewater canoeing:** Ratio of instructor to participant is 1 to 5 or 1 to 10 with a qualified assistant. The instructor must have the appropriate certification as noted above for flat water or whitewater canoeing.
    - **American Canoe Association** – River Canoe Day Trip Rescue Skills Assessment (for river trips)
- **Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
  - **Research river condition and select canoes appropriate to skill level.** Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment. Also make sure of the following: Craft weight and capacity are not exceeded (some crafts clearly display maximum capacity).
    - Canoes that are 15 feet or shorter hold no more than two people.
    - Each canoe is sized for the number of people using it.
    - You are knowledgeable of the difficulty of the water run and the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#).
    - You are aware of possible changes in river level and weather and [their effects](#) on the run's level of difficulty.
  - **Prepare for emergencies.** First Aider Requirements: If a lifeguard is not on duty, an adult with rescue and resuscitation experience and/or certification is present. Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.
  - **Respect the environment.** Make sure canoeing on whitewater or semi-protected waters meets the [Safety Code of American Whitewater](#).
  - **File a float plan.** If participating in a long-distance canoe trip, file a float plan with reliable person who will notify local authorities should your group not return. Float plan must include names of people on board, destination, craft description, times of departure and return, and additional details about routes and marine communications. The Coast Guard provides an [electronic, printable form](#).
  - **Know the Universal River Signals.** The qualified adult and/or canoe instructor understands the [American Whitewater codes](#). Also, a set of whistle and visual signals is established that allows messages to pass between canoes.
  - **Take river-rescue precautions.** Instructor/qualified adult attaches a locking blade knife to life jacket or secures it inside the canoe in an easily accessible place.
  - **Transport canoes safely.** Canoes are transported on car-top racks or trailers designed to haul canoes. Canoes are secured with two lines across the top and a line at the bow and the stern.
  - **Encourage girls to pack wisely.** Additional gear (clothing, sleeping, cooking) is stored in waterproof containers or packages and secured in the canoe. Do not overload the canoe.

## On the Day of Canoeing

- **Get a weather report.** Never canoe on a stormy day. On the day of the activity, visit [weather.com](#), [intellicast.com](#), or other reliable sources to assess weather conditions, water temperature, and

river/wave conditions. If weather conditions prevent the trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.

- ❑ **Review rescue tips.** Know how to right a tipped canoe and other river-rescue techniques.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, and stay low.

### Canoeing Links

- **American Canoe Association:** [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)
- **American Whitewater:** [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)
- **Beginner's Guide to Canoeing:** <http://canoeing.com/beginner>
- **International Canoe Federation:** [www.canoeicf.com](http://www.canoeicf.com)
- **National Organization for River Sports:** [www.nationalrivers.org](http://www.nationalrivers.org)
- **U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division:** [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)

### Canoeing Know-How for Girls

- **Master canoeing strokes.** The more you know about strokes, the better the canoeist you'll be. Learn about the five essential canoeing strokes [here](#).



## Challenge Courses: Safety Activity Checkpoints



A challenge course is a set of structures that provide a setting for physical challenges designed to increase participant self-confidence and physical coordination, increase group cooperation, and have fun.

Initiative games and low elements require the group to work together to accomplish mental or physical challenges; spotters safeguard the movements of each member of the group. High ropes challenge courses involve components for individual or group challenges that are 6 feet or more off the ground. A safety belay (rope to secure a person to an anchor point) is used with a harness, and participants wear a helmet. Spotters (participants who safeguard the movements of a member of the group) provide support and protect the head and upper body of a climber in case of a fall.

Each participant must possess the physical strength and technical skills to use the equipment, and must understand the safety procedures and consequences of her actions. Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies may participate only in activities that have been designed for their age and that have equipment that suit the size and ability of the girl.

**Know where to find challenge courses.** Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions and approval. Also, the Association for Challenge Course Technology provides a list of companies that have completed its [Professional Vendor Member](#) accreditation processes. The Professional Ropes course Association is another ANSI approved accredited association. Find its list of accredited vendors at: [http://www.prcainfo.org/Course\\_Vendors](http://www.prcainfo.org/Course_Vendors)

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Center on Health, Physical Activities and Disabilities](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Challenge Courses Gear

#### Required Gear:

- Sturdy shoes

#### Required For High Elements:

- ❑ Climbing helmets (with Union of International Alpine Association (UIAA)-approved label must be worn for all climbing activities in which the participant is more than 6 feet off the ground and/or on belay. In addition, participants standing in the “fall zone” beneath a climbing element wear helmets. It is recommended that a disposable liner, such as a shower cap or surgical cap, be worn underneath the helmet to protect against the spread of head lice.
- ❑ Belaying equipment – ropes, webbing, harnesses, hardware, and helmets – must be designed, tested, and manufactured for the purpose of this type of activity and appropriate for the size of the user.

## Recommended Gear

- ❑ Long pants or bike pants for activities when skin abrasions on legs are possible
- ❑ Sunscreen and (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- ❑ Sunglasses
- ❑ Close-fitting clothing (avoid wearing loose clothing, especially around the head and neck). A chest harness with seat harness or full-body harness for small framed girls when climbingPrepare for Challenge Courses
- ❑ **Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** High ropes courses require a trained and certified instructor by a verified agency. The instructor must demonstrate competence in equipment maintenance, safety and rescue techniques, proper use of the course and hands-on training. Initiative games and low ropes courses require a trained and certified instructor or an instructor with training and documented experience according to your council guidelines and *Volunteer Essentials*. Training includes competence in equipment maintenance, safety techniques, proper use of the course and hands-on training. Ensure that the instructor-to-participant ratio meets or exceeds minimum standards, as identified by the original manufacturer or installer of the challenge course and/or is in compliance with current industry standards. Ensure that the instructor has provided written documentation of the completed training, there is a regular process of review and update for all instructors, and a minimum of two instructors are present. Instructors are skilled in selecting appropriate activities, teaching and supervising spotting and belaying techniques, and modifying tasks to provide an appropriate experience for the ages and skill levels in the group. Before use, instructors inspect all equipment, course components, and landing areas in the activity area.
- ❑ **Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED; who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls as well as abrasions and sunburn. A sharp knife, hardware, and extra rope of appropriate length for rescue are available at the site. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. Specialized safety and rescue procedures are planned and practiced to ensure the ability to remove a participant from a high-ropes, rappelling, or climbing situation. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Sharp objects, jewelry, and watches are removed and pockets emptied. Long hair is pulled back from the face and fastened under the helmet to prevent tangling.

## On the Day of the Challenge Course Activity

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. Be prepared to alter the activity plan or have an alternate activity prepared if weather conditions change. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall

objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Ensure that equipment is well-maintained\*.** There is a documented maintenance schedule and periodic inspection by instructors and outside professionals of all artificial structures and equipment used in the activities. A use log is kept on all equipment subject to stress, wear, and deterioration. A written equipment monitoring and retirement process is established and followed.
- **Girls learn about and prepare for challenge courses.** Instructors teach a set of readiness and action commands to all participants for climbing, spotting, and belaying. All participants utilize gentle muscle warm-up and stretching activities before beginning physical activities. Instructors describe the objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants before beginning an activity.
- **Girls practice safe challenge-course techniques.** Spotting techniques are taught, demonstrated, and practiced by participants prior to any challenge-course activity. All activities are appropriately spotted. For activities where partners are needed, instructors match participants according to size and skill level, if appropriate. Instructors supervise all tie-ins, belays, and climbs on high ropes courses and spotting on low elements courses. Participants are not stacked more than three levels high vertically (in a pyramid, for example) on each other at any time. No one should stand on the middle of someone else's back.

### Challenge Courses Links

- **Association for Experiential Education:** [www.aee.org](http://www.aee.org)
- Association for Challenge Course Technology: [www.acctinfo.org](http://www.acctinfo.org)
- Professional ropes course association : <http://www.prcainfo.org/>

### Challenge Courses Know-How for Girls

- Focus on team-building. Challenge courses rely on strong communication and trust. Is your team ready for the challenge?

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Climbing and Rappelling: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Girls may participate in various types of climbing, keeping in mind that climbing and rappelling is not permitted for Daisies, while Brownies are only allowed to participate in climbing activities.

- **Bouldering:** Climbing without a rope but at a height not greater than 6 feet off the ground. Spotters (participants who safeguard the movements of a member of the group) provide support and protect the head and upper body of a climber in case of a fall. Spotting is used on descending and ascending high elements or climbing routes and bouldering.
- **Top roping:** A climbing method in which the rope is anchored from the top of the climbing route, using belays (safety ropes to secure a person to an anchor point). The belayer (person who controls belay/safety line to prevent long and dangerous falls) is set up at the bottom of the route with the other end of the rope tied to the climber.
- **Multi-pitch climbing:** For experienced climbers only. A climb on a long route that requires several pitches the length of a rope or less (a “pitch” is the rope-length between belay stations). The climbing group climbs to the top of the first pitch. The lead climber climbs the next pitch, anchors in, and belays each remaining climber individually to the anchor.
- **Indoor or outdoor artificial climbing walls and auto belay or harnessed indoor ropes courses:** These activities do not incorporate an element of high risk and can be done by participants of various ages and abilities, keeping in mind that Daisies are not permitted to participate in climbing and rappelling.

**Know where to climb and rappel.** Climbing and rappelling may be done on indoor or outdoor artificial climbing walls, climbing/rappelling towers, indoor ropes courses and natural rock. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls of all abilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Disabled Sports USA](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Climbing and Rappelling Gear

#### Required Gear

- Climbing helmets that have the UIAA-approved label (Union of International Alpine Association) must be worn for all outdoor natural climbing situations where the participant is more than 6 feet off the

ground or on belay. It is recommended that a disposable liner, such as a shower cap or surgical cap, be worn underneath the helmet to protect against the spread of head lice.

- A chest harness with seat harness or full-body harness may be required for specific climbing or ropes activities.
- Sturdy shoes
- Close-fitting clothing; avoid wearing loose clothing, especially around the head and neck
- Portable drinking water
- Raingear, as necessary

### Recommended Gear

- Long pants or bike pants are recommended for activities when skin abrasions on legs are possible
- All equipment used for belaying such as ropes, webbing, harnesses, hardware and helmets are designed, tested, and manufactured for the purpose of this type of activity and appropriate for the size of the user.
- Nonperishable, high-energy foods such as fruits and nuts, as necessary dependent on location, length of time and type of climbing
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses

### Prepare for Climbing and Rappelling

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios, keeping in mind that Daisies do not participate in climbing and rappelling and Brownies participate in climbing only*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.**
  - For bouldering, top roping and multi-pitch climbing, an instructor with documented experience, indicating competence in equipment maintenance, safety and rescue techniques, proper use of the course and hands-on training (must provide certification) or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in Volunteer Essentials directly supervises the group. . Ensure that there is a regular process of review and update for all instructors. A minimum of two instructors are present, and instructors are skilled in selecting appropriate activities, teaching and supervising spotting and belaying techniques, and modifying tasks to provide an appropriate experience for the ages and skill levels in the group. Before use, instructors inspect all equipment, course components, and landing areas in the activity area.
  - Indoor or outdoor artificial climbing walls and auto belay or harnessed indoor ropes courses facilitators have experience, indicating competence in equipment maintenance, safety and rescue techniques, proper use of the course and hands-on training. A minimum of one facilitator and an additional adult are present, and facilitators are skilled in selecting appropriate activities, teaching and supervising spotting and lowering techniques, and modifying tasks to provide an appropriate experience for the ages and skill levels in the group. Before use, facilitators inspect all equipment, course components, and landing areas in the activity area.
- The instructor-to-participant ratios are as follows:**
  - Bouldering and top roping: 1 instructor to 10 participants
  - Multi-pitch climbing: 1 instructor (qualified lead climber) to 3 participants

**NOTE:** The instructor to participant ratio is NOT the same as the adult to girl ratio that is found in the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints. Both ratios MUST be complied with when girls are participating in climbing or rappelling. For example, if there are 15 Cadettes participating in a multi-pitch climbing activity, there must be 5 instructors plus 2 adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).

- Select a safe site.** Permits and permission requests are filed as required for outdoor natural climbing sites and facilities. All permanent structures and the belaying system are planned and constructed by

experienced individuals. Plans and procedures are established to avoid unauthorized use of the site, structures, and equipment. The artificial climbing site must be posted to warn against unauthorized use.

- **Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls as well as abrasions and sunburn. A sharp knife, hardware, and extra rope of appropriate length for rescue are available at the site. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. Specialized safety and rescue procedures are planned and practiced to ensure the ability to remove a participant from a rappelling or climbing situation. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
- **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Sharp objects, jewelry, and watches are removed and pockets emptied. Long hair is pulled back from the face and fastened under the helmet to prevent tangling.

### On the Day of Climbing or Rappelling

- **Get a weather report.** If climbing and rappelling outdoors, on the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. Be prepared to alter the activity plan or have an alternate activity prepared if weather conditions change. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Ensure that equipment is well-maintained\*.** There is a documented maintenance schedule and periodic inspection by instructors and outside professionals of all artificial structures and equipment used in the activities. A use log is kept on all equipment subject to stress, wear, and deterioration. A written equipment monitoring and retirement process is established and followed.
- **Participants learn about and prepare for climbing and rappelling.** Instructors teach a set of readiness and action commands to all participants for climbing, spotting, and belaying. All participants utilize muscle warm-up and stretching activities before beginning physical activities. Instructors describe the objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants before beginning an activity.
- **Participants practice safe climbing and rappelling techniques.** Spotting techniques (if necessary) are taught, demonstrated, and practiced by participants prior to any climbing or rappelling activity. All activities are appropriately spotted. For activities where partners are needed, instructors match participants according to size and skill level, if appropriate. Instructors supervise all tie-ins, belays, and climbs on climbing sites and spotting on bouldering sites.

### Climbing and Rappelling Links

- International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation: [www.theuiaa.org](http://www.theuiaa.org)
- Rockclimbing.com: [www.rockclimbing.com](http://www.rockclimbing.com)

### Climbing and Rappelling Know-How for Girls

- Leave no trace. When climbing and rappelling in natural areas, it's important to respect rocks and the environment. Read tips from the [U.S. National Park Service Web site](http://www.nps.gov).

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Girl Scouts use the Internet for a variety of reasons such as to communicate with other girls, research travel plans and activities, and create websites for events and series opportunities. In addition, Councils may choose to participate in the Digital Cookie online sales program, as well as the online sale and marketing of other approved Girl Scout related products. In addition, a Girl Scout group working with an adult may wish to do such things as:

- Earn a technology award or other award found online
- Search for other Girl Scout council or group web sites
- Research a badge or community resource
- Visit the [World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts' \(WAGGGS\) Web site](#) or member countries' web sites
- Create a static web page on the Internet (a static web page is one that looks the same each time users view it and does not allow guests to post to it)
- Set up a secure, password-protected Web site with a calendar and information for girls and families
- Use Girl Scout vendor web sites to learn more about product activities

Adults should monitor web sites that girls view, ensuring that they are safe and actively controlled. No girl or adult acting on behalf of girl members can collect money online for Girl Scout products or conduct money-earning activities online with two exceptions. The first is for Digital Cookie, and the second is for GSUSA-approved magazine vendor programs. In addition to the information contained in these Safety Activity Checkpoints, please also see the Safety Activity Checkpoints titled "Girl Scout Cookie/Council Sponsored Product Sales".

**Know where to use computers and go online. Most girls will go online from their home computers. For girls that cannot go online from home, check with your Girl Scout council for suggestions on sites where computers are available for use.**

**Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Independent Living Institute](#) provides to people with disabilities.**

### Prepare for Computer/Online Use

- ❑ **Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** If girls will be participating in a group learning session outside of their normal meeting place, see the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*.
- ❑ **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** When planning a group learning session, make sure the instructor has the appropriate knowledge and experience for the learning session.
- ❑ **Select a safe location to use computers and the web.** When planning a group learning session, identify a location that provides group members with opportunities to use computers and access the Internet. Look for computers available for group use at a library, Girl Scout program center, school or college computer lab, computer rental store with training facility, or museum. Make sure that there are enough computers for each girl to learn by doing, even if there is some sharing (cooperative learning) taking place.
- ❑ **Understand the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge.** Before girls use the Internet, copy and distribute the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, which is available at the end of this document and at [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org). All girls, as well as their parent/guardian, must read, agree to and sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge before girls go online.

### Guidelines for Developing a Web Site

- ❑ **Ensure girls' safety in web site design.** Girls must understand that the Internet is an open means of communication that anyone can access. As such, web sites will often attract people other than their intended users. It is therefore imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and adults not be disclosed on a web site. The following measures help to ensure girls' safety while online:
  - Use only girls' first names.
  - Never post last names, addresses, phone numbers, or e-mail addresses of girls.
  - Always have a parent's or guardian's permission when using pictures of girls on a Web site. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old.
  - Do not post addresses of group meeting places or dates and times of meetings, events or trips. Instead, an adult who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an e-mail to the families.
  - Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a web site. All postings (such as message boards or guest books) should have adult oversight and be screened prior to posting live.
  - Ensure that web sites do not show personal e-mail addresses of girls, but use a troop or group e-mail, or an adult's e-mail address.
- ❑ **Web sites and links.** When selecting links to other web sites that show on your site, make sure the contents of potential links are in keeping with Girl Scout principles and activities. Avoid linking to commercial sites selling merchandise to avoid implied Girl Scout endorsement of the products they offer. Seek out sites that enhance girls' participation in Girl Scouting. These sites should be: tasteful; program level appropriate; show diversity; beneficial for girls, adults, and families; and in keeping with the Girl Scout organization's purpose. As a courtesy, you should e-mail the site's Webmaster, requesting permission to link to the site. Use similar criteria to determine what sites link to your group's web site.
- ❑ **Respect copyrighted material.** A group web site may not use copyrighted designs, text, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder. The basic principle is, if it's not yours, don't use it. Girls may use trademarks owned by GSUSA, which include the trefoil shape; Girl Scout Daisy Pin and Girl Scout Brownie Pin; contemporary and traditional Girl Scout pins; the words Girl Scout Daisy, Girl Scout Brownie, Girl Scout Junior, Girl Scout Cadettes, Girl Scout

Senior, Girl Scout Ambassador, Girl Scouting, Girl Scouts, and Girl Scout Cookies; Girl Scout Brownie Try-its, Girl Scout Junior Badges, and all Girl Scout Cadette-Ambassador Interest Project awards, their names and symbols, as well as all Girl Scout journey insignia. Information on use of GSUSA graphics and trademarks can be found at [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) under Girl Scout Central: Graphics Gallery, and under the link for Terms and Conditions on the footer of each [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) page ([http://www.girlscouts.org/help/terms\\_conditions.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/help/terms_conditions.asp)). Girl Scout trademarks can be used only in accordance with guidelines for their use. The Girl Scout trefoil, for example, may not be animated or used as wallpaper for a Web site. Check with your council's Web site for complete graphics guidelines and approvals. Some names (such as commercial products and cartoon characters) are also trademarked and cannot be incorporated into web sites or web site addresses. Permission is also required from the author or publisher for the use of videos and music on web sites. Do not post words to copyrighted songs, poems, or books, as permission must be granted from the record label, publisher, artist, poet, or author, and is nearly impossible to obtain.

- **Social-networking sites.** Groups whose girls are at least 13 years old and have obtained parental permission may set up a troop or group social networking site. In addition, all social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter and Myspace) must be approved by the council and must meet age limits set by the provider (usually 13 years old and older in most cases, which is in accordance with the United States Child Online Privacy and Protection Act [COPPA] and the Child Online Protection Act [COPA]). Any online marketing using social networking tools must follow guidelines outlined in the "Managing Group Finances" chapter of *Volunteer Essentials*. Any appearance in a Girl Scout–related online video or picture must have permission from each girl's parent or guardian, using the GSUSA girl/adult permission form. These completed forms should be held by the adult and/or council.

### Digital Cookie Guidelines

Digital Cookie is an online sales outlet for Girl Scout Cookies, designed to supplement and enhance the traditional cookie sales program. Since this is a unique way for girls to participate in the Girl Scout Cookie sale, separate Terms and Conditions for Girl Scouts, Volunteers, Parents/Guardians and Councils have been developed.

- **Ensure girls safety.** Girls must read and accept the Girl Scouts Digital Cookie Pledge before they can participate in the Digital Cookie Program. Parents/guardians of girls must read and accept the Terms and Conditions for Parents/Guardians of Girl Scouts before their daughter can participate in the Digital Cookie Program. Finally, volunteers must read and accept the Terms and Conditions for Volunteers before they can participate in the Digital Cookie Program. The following measures will help to keep a girl safe while participating in the Digital Cookie Program:
  - Girls should never post their last names, addresses, phone numbers or email addresses
  - Girls may only post about their participation in the Digital Cookie program on social media sites that allow them to restrict access to friends and family (e.g. Facebook), and not to social media sites open to anyone (e.g. Craigslist or e-Bay).
  - Girls will only share the link to their Digital Cookie site with people they know in real life
  -
- **Digital Cookie web sites.** As part of the Digital Cookie program, girls will be creating their own unique web sites to market and sell Girl Scout Cookies. Girls will be able to take and track orders, set sales goals and show how they will use the proceeds from cookie sales to support Girl Scout activities. Girls will also be able to upload videos to their website to help market the Girl Scout cookie sale. In order to ensure the safe use a girl's Digital Cookie web site the following points should be kept in mind:
  - Parents/guardians must review and approve a girl's website before it goes live.
  - For girls under 13 years old, a parent or guardian must manage the girl's web site and be responsible for all content and information posted.
  - Girls must only share their first name, troop number and council name on their Digital Cookie web site.
  - Parents/guardians must review and approve any pictures and videos before they are posted to a girl's Digital Cookie web site. If the girl is under 13 years old, a parent or guardian must post the pictures and videos to the girl's web site.

- The posting of all videos must be done in accordance with the instructions provided by GSUSA in order to ensure the security of the girl's Digital Cookie web site.

### Computer and Online Safety Links

- Girl Scouts of the USA: [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org)
- Go Girls Only (for girls grades 1–6): [www.gogirlsonly.org](http://www.gogirlsonly.org)
- Stop, Think, Connect: (<http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/STCResourceforKids.pdf>)
- The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace in Savannah, Georgia: [www.juliettegordonlowbirthplace.org](http://www.juliettegordonlowbirthplace.org)
- Girl Scout Cookies (for information on Girl Scout Cookies): [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org)
- Girl Scout council Finder: [www.girlscouts.org/councilfinder](http://www.girlscouts.org/councilfinder)

### Blogging

- **Blog about Girl Scouting.** Planning a take-action project, road trip, or camping adventure? Consider documenting your plans and experiences on a council or national blog and divvy up the documentation duties (photography, writing, editing, and so on) among the group.





## Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge for All Girl Scouts

I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number(s), parents' or guardians' work address/telephone number(s), and the name and location of my school without the permission of my parent or guardian.

I will tell an adult right away if I come across or receive any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.

I will always follow the rules of Internet sites, including those rules that are based on age of use, parental approval and knowledge, and public laws.

I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents or guardians. If my parents or guardian agree to a meeting, I will arrange it in a public place and bring a parent or guardian along.

I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parent or guardian.

I will talk with my parent or guardian so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide on the time of day that I can be online, the length of time that I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

I will not use the Internet to collect money for Girl Scout products, and I will follow all safety guidelines related to Girl Scout product sales.

I will practice online "netiquette" (good manners) at all times when online.

- **I won't spam others.**
- **I will not bully nor will I tolerate bullying (and I will always tell a trusted adult if this is a problem).**
- **I won't use bad language.**

I will be guided by the Girl Scout Promise and Law in all that I do online.

Signed,

Girl Scout \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The GSUSA Online Safety Pledge is based upon the Online Safety Pledge developed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children ([www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)).



## Cross-Country Skiing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Also referred to as “back-country,” “Nordic,” and “XC skiing,” cross-country skiing is an excellent form of exercise and an opportune way to explore the outdoors in the wintertime. As with downhill skiers, cross-country skiers use two poles for guidance, and bindings to connect boots to skis. Unlike downhill skiing, in which the entire boot is attached to the ski, only the toe of the cross-country skier’s boot is attached to the ski. Contact ski shops and cross-country ski organizations to inquire about rental equipment. Cross-country skiing is not permitted for Girl Scout Daisies.

**Know where to cross-country ski.** Designated cross-country ski trails are recommended. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions and approval. Also, [xcski.org](http://xcski.org) provides information about cross-country [skiing trails](#).

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [www.SitSki.com](http://www.SitSki.com) and [Disabled Sports USA](#) provide to people with disabilities.

### Cross-Country Skiing Gear

#### Required Gear:

- Skis
- Ski poles
- Boots
- Thick, water-resistant gloves or mittens

#### Recommended Gear

- Winter hat
- Heavy insulating socks

- Thermal underwear or long johns
- Sunglasses or ski goggles to protect eyes from bright snow glare
- Sunscreen and (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Water bottle, high-energy food (such as fruits and nuts)
- Daypack to carry personal belongings
- Windproof, waterproof jacket
- Snow pants or tights and windbreakers made for skiing, bicycling, or running

### Prepare for Cross-Country Skiing

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Instruction is given by an adult with experience teaching and/or supervising cross-country skiing for the age group(s) involved or has documented experience according to your council's guidelines..
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoint*.
- Select a safe cross-country skiing site\*.** Girls are encouraged to plan trip details and include adequate rest periods with opportunities to replenish fluids and eat high-energy foods (such as fruits and nuts). The nature of the terrain, potential hazards (such as an avalanche or frozen lake), mileage, and approximate cross-country skiing time are known to all group members. When a latrine is not available, individual cat holes at least 200 feet away from water sources are used to dispose of human waste (visit [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org) for more information).
- Map the course\*.** The route is marked on a map and before skiing designate a meeting place where girls can contact a supervising adult.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. Emergency transportation is available. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. Girls are trained in winter survival (such as snow-cave building, whiteouts, and avalanche avoidance), as needed. Search-and-rescue procedures are written out in advance and arrangements are made for medical emergencies and evacuation procedures. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Cross-Country Skiing

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. [Xcski.org](http://Xcski.org) provides reports about snow conditions by region. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.
- Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Follow cross-country safety standards\*.** Ski area rules are explained and observed:
  - Girls ski under control to avoid other skiers and objects.
  - Girls yield the right-of-way to those already on the trail. They step to the side to let faster skiers pass. A descending skier has the right of way.
  - A faster skier indicates her desire to pass by calling "Track, please."
  - Girls do not ski close to the edge of an embankment or a cliff.
  - Girls do not walk on ski trails.

### Cross-Country Skiing Links

- Cross Country Ski Areas Association: [www.xcski.org](http://www.xcski.org)
- National Ski Patrol: [www.nsp.org](http://www.nsp.org)
- The World of Cross Country Skiing: [www.xcskiworld.com](http://www.xcskiworld.com)

### Cross-Country Skiing Know-How for Girls

- **Get in shape.** Before cross-country skiing, run and/or participate in other aerobic exercises to build endurance.
- **Recover from a fall.** The act of hoisting back up while wearing skis can be a cumbersome process. Learn how to get back up on your skis at the [XCskiworld website](http://XCskiworld.com).

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Whether girls are participating in snowboarding or traditional downhill, slalom, Super G, or other types of skiing, participants use trails and slopes matched to their abilities. [Skiing.about.com](http://Skiing.about.com) describes various [ski levels](#), which range from “never-ever” to expert. In planning a Girl Scout ski or snowboarding trip, contact the ski resort or organization to inquire about rental equipment, lift tickets, and accommodations for large groups. With appropriate instructors, equipment and hills/levels, Daisies are permitted to participate in skiing. However, snowboarding is not permitted for Girl Scout Daisies.

**Caution:** Girls are not allowed to do aerial tricks on skis or snowboards.

**Know where to downhill ski and snowboard.** Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions and approval. Also, locate ski resorts by region at [ABC-of-Snowboarding](#)

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Disabled Sports USA](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Gear

#### Required Gear:

- Protective helmet with properly fitting safety harness that meets the Snell Memorial Foundation’s RS-98 or S-98 standards or the American Society for Testing and Materials ([ASTM](#)) F2040 requirements (or both) and displays the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal
- Ski or snowboarding boots
- Skis or snowboards with bindings

- Ski poles (not needed for snowboarding)
- Sunglasses or ski goggles to protect eyes from bright snow glare

### Recommended Gear:

- Hat
- Thick, water-resistant gloves or mittens
- Heavy insulating socks
- Sunscreen and (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Windproof, waterproof jacket and pants

### Prepare for Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios see the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Instructors are certified by the [Professional Ski Instructors of America](#) (PSIA) and the [American Association of Snowboard Instructors](#) (AASI) or possess equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines. Instructors have experience teaching and/or supervising downhill skiing/snowboarding for the age group(s) involved.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Select a safe downhill skiing and/or snowboarding site.** Girls are encouraged to plan trip details and include adequate rest periods with opportunities to replenish fluids and eat high-energy foods (such as fruits and nuts). A nutritious, high-energy snack is planned, with beverages provided to prevent dehydration. Ensure that terrain and potential hazards are known to all participants.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from Emergency Medical Services response time, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
- Get in shape.** Participants get in condition by exercising before the skiing or snowboarding trip..

### On the Day of Downhill Skiing or Snowboarding

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](#) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.
- Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Safeguard valuables.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Learn the basics of skiing and snowboarding.** Participants learn how to ride ski lifts, including line courtesy, loading and unloading, and emergency procedures. Skiers and snowboarders ski and snowboard under control. Participants ski responsibly, and the rules of the ski area are explained and observed.
- Follow downhill skiing and snowboarding safety standards.** Skiers and snowboarders follow these guidelines:
  - Do not ski off-trail or in an unmarked or closed area.
  - Make others aware before you turn.
  - Yield the right-of-way to those already on the slope.
  - Do not cross the path of skiers.

- Avoid objects and obstacles, such as trees and rocks.
- To rest or adjust equipment, stop on the sides of the slope or trail.
- Move quickly to the side of the trail or slope after falling, unless injured.
- Summon the ski patrol if a skier is injured.

### Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Links

- The Professional Ski Instructors of America and the American Association of Snowboard instructors: [www.thesnowpros.org](http://www.thesnowpros.org)
- National Ski Patrol: [www.nsp.org](http://www.nsp.org)
- U.S. Ski Team: [www.uskiteam.com](http://www.uskiteam.com)
- U.S. Snowboarding: [www.ussnowboarding.com](http://www.ussnowboarding.com)

### Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Know-How for Girls

- **Know the slopes.** Skiing.about.com details [trail ratings](#), which include green circle as the easiest, blue square as intermediate, and black diamond for expert skiers and snowboarders.
- **Prepare for snowboarding.** Learn about the snowboard stance, using a snowboard, and how to avoid injuries at [safesnowboarding.com](http://safesnowboarding.com).



## Fencing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Derived from the word “defense,” fencing is a sport and martial art that involves using swords called foils (practice swords), sabers, and *épées* (a fencing sword with a bowl-shaped hand guard). The object of fencing is to touch the opponent with the tip of a sword without getting hit by the opponent’s sword. A fencing game (or bout) is typically three minutes—the first fencer to score five touches (or hits) wins; if neither reaches five within the designated time period, the participant with the most touches wins. If performed correctly with the proper equipment, fencing is a safe activity with a low injury rate. Most fencing clubs provide students with a full kit of equipment. Girl Scout Daisies learn about fencing games and the rules of fencing but should use only foam mock swords.

**Know where to participate in fencing.** Beginners learn about fencing from fencing member clubs. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, to locate fencing clubs and camps, visit the [United States Fencing Association](#).

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that organizations such as [Wheelchair Fencer](#) provide to people with disabilities.

## Fencing Gear

### Required Gear

- Fencing mask made of wire mesh, with a thick protective bib
- Fencing sword (typically a foil, *épée*, or saber). Girl Scout Daisies use foam mock swords only.

### Recommended Gear

- Fencing glove
- Chest protector
- Plastron (underarm protector worn on fencing arm)
- Fencing jacket
- Fencing knickers or pants that cover knees
- Long socks that go up to knees (soccer socks are recommended)
- Sneakers or court shoes

### Prepare for Fencing

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the fencing instructor is certified by the U.S. Fencing Coaches Association or an equivalent international fencing association.
- Select a safe fencing location\*.** Ensure that the location of fencing instruction or event is an open space free of obstructions. The fencing floor is even and non-slippery; a wood floor or sport court is recommended.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED. *See Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Fencing

- Use the buddy system.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Safeguard valuables.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*

### Fencing Links

U.S. Fencing Association: [www.usfencing.org](http://www.usfencing.org)

U.S. Fencing Coaches Association: [www.usfca.org](http://www.usfca.org)

International Fencing Federation: [www.fie.org](http://www.fie.org)

### Fencing Know-how for Girls

- Learn basics of fencing. Go to [USA Fencing, Fencing 101](#) to learn about weapons, competition, fencing terms and more.
- Go for the gold. Mariel Zagunis, who won gold medals in the individual saber at the **2004** and **2008 Summer Olympics**, is only the second American ever to have won a gold medal in Olympic fencing. Read about Mariel and other Fencing athletes at [USA Fencing, Athlete Bios](#).
- \* These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility as appropriate.



## Fishing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Fishing (also referred to as “angling”) is a sport, a leisurely activity and a major food industry, depending on who you’re talking to. In the United States, freshwater fishing is more popular than saltwater fishing, and varieties include fly fishing, ice fishing (see the “Ice Fishing” Safety Activity Checkpoints) and match fishing (the most popular form of competitive fishing). The best times of day to fish rely on a variety of factors, such as amount of sunlight, temperature and depth of water and winds. In general, however, the best times to fish are early in the morning or in the mid-evening.

**Know where to fish.** Lakes, rivers, ponds, creeks, and the ocean are great places to fish. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, [Takemefishing.com](http://Takemefishing.com) provides an online tool to select fishing locations in the United States.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Disabled Sports USA](http://DisabledSportsUSA.org) provides to people with disabilities.

### Fishing Gear

#### Required Gear

- If fishing from a boat, reference the “Row Boating” or “Sailing” Safety Activity Checkpoints
- If girls are wading in water more than knee-deep or fishing from a boat, ensure that they wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).
- Fishing rod appropriate to the type of fishing
- Fishing tackle (and tackle box) appropriate for the size and skill level of the participants and the type of fish to be caught
- Tools for removing hooks and cutting lines

#### Recommended Gear

- Layered, non-cotton clothing that's easily changeable depending on temperatures (waterproof jacket recommended)
- Boat shoes, closed-toe and nonslip hiking/sport sandals with heel strap, water socks or shoes (no flip-flops)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15)
- Sunglasses or sunhat
- Flashlight
- Insect repellent
- Cooler and ice for keeping fish cool and avoiding spoilage (if intended for consumption)
- If fishing from a boat, at least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water
- Fishing net

## Prepare for Fishing

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Ensure participants are able to swim (for girls wading in water more than knee-deep).** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the adult or fishing instructor holds the following certification or possesses equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#):
  - **Fishing from a dock:** American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue certification. The ratio of adult watchers to participants is 1 to 10, except for Daisies where the ratio is 1 to 6. Additional adult watchers are necessary for groups that are spread out or out of direct sight.
  - **Fishing while wading, above knee-deep.** American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue certification. The ratio of adult watchers to participants is 1 to 10, except for Daisies where the ratio is 1 to 6. Additional adult watchers are necessary for groups that are spread out or out of direct sight.
  - **Fishing from a shoreline or while wading (up to knee-deep):** American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue is recommended, but not required. However, personal flotation devices or other water rescue equipment must be provided. The ratio of adult watchers to participants is 1 to 10, except for Daisies where the ratio is 1 to 6. Additional adult watchers are necessary for groups that are spread out or out of direct sight.
  - **Fishing from small craft:** American Red Cross Small Craft Safety certification; the ratio of adult watcher to participant is 1 to 10, except for Daisies where the ratio is 1 to 6. Additional adult watchers are necessary for groups that are spread out or out of direct sight.
  - **NOTE:** The instructor-to-participant ratio is NOT necessarily the same as the adult-to-girl ratio that is found in the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints. Both ratios MUST be complied with when girls are participating in fishing. For example, if there are 20 Juniors participating in a fishing activity, there must be 2 instructors plus 3 adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Observe fishing and environmental regulations.** When selecting a fishing location, follow local, state and federal fishing regulations, and obtain [fishing licenses](#), where required. Use the correct type of bait and fishing gear permitted in that area, and learn about limits on the number, size and kind of fish that you can keep. Also select a fishing location that is separate from swimming areas.

- ❑ **Select appropriate boats for water and passengers\***. Make sure craft weight and capacity are not exceeded (some crafts clearly display maximum capacity). Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment.
- ❑ **File a float plan for extensive boat trips**. If going on an extended boat fishing trip, file a float plan with a reliable person who will notify local authorities should your group not return. Float plans must include the names of people on board, destination, craft description, times of departure and return and additional details about routes and marine communications. The Coast Guard provides an [electronic, printable form](#).
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies**. Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Fishing

- ❑ **Get a weather and wind report**. Never fish on a stormy or extremely windy day. On the day of the fishing activity, visit [weather.com](#) or other reliable sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If weather conditions prevent the fishing trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system**. See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning**. Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, head into the wind at a 45-degree angle, and stay low.
- ❑ **Respect fish and wildlife**. Whenever possible, use barbless hooks, and return live fish to the water. Remove fishing gear, bait, and dead fish at the end of the fishing activity.

### Fishing Links

- American Sportfishing Association: [www.asafishing.org](#)
- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies: [www.fishwildlife.org](#)
- International Game Fish Association: [www.igfa.org](#)
- Leave No Trace: [www.lnt.org](#)
- Take Me Fishing: [www.takemefishing.org](#)
- U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division: [www.uscgboating.org](#)

### Fishing Know-How for Girls

- **Lure them in**. Learn all about the vast variety of artificial and live fish bait on this at [Take Me Fishing](#).
- **Learn about rods and reels**. Spincast, spinning, baitcast, and fly are the four reel types on the [Take Me Fishing](#).

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**

# Geocaching: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Geocaching is a recreational outdoor activity that centers on the use of a Global Positioning System (GPS) and maps. Geocachers seek out caches (waterproof containers containing logbooks) that have been hidden just about anywhere in the world, whether in urban areas, in the wilderness, in tree roots and so on. As treasure hunters in an international game of hide-and-seek, participants use [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) to select cache locations and communicate with other geocachers.

Geocaching often involves lengthy city walks or day hikes in the woods. Depending on the location of a cache, participants are prepared for more strenuous activities. If incorporating backpacking, canoeing, and/or rock climbing into a geocaching activity, reference the appropriate Safety Activity Checkpoints to ensure proper safety precautions are taken, including the presence of a qualified instructor(s). Because of the challenging nature of GPS operation and the ciphering of numbers and data, geocaching is not permitted for Girl Scout Daisies unless they're working with older girls and adults as part of another outdoor activity. Geocaching is appropriate for Girl Scout Brownies so long as the time duration is not excessive and girls are looking for basic cache hides.

**Know where to participate in geocaching.** Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, when on private or government property, follow all posted rules, guidelines and etiquette. [Geocaching.com](http://Geocaching.com) outlines locations that are prohibited for placing a cache.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Handicaching.com](http://Handicaching.com) provides to people with disabilities.

## Geocaching Gear

### Required Gear:

- GPS device

### Recommended Gear:

- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Portable drinking water
- Cell phone
- Clothing appropriate for the activity and weather
- Notebook and pen or pencil

- Swag (or “stuff we all get”), which is the items that geocachers place into caches—usually small plastic toys, key chains, sunglasses—for other geocachers to take once they’ve located a cache. Topographical and/or standard map of geocaching area
- Daypack to carry personal belongings
- Hiking boots for wilderness areas, or comfortable and sturdy walking shoes for urban environments
- Whistle

## Prepare for Geocaching

- **Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. For a large group of girls participating in geocaching, it is recommended that girls organize themselves into small groups.
- **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** The geocaching instructor has experience and skill in teaching/supervising geocaching, topographical-map reading, and proper usage of GPS devices and has documented experience according to your council’s guidelines, as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*. For geocaching activities that involve caving, rock climbing, and similar activities, refer to the appropriate Safety Activity Checkpoints for details about instructor credentials and/or skill sets. The instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls before geocaching.
- **Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Select a safe geocaching location.** Learn about the terrain of a geocaching site by learning about the Difficulty/Terrain rating (D/T) on the cache page of [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com). The ratings, which range from 1/1 to 5/5, measure the level of difficulty for finding a cache at a designated location. A terrain rating of 1 typically means the cache is accessible for people with disabilities. Keep in mind that a GPS device provides a direct line measurement from the starting point to a destination; a GPS does not include the distance around path obstructions such as bodies of water.
- **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in activities.
- **Develop a geocaching curriculum.** Encourage girls to plan the details of a geocaching trip, and develop a geocaching curriculum that includes lesson plans that cover elements such as the purpose of the activity, skills necessary, safety considerations, diagrams to aid with comprehension, and navigational resources.
- **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of soft tissue and bone injury, and hypothermia. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from Emergency Medical Services response time, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training. On the Day of Geocaching
- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the geocaching activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if weather conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open, flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them.
- **Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Girls learn about geocaching.** Girls develop skills about GPS use, latitude and longitude, and reading maps. Ideally, each girl is able to use her own GPS, or two girls share a GPS. When more than three participants share a GPS device, it becomes more difficult for girls to actively participate in the geocaching activity.

- **Practice safe geocaching.** To prevent injury when searching for caches, inspect areas with care before trekking into potentially dangerous locations or placing hands into unknown nooks and crannies such as ground holes, ponds, creeks, or urban buildings and structures. Be on lookout for sharp edges, animals, insects, and garbage.

### Geocaching Links

- Geocaching—The Official Global GPS Cache Hunt Site: [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com)
- Geocaching with NaviCache: [www.navicache.com](http://www.navicache.com)
- TerraCaching—For Love of the Hunt: [www.terraching.com](http://www.terraching.com)

### Geocaching Know-How for Girls

- **Cache in, trash out.** Like the Leave No Trace initiative, geocachers are encouraged to leave caching sites cleaner than they found them. Geocachers are invited to participate in International [Cache In Trash Out](#) events, which are worldwide clean-up efforts.
- **Find a benchmark.** Using a GPS or directions provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Geodetic Survey, you can seek out NGS survey markers and other items that have been marked in the United States. Visit [www.geocaching.com/mark](http://www.geocaching.com/mark) to learn more.





## Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale: Safety Activity Checkpoints



The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led business in the United States, generating more than \$700 million for girls and communities nationwide. Through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, girls develop five essential skills: goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics. Girl Scout council-sponsored product sales—which include products from official Girl Scout Cookie vendors and magazine and nut vendors—give girls proven opportunities to earn money and/or credits for their Girl Scout program activities, while contributing significantly to their local councils and communities through take-action projects.

**Know where to sell Girl Scout Cookies and other products. See “Sell in Designated Areas” in this checkpoint, as well as materials and information supplied by your Girl Scout council and vendors.**

**Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations.**

### Prepare for the Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale

- Communicate with council and parents.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. In addition, make sure to obtain written permission from a girl’s parent or guardian before she participates in a council product sale.
- Girls plan the activity.** In order for girls to gain essential leadership skills inherent in the Girl Scout program, it is important to involve girls in the goal setting, planning, and execution of product sales. For this reason, adults may assist, but cannot sell Girl Scout products. (The role of the Girl Scout Daisy adult is fully explained in online materials on [girlscouts.org](http://girlscouts.org) on the [Girl Scout Central: Cookies](#) page.)
- Girls learn about product sales safety.** Girls learn and practice personal protection skills as outlined in GSUSA publications including this and other Safety Activity Checkpoints, Volunteer Essentials (provided by your council) and Risk Management at Girl Scout Councils. Examples of safe practices include:

- Providing, a designated adult's telephone number and/or group e-mail overseen by an adult for product reorders or complaints
  - Girls never giving out their phone number or personal e-mail address
  - Ensuring a first-aid kit is available at a booth sale or product sale "walk-about"
  - Having immediate telephone access to an adult as part of the emergency plan for Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors (Daisies, Brownies and Juniors are always accompanied by an adult)
- **Arrange for adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for adult-to-girl ratios, as well as the following guidance.* Adults provide supervision and guidance for all program levels, and must accompany Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies and Juniors when they are selling, taking orders for, or delivering products. Adults oversee Girl Scout Cadettes Seniors, and Ambassadors, and must be aware of how, when, and where the girls are selling products. In addition, an adult must be readily accessible to girls when they are participating in product sales. This can be accomplished by an adult being present with the girls or by having the adult and girls exchange telephone numbers. Adults are present at booth activities with girls at any program level. Adult supervision also extends to any online activity including Digital Cookie.
- **Prepare for cookie and product sales with Girl Scout Daisies.** Girl Scout Daisies may participate in product sales, but must do so under the direct supervision of an adult. Materials provided by GSUSA for Daisies focus on engaging girls in selling to friends (including neighbors and social groups) and family. This approach is based on:
- The attention span and physical abilities of the girls
  - The need for one-on-one supervision when handling money (the adult should hold all money)
  - The involvement of parents or trusted adults in goal-setting, and ensuring that goals are appropriate for the group or individuals
  - The importance of providing girls with a foundation in the basics of product-related activities
- **Sell in a designated area.** Girl Scouts should observe council jurisdiction (by zip codes) when marketing and selling products in person or at a cookie booth. For Digital Cookie girls may market and sell to family and friends beyond their council's jurisdiction. Prospects that come from outside council jurisdiction should be referred to the council finder at [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org). Girl Scouts should observe council jurisdictions when selling cookies in a parent's or guardian's workplace, unless other arrangements are made to accommodate all Girl Scout families connected to that workplace. For cookie booth sales, all booth locations are designated and approved by the council. In addition, all council guidelines with regard to setting up, manning and taking down a booth must be followed (see below for additional information).
- **Respect Girl Scout trademarks.** Girl Scout Cookies and Girl Scouts are trademarked by Girl Scouts of the USA and cannot be used to endorse others' products or services. Any questions regarding the use of Girl Scout Cookies or the name Girl Scouts must be addressed to the Girl Scout council or [trademarks@girlscouts.org](mailto:trademarks@girlscouts.org). The Girl Scout name, Girl Scout Cookies and Girl Scout marks, as well as pictures of Girl Scout Cookie boxes or cookies themselves, can be used only by Girl Scout councils and by girls in conjunction with a Girl Scout product program. These rights are not transferable to customers or businesses purchasing cookies for use with gifting or promotional activities.

### On the Day of the Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale

- **Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Note: If an individual Girl Scout Cadette, Senior or Ambassador is selling or delivering products, or making a sales presentation to a group, she must be accompanied by an adult if she is not accompanied by a buddy.
- Practice safety in selling and delivering products.
- Girls must wear a membership pin, uniform or Girl Scout clothing (e.g., Girl Scout T-shirt) to clearly identify themselves as Girl Scouts.
  - Girls and accompanying adults should be familiar with the areas and neighborhoods where product sales take place.
  - Girls should participate in door-to-door sales only during daylight hours.

- When Girl Scouts operate a booth in a store, mall or other public place, adults must be present at all times, regardless of the age of the Girl Scouts. When planning sales booths, follow council guidelines for additional information about setting up a booth and safety and security suggestions and assistance.
  - Use safe pedestrian practices, especially when crossing at busy intersections.
  - Do not enter the home or vehicle of a stranger, and avoid selling to people in vehicles (except at designated drive-thru cookie booths) or going into alleys.
  - Do not carry large amounts of money and ensure provisions have been made for safeguarding the money in advance of the sale.
- ☐ **Practice safe booth sales.** When setting up booth sales, ensure that:
- You have adequate space at the booth for table, products and girls and to allow for safe passage by pedestrians, bikes and cars.
  - Girls are a safe distance from cars. If possible, set up a safety barrier between cars and the booth—perhaps a few volunteers could park their cars in spaces near the booth location.
  - The booth is not blocking a store entrance or exit.
  - While girls can receive cash from buyers and make change, they should hand the money to the adult for safekeeping. It is important that cash is kept safe and out of sight. This can be accomplished by:
    - Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
    - Having an adult volunteer keep the money by, for example, securing it in a front-facing pouch tied around her waist
- ☐ **Digital Cookie.** Digital Cookie is friends and family driven, and allows girls to create their own Digital Cookie web site where their friends and family can purchase cookies. In order for a girl to participate in the Digital Cookie Program she must read and agree to abide by the Girl Scout Digital Cookie Pledge and her parents/guardians must read and agree to abide by the Digital Cookie Terms and Conditions for Parents/Guardians of Girl Scouts. Both of these documents outline the steps needed to ensure a girl has a safe experience when participating in the Digital Cookie Program. For more specific information on how to be safe when participating in the Digital Cookie Program, please see the Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- ☐ **Practice safe online marketing.** Girls not participating in Digital Cookie may call and send e-mail messages to alert friends and family to product sales, and accept customer commitments via email or telephone. Girls who are 13 years old or older may use social networking sites to market product, but must follow council and GSUSA guidelines. Girls sending out product e-mails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name and their council name. Personal e-mails or street addresses of girls should never be used for contacting or responding to customers. Instead, use one of the following:
- A blind return address account, hosted on a secure site such as provided by our product sales partners, where the girls' name or personal e-mail address is not revealed to the customer
  - A group account monitored by an adult
  - An adult e-mail account supervised by an adult

### Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale Links

- Girl Scout Cookies official site: [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org)

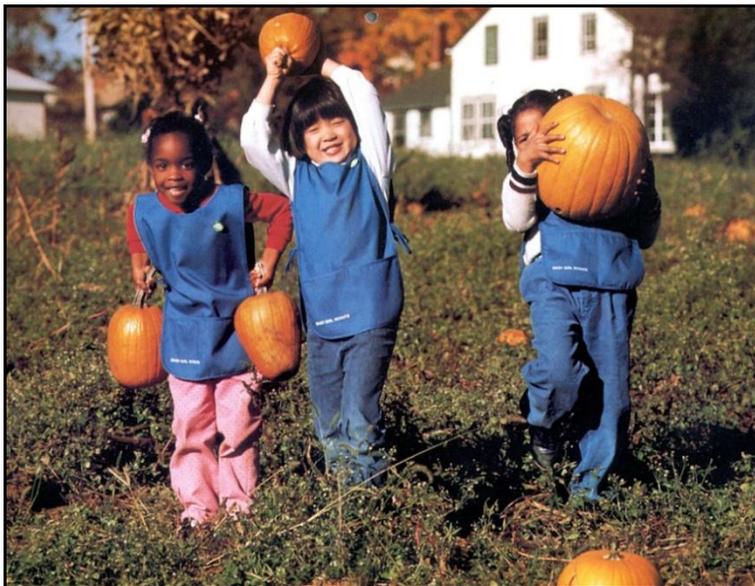
### Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale Know How

- GSUSA official product sale vendors: Companies licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce official Girl Scout products for girls to sell. The companies are selected by councils and contracted for one, two, and/or three years.
- [Little Brownie Bakers](#) and [ABC Bakers](#) produce Girl Scout cookies. Their Web sites have general information as well as activities and management tools.
- [Ashdon Farms](#) and [Trophy Nut](#) are approved GSUSA nut vendors and provide online information, activities, and management tools.

- [QSP /GAO](#) and [M2 Media Group](#) offer magazine subscription programs approved by GSUSA. Each provides online tools and activities for download and use. Magazine selection and sales may take place online. Check with your council for more details.
- Nutritional and packaging information: Read nutritional and health information on product description sheets provided by the vendors annually or check their Web sites. Girls should be able to discuss serving size, nutritional values, and fat and allergy information. Read additional nutrition information at [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org). Recycling information is provided on product containers.



## Hayrides: Safety Activity Checkpoints



A traditional activity that's often part of autumn festivities and apple- or pumpkin-picking trips, hayrides are fun for girls of all ages. Before participating in a hayride, ensure that hayride equipment (tractor/truck, bales of hay) are secure, that vehicle weight limitations and seating capacities are not exceeded, and that paths and trails are free of obstructions. Also ensure that girls are responsible riders who stay seated during the hayride.

**Know where to go on hayrides. The hayride takes place on private property at a maximum speed of 10 miles per hour. Public roads and highways are not used. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.**

**Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations.**

### Hayride Gear

#### Required Gear

- Qualified driver who is licensed to drive a vehicle in the jurisdiction and is at least 21 years of age.
- The hauled vehicle in good working order and meets all state and local safety requirements and displays proper identification showing these conditions have been met. The hauled vehicle has protective sides and rear fencing or gates, as well as rear lights in working order. Any coupling of a trailer to a vehicle is appropriate to the load and has a safety chain.

#### Recommended Gear

- Layered clothing appropriate for the weather
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) and lip balm
- Sunglasses

## Prepare for the Hayride

- ❑ **Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints* for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios.
- ❑ **Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Select a safe hayride location and provider\*.** Inspect the site to be sure it is free of potential hazards, and make sure emergency medical care is accessible. Ensure that the hayride route is clear of debris and hazards that may cause a jolt or jarring ride for participants.
- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of abrasions, sprains, and fractures. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of the Hayride

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the hayride trip, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls learn about and practice safe hayrides.** Girls do not ride in the hauling vehicle. The driver of the hauling vehicle is licensed to drive a vehicle in the jurisdiction and is at least 21 years of age. The hauled vehicle meets all state and local safety requirements and displays proper identification showing these conditions have been met. The hauled vehicle has protective sides and rear fencing or gates, as well as rear lights in working order. The hay or straw is properly stacked to prevent slipping. Sufficient seating space is allowed for each person. Girls and adults remain seated during the ride.

## Hayride Links

- National Safety Council: [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)
- Integrating Safety into Agritourism: <http://www.safeagritourism.com/>
- Haunted House Association:  
[www.hauntedhouseassociation.org/safety/hayride\\_safety\\_and\\_common\\_sense.php](http://www.hauntedhouseassociation.org/safety/hayride_safety_and_common_sense.php)

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Hiking: Safety Activity Checkpoints

Unlike short walks, hiking involves lengthy, cross-country walking trips and often requires sturdy boots to provide traction on rocks and unruly earth floors. With respect to the [Leave No Trace](#) philosophy, it's important for hikers to leave trails as (or better than) they found them. Although the action of one hiker may not strongly affect the environment, the effects of large groups of hikers can degrade trails.

**Caution:** Girls 12 years old and older must follow the Shooting Sports Safety Activity Checkpoints in order to use firearms, and must have both council and parent/guardian permission. Girls are never allowed to hunt, go on high-altitude climbs or to ride all-terrain vehicles or motor bikes.

**Note:** For overnight hiking experiences, follow the guidance in the Backpacking Safety Activity Checkpoints.

**Know where to hike. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, to locate hiking areas near U.S. metropolitan areas, visit [localhikes.com](http://localhikes.com) or [alltrails.com](http://alltrails.com).**

**Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls of all abilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Contact national parks to inquire about their accommodations for people with disabilities. To learn more about adapting hiking activities visit [Disabled Sports USA](#).**

### Hiking Gear

#### Required Gear

- Lightweight, layered clothing and outerwear appropriate for weather conditions
- Water bottle or hydration pack (each girl carries at least one quart)

- Nonperishable, high-energy foods such as fruits and nuts
- Hiking/trail boots or footwear
- Map and compass or map and global positioning system (GPS)
- Flashlight
- Whistle

### Recommended Gear

- Rain jacket or poncho
- Insect repellent
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Hat or bandana
- Day pack
- Sunglasses
- Pocket knife

### Prepare for Hiking

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.* In addition, encourage girls to plan routes, activities, rules for group living and guidelines for dealing with problems that may arise with other groups of hikers.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *For adult-to-girl ratios see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.* In addition, ensure that the hiking adult or instructor has experience in teaching hiking techniques and trip planning. Ensure that one adult is in front of the group of hikers, and the other is in the rear of each group, and that both are familiar with the area.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls share resources.** Encourage girls to distribute a list of hiking gear and supplies, and to determine which resources can be shared.
- Choose an appropriate hiking route.** Terrain, mileage, and hiking time are known to the hikers in advance. Hikes are restricted to a reasonable length as determined by age, level of experience, nature of the terrain, physical condition of the hikers, disabilities, weather conditions and time of day. The hiking pace always accommodates the slowest hiker.
- Assess safety of hiking routes.** The route is known to at least one of the adults or a report is obtained in advance to assess potential hazards such as poisonous plants, dangerous animals, unsafe drinking water, cliffs and drop-offs. Ensure that a land-management or similar agency is contacted during the trip planning stage to determine available routes and campsites, recommended group size, water quantity and quality, and permits needed.
- Ensure that hikers have a comprehensive understanding of the trip.** Group members are trained to be observant of the route, surroundings, and fatigue of individuals. Instruction is given on the safety rules for hiking, such as staying together in a group, recognizing poisonous plants and biting or stinging insects and ticks, respecting wild animals and behaving effectively in emergencies. Ensure that girls, based on their level, know how to read maps, use a compass, navigate a route, and estimate distance.
- Take safety precautions.** Search-and-rescue procedures for missing persons are written out in advance, reviewed, and practiced by girls and adults. Methods of communication with sources of emergency care, such as hospitals, and park and fire officials, are known and arranged in advance.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases from extremes of temperature, such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke, frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, as well as sprains, fractures, insect stings, tick bites, snake bites, sunburn, and altitude sickness, as necessary. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. If feasible, a vehicle is available to transport an injured or sick person. See Volunteer Essentials for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Hiking

- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if weather conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan, alternative activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm with lightning, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Respect the environment and keep trails clean.** Use the principles of minimal-impact camping. Store garbage in insect- and animal-proof containers with plastic inner linings, and cover it securely when there is a campsite garbage-pickup service. When there is no garbage-pickup service, remove garbage from campsite in plastic bags and discard, as appropriate. Recycle whenever possible. Do not bury food; carry out grease and fuel canisters. Do not remove natural materials such as leaves or branches. In addition, avoid eating wild foods, walking on or uprooting plants, interfering with or feeding wild animals, and littering.
- **Practice safe hiking.** Instructions are given on the safety rules for hiking, which include forbidding hiking off-trail and after dusk. Girls stay on the pathway to avoid trampling trailside plants and causing erosion. In addition, take adequate rest periods, with time to replenish fluids and eat high-energy food (such as fruits and nuts).

### Hiking Links

- American Hiking Society: [www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org)
- Appalachian Mountain Club: [www.outdoors.org](http://www.outdoors.org)
- Appalachian Trail Conference: [www.atconf.org](http://www.atconf.org)
- Leave No Trace: [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)

### Hiking Know-How for Girls

- **Practice with maps and a compass.** Before heading out on a lengthy hike, learn how to read a map and use a compass. Look at a map to understand where you started, and where you plan to finish. What do you anticipate you'll see during your hike?
- **Learn about regional nature.** What flowers, trees, insects are unique to the area you're hiking in?



## Horseback Riding: Safety Activity Checkpoints



One of the most important aspects of horseback riding is showing respect for horses. Before riding, inspect horses to ensure that they have no cuts, injuries, or rocks in their feet.

The purpose of these checkpoints is to provide tips for trail riding and ring or corral riding. Some activities, such as vaulting, pack trips, driving, and games, may require special equipment, as well as horses and instructors with specialized training (for vaulting, see the Vaulting Safety Activity Checkpoints). Horseback riding is not permitted for Girl Scout Daisies, but Daisies may participate in pony rides when the horses are led by persons on foot.

**Know where to ride.** Locations with firm grounding that are designated for horseback riding. Riding is done during daylight hours; riding at night is in an enclosed, well-lit area. Avoid horseback riding in wet areas, mud, and on streets and parking lots. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions and approval

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Disabled Sports USA](#) and [Saddle Up!](#) provide to people with disabilities.

### Horseback Riding Gear

#### Required Gear

- Protective headgear with properly fitting safety harness that meets the American Society for Testing and Materials ([ASTM](#)) F1163-88 requirements, displaying the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal
- Long pants and appropriate protective clothing (clothing is snug to prevent tangling with saddle)
- Boots or closed-toe shoes with a smooth sole and at least a half-inch heel to prevent feet from sliding through stirrups (no steel-toe shoes, which could bend in stirrups). Recommended
- Gear/Saddle (sized appropriately for each rider)
- Extra Halter/Lead ropes carried by instructor
- Cell phone or walkie-talkies to communicate need for emergency services

## Recommended Gear

- Tapaderos (pieces of heavy leather around the front of the stirrup of a stock or range saddle to protect the rider's foot and to keep the foot from sliding through the stirrup). If the saddle does not have tapaderos, the rider should have riding boots with at least a 1-inch heel to prevent the foot from slipping
- Rain gear
- Well-fitting gloves to protect hands from blisters, rope burns, and cuts
- Saddlebag (for lengthy trail rides)
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15, dependent on weather and if riding outdoors) and lip balm
- Sunglasses (dependent on weather and if riding outdoors)

## Prepare for Horseback Riding

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Organize groups and arrange for adult supervision.** *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the Introduction to the Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Riding instructors are adults (at least 18 years old) who have current certification from an accredited horsemanship instructor training organization, such as the [Certified Horsemanship Association](#) and [American Association for Horsemanship Safety](#) and see [link to list below](#), or documented proof of a minimum of three years' experience successfully instructing in a general horseback riding program. Assistant riding instructors are at least 16 years old and are certified by an accredited horsemanship instructor training organization or have documented proof of at least one year's experience successfully instructing in a general horseback riding program. Riders are supervised by instructors or assistant instructors at all times when in the proximity of horses, whether mounted or not. For ring or corral riding and trail riding, at least one instructor and one assistant instructor supervise a group of 10 or fewer riders. For ring and corral riding, one additional instructor is required for every five additional riders. For beginners and younger girls, or for difficult trails, in trail riding, increased instructors may be needed.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Assess participants' maturity level.** Girls must possess sufficient physical coordination and balance to participate in riding. They are old enough to understand and practice safety procedures, to use good judgment in reacting to situations, and to take responsibility for themselves and their horses. Some stables have weight limits for rider eligibility, so check with the stable when making reservations.
- Select a safe site\*.** Obtain permission and any necessary permits before riding on public or private lands; records of maintenance checks, requests, and repairs must be kept. The stable operator provides evidence of liability insurance and instructor certification and references from other youth-group users of the stable. For both Girl Scout council-owned and non-Girl Scout riding facilities, the riding area is away from outside distractions and free of debris; the barn and riding areas do not have exposed barbed wire fencing; the instructional rings, corrals, paddocks, and stables have clearly posted rules and regulations; the horses are properly cared for, and the stables, corrals, and barns are clean and uncluttered. Tack (saddles, bridles, and so on) is clean and in good condition. Communicate with the horseback-riding organization about any rider weight limitations; in some cases, heavier riders can cause a horse pain, which, in turn, may cause horses to exhibit dangerous behavior.
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces. Riders may not ride barefoot, in sandals, or in hiking boots with lug soles. Riders do not wear backpacks, day packs, or fanny packs.
- Take safety precautions.** An emergency vehicle is readily available. Plans for communication with emergency services and fire officials are arranged in advance and known by each instructor. Plans for response in an emergency—such as a fire, severe weather, an injured rider, or an injured or loose horse—are known by all participants and instructors. At Girl Scout facilities, communication between the riding area and the site director or healthcare personnel is possible. In stable and ring areas,

telephone numbers for the fire department, local hospital or emergency ambulance service, and veterinarian are conspicuously posted, and the location of the fire alarm is known to all girls and adults.

- **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls as well as abrasions and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of Horseback Riding

- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of horseback riding, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Safeguard valuables.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Girls learn about safe horseback riding.** A pre-ride demonstration is given to first-time riders, including mounting, dismounting, starting, stopping, steering, and maintaining a balanced body position. Avoid changing clothing, such as putting on raingear, while mounted on the horse, because it may scare the horse; instead, dismount for clothing changes or adjustments.
- **Test and classify riders according to riding ability\*.** The horse and the riding area are assigned according to the rider's ability. Beginning riders attend an introductory safety lesson, including information on horse psychology and behavior and approaching, handling, and leading a horse. Before trail riding, all riders warm up in a ring or corral to ensure that they are well suited to their horses and can control all the gaits and functions required during the trail ride. Ensure that riders feel confident and demonstrate basic skills in controlling the horse (stop, start, and steer) and maintaining proper distance.
- **Follow basic horseback safety standards\*.** To ensure that equipment fits properly and/or is properly adjusted, an instructor makes a safety check of each rider's clothing, footwear, helmet, and saddle. He or she checks stirrup length by ensuring that riders are able to raise their behinds off the saddle about one hand's depth. Front and rear cinches are checked for tightness, twigs, folds, and bends. The instructor also checks the safety of the riding area before each session. Only one rider is allowed on a horse at any time, and there is no eating or drinking while riding. Riders should dismount before going through small gates.
- **Respect ring- or corral-riding standards\*.** Each horse and rider is under the observation of an instructor at all times, and the riding ring has good footing for the horses and is free of dangerous obstructions. The fencing is at least 42 inches high, visible, and well maintained. Gates to the ring are shut.
- **Inspect and don't spook horses\*.** Horses displaying uncomfortable or abnormal behaviors should be dismounted and checked for injuries and poor equipment fitting, and may need to be walked back to the stable on foot. If a horse gets loose, do not chase it; instead, an adult calmly attempts to retrieve the horse.
- **Respect trail-riding standards\*.** The length of the trail ride and the gait of the horses are geared to the ability of the least experienced rider. Riding trails have good footing and are free of dangerous obstructions such as low-hanging branches. Trails are marked, mapped, regularly inspected, and maintained. The participants ride single file, one full horse length apart, with an instructor at the head and at the rear of the group. Riders have control of horses, maintain the spacing between horses, and increase distances between horses when the horses' speed increases. Horses are walked (not ridden) up and down hills, and are walked for the final 10 minutes of any riding period in order to cool down.

- **Avoid public roads and highways whenever possible.** If a group must cross a road, the instructor first halts the group in a line well before the road, checks for traffic, and then signals the group to cross. At the signal, all horses are turned to face the highway and all cross at the same time.

### Horseback Riding Links

- Organizations that provide Horseback riding instructor certifications and training can be found at the American Camp Association website: <http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation/horsecert>
- Certified Horsemanship Association: [www.cha-ahse.org](http://www.cha-ahse.org)
- International Federation for Equestrian Sports: [www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org)
- United States Pony Clubs: [www.ponyclub.org](http://www.ponyclub.org)

### Horseback Riding Know-How for Girls

- **Get to know your horse.** Did you know there are more than 50 colors of horses? Thoroughbreds are identified by their colors, which include bay, black, chestnut, dark bay or brown, gray, and roan. Visit [www.thinklikeahorse.org](http://www.thinklikeahorse.org) to learn more about horses.
- **Hold your horses.** Before horseback riding, learn how to mount, dismount, rein, and other horseback riding procedures at [www.mahalo.com/how-to-ride-a-horse](http://www.mahalo.com/how-to-ride-a-horse).
- **Respect the horse.** Did you know that horses feel less comfortable when they can't see the rider's eyes? For that reason, avoid wearing sunglasses.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Ice Fishing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Ice fishing, the practice of fishing through a hole cut in the ice of a body of water, is a relaxing wintertime activity—particularly in northern U.S. states. Ice anglers often sit on stools inside small ice shanties, which provide shelter and warmth in cold temperatures. Shanties are typically made of wood or plastic and are rented from sport-fishing outlets or made at home.

**Know where to ice fish.** Lakes and ponds tend to be best. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, the [Take Me Fishing Website](#) provides an online tool to select fishing locations by U.S. location and water body. Consult state ice angler associations for information about ice fishing events and resources.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information available at [Take Me Fishing](#) and [Fishing Has No Boundaries](#).

### Ice Fishing Gear

#### Required Gear

- Snowsuit, warm coat, hat, and mittens
- Lightweight rubber gloves or hunting/fishing gloves
- Waterproof boots that protect against cold temperatures
- Fishing rod (1- to 3-foot rods are most common)
- Fishing tackle appropriate for the size and skill level of the participants and the type of fish to be caught (and tackle box)
- Tools for removing hooks and cutting lines
- Ice auger (ice saw or chisel). Click [here](#) for information on augers and other equipment.
- Ice sled for pulling equipment (optional)
- Jigging rod/pole or tip-up to catch fish
- Ice bucket and scoop

- At least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water

### Recommended Gear

- Flashlight and lantern
- Folding or portable chairs
- Cooler for storing fish (if intended for consumption)
- Shanty (optional)

### Prepare for Ice Fishing

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the adult or ice-fishing instructor holds American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue certification or possesses equivalent certification or documented experience (competencies); the ratio of instructor to participant is 1 to 10. Additional adult watchers are necessary for groups that are spread out or out of direct sight.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Observe fishing and environmental regulations.** When selecting an ice-fishing location, follow local, [state](#) and federal fishing regulations, and obtain [fishing licenses](#), where required. Use the correct type of bait and fishing gear permitted in that area, and learn about limits on the number, size, and kind of fish that you can keep.
- Verify safety of ice-fishing location.** Ensure that ice is solid and thick enough to support the ice fishers' weight. Click [here](#) for a copy of the Department of Natural Resources of the State of Minnesota's "ice card", which shows the recommended minimum ice thickness. Opinions vary about the appropriate thickness of ice for fishing. Generally the thickness should be between 4 and 6 inches. Check with your local Department of Natural Resources. Once arriving at the lake, check the ice thickness, keeping in mind that temperature, snow cover, currents, springs and rough fish all affect the relative safety of ice. Also, ice is seldom the same thickness over a single body of water, and can be two feet thick in one place and one inch thick a few yards away. Check the ice at least every 150 feet. Click [here](#) for more information on ice fishing safety.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. Basic ice rescue techniques are understood and practiced. Appropriate rescue equipment is on hand (for example, ring buoy, rope, throw bag, pole, ladder, boat, where necessary). See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Ice Fishing

- Get a weather report.** Never fish on a stormy or extremely cold day. On the day of the ice fishing activity, visit [weather.com](#) or other reliable sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If weather conditions prevent the ice-fishing trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity.
- Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit the ice-fishing location immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

- **Respect fish and wildlife.** Whenever possible, use barbless hooks, and return live fish to the water. Remove fishing gear, bait and dead fish at the end of the fishing activity. For additional information see the Leave No Trace [website](#).

### Ice Fishing Links

- American Sportfishing Association: [www.asafishing.org](http://www.asafishing.org)
- Take Me Fishing: [www.takemefishing.org](http://www.takemefishing.org)
- IceLeaders.com: [www.iceleaders.com](http://www.iceleaders.com)

### Ice Fishing Know-How for Girls

- **Learn the basics of ice fishing.** Know before you go! Visit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources [website](#) for helpful information
- **Learn how to set up an ice-fishing tip-up.** A tip-up is a device that holds a fishing line attached to a flag that tips up when a fish bites the attached bait. Watch an instructional video on [YouTube](#).



## Ice Skating: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Ice skating is an exhilarating form of exercise and entertainment in the wintertime and year round—and a safe activity if precautions are taken. It's important to use skates that are properly fitted, securely laced, and properly tied. Figure skates are different from hockey skates and speed skates in that they have a higher top, which provides ankle support during jumps. Falling on the ice is the riskiest situation for skaters, but there are ways to avoid injury. For beginners, falling is part of the learning process and is in the first lesson. Learn tips to avoid injuries at [SkatingFitness.com](http://SkatingFitness.com).

**Know where to skate.** The best places to skate are at an indoor or outdoor ice-skating rink. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, for regional ice-skating rinks, visit [SkatingFitness.com](http://SkatingFitness.com) or the [Ice Skating Institute's website](http://Ice Skating Institute's website). Girls may skate on a pond or lake (which will be far bumpier than a rink and may lead to more falling) with supervision, but may never skate on a stream or river. Consult with park personnel and local police to determine if the ice is safe for skating, before going on the ice. If unsure of the ice thickness, DO NOT skate on it. Girls may skate at night if the area is well lit.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Skating Athletes Bold at Heart](http://Skating Athletes Bold at Heart) and [US Figure Skating](http://US Figure Skating) provide to people with disabilities.

### Ice Skating Gear

#### Required Gear:

- Ice skates

#### Recommended Gear:

- For outdoor skating, several layers of warm clothing that allow freedom of movement
- Thermal underwear
- Warm coat
- Stocking hat and scarf

- Gloves or mittens
- Change of socks
- Tissues
- Protective skate gear for beginners (helmet, wrist, elbow, knee pads)
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15 dependent on weather and if skating outdoors) and lip balm
- Sunglasses (dependent on weather and if skating outdoors)

## Prepare for Ice Skating

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Organize transportation and arrange for adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the *Introduction to the Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Adults keep a close watch on skaters from outside the main skating area. Check with the rink supervisor in advance to learn how many adults, in addition to the rink staff, are needed to supervise the group while on the ice.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Practice sessions are scheduled for beginners, where an experienced ice-skating instructor instructs girls in basic ice-skating skills, safety, conduct rules, and has documented experience according to your council's guidelines, .
- Select a safe ice-skating site\*.** Obtain council guidance in selecting the ice-skating site; established ice-skating rinks are safest. Ensure that the rink has a smooth skating surface free of debris. Skating surfaces are checked in advance for thickness, and to ensure there are no patches of grass, rocks, and cracks. The rink supervisor is called in advance to arrange for large groups or for practice sessions.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider (level 1) with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls as well as abrasions, near drowning, and immersion hypothermia. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. Basic ice rescue techniques are understood and practiced. Appropriate rescue equipment is on hand for pond and lake skating and includes ring buoy, rope, throw bag, pole, ladder, boat, etc. (indoor rinks do not require such equipment). See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of Ice Skating

- Get a weather report.** If skating outdoors, on the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Safeguard valuables.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Warm up for ice skating.** Girls learn to perform basic skating skills, including how to fall and get up, before attempting more advanced skills. Gentle warm-up exercises are done before any strenuous ice skating; cool-down exercises end the sessions.
- Follow basic ice-skating safety standards\*.** Follow rink rules, such as:
  - Everyone skates in the same direction.
  - Girls do not stop in the main skating area.
  - Skaters yield the right-of-way to those already in the rink.
  - Skaters do not cut across the paths of other skaters.
  - Skaters do not push, shove, or race on the ice.

- A falling skater does not grab hold of another skater.
- A fallen skater rises quickly, unless injured.
- Loose or sharp articles, such as handbags, combs, and keys are not carried in pockets, hands, hair, or any place where they might cause injury to the skater in the event of a fall, or injure another skater by falling to the floor.

### Ice Skating Links

- Ice Skating Institute: [www.skateisi.com](http://www.skateisi.com)
- U.S. Figure Skating: [www.usfigureskating.org](http://www.usfigureskating.org)

### Ice Skating Know-How for Girls

- **Learn ice-skating techniques.** Learn about ice-skating turns, spins and jumps at [iceskate.net](http://iceskate.net), and how to fall and stop at [www.skatingfitness.com](http://www.skatingfitness.com).

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Indoor Skydiving: Safety Activity Checkpoints



**With your councils express permission, indoor skydiving is one of only two freefall activities not prohibited by Girl Scouts, primarily because it is a contained, low-impact activity that can be adjusted to the size and skill-level of the participants.** Indoor skydiving takes place in a vertical wind tunnel (a wind tunnel that moves air in an upward column) to simulate the experience of skydiving without planes or parachutes. The force of the wind generated in the tunnel is based on the size (height and weight), skill-level and needs of the “skydiver.” The skydiver floats three to six feet above a trampoline-like net, so if the fan fails, the participant falls into the net and is caught. There are several facilities in the United States that operate vertical wind tunnels for recreation and training; only those facilities with indoor vertical wind tunnels are permitted for use by Girl Scouts. Indoor skydiving is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies or Brownies.

Know where to “skydive.” Only indoor vertical wind tunnels are permitted. Be sure that the facility you plan to attend is indoors.

Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Indoor Skydiving is not recommended for pregnant women and people with previous or recurring back, shoulder, or neck problems, and some facilities also have weight restrictions and requirements for participants. Note that some facilities may prohibit people with any of the previously mentioned conditions from participating. Get specifics from the indoor skydiving facility you plan to attend.

### Indoor Skydiving Gear

#### Required Gear (may be provided by the facility)

- Helmet (full-face or open-face)
- Goggles
- Elbow/Kneepads

- Earplugs
- Jumpsuit

### Recommended Gear

- Comfortable clothes
- Tightly laced athletic shoes

### Prepare for Indoor Skydiving

- Communicate with council and parents.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the instructor holds instructional certification from the [International Bodyflight Association](#), or has council-approved equivalent certification or documented experience and skill in teaching and/or supervising indoor skydiving. If you have questions about certification or instructor knowledge, contact either the International Bodyflight Association or [Skyventure](#) (a recognized vertical wind tunnel company) to ask about instructors at the facility you intend to use.
- Compile key contacts.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Size up gear\*.** Ensure the appropriate sizes of helmets, jumpsuits, goggles, and elbow/kneepads are available, and make sure that helmets and goggles fit girls' faces securely and comfortably; make certain that girls with glasses or contacts have goggles that properly accommodate them.
- Safeguard valuables.** Don't leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place. Most indoor skydiving facilities provide a locker area for personal belongings. Check with the facility ahead of time about cost and availability of the facility's storage amenities.
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of abrasions, sprains, and fractures. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Indoor Skydiving

- Girls learn how to skydive indoors.** All first-time participants will be given instruction in how to properly wear and adjust gear and how to float and move in the vertical wind tunnel. All legitimate centers provide instruction; it is up to the adult organizing this activity to ensure this is so.
- Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Keep in mind, however, the buddy system only applies to activity **outside** the wind tunnel, as only one participant at a time is allowed in the wind tunnel.

### Indoor Skydiving Links

- International Bodyflight Association: [www.tunnelflight.com](http://www.tunnelflight.com)
- Bodyflight Network: [www.bodyflight.net](http://www.bodyflight.net)
- Skyventure: [www.skyventure.com](http://www.skyventure.com)

### Indoor Skydiving Know-How for Girls

- **Fall with style.** There are several maneuvers skydivers can do while in the wind tunnel including flips, spins, and turns. First time skydivers will not likely perform or learn any of these maneuvers; depending on skill-level, the instructor, and council guidelines, girls with experience may learn and perform these maneuvers while in the wind tunnel.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Indoor Trampoline Parks: Safety Activity Checkpoints



**With your councils express permission, indoor trampoline parks are one of only two freefall activities not prohibited by Girl Scouts.** An indoor trampoline park is an enclosed gymnasium-like space consisting of many connected trampolines used to turn an entire room into a massive trampoline. Indoor trampoline courts, because they are contained, low-impact, and adjustable to size and skill-level of participants, is one of two freefall activities not prohibited by Girl Scouts. Indoor Trampoline Parks have padded walls, soft (may be foam pits) landing areas and staff trained to watch for possible unsafe behavior. Indoor trampolining is not recommended for Daisy Girl Scouts.

**Caution:** Indoor trampoline parks may contain other activities that could require additional safety activity checkpoint reviews, or which are prohibited to Girl Scouts. Outdoor trampolines are **not** allowed under any circumstance. Personal gym mini-trampolines may be used as part of an exercise program (follow appropriate safety precautions).

**Know where to “trampoline.”** Only council-approved indoor trampoline parks are permitted. Be sure that the facility you plan to attend is approved by your council. Your council will be checking to ensure that the trampoline park meets the following safety standards:

- This trampoline facility meets or exceeds ASTM F2970 – 13 – *Standard Practice for Design, Manufacture, Installation, Operation, Maintenance, Inspection and Major Modifications of Trampoline Courts.*
- All trampoline courts are at floor level.
- Each trampoline court is surrounded by a wall enclosures and/or safety netting.
- Each trampoline bed has a second backup safety trampoline beneath it in the unlikely event the trampoline bed should fail – in accordance with ASTM standards.

- The steel and springs between the trampoline beds is covered by a minimum of 2 inches of gymnastics grade padding.
- Each trampoline court must be staffed by employee “monitors”, to monitor the safety of the participants and to insure participants are following the safety guidelines.
- There should be one “court monitor”, for every 32 kids.
- Monitors have onboarding training as well as ongoing training.
- There should be clearly posted rules that prohibit roughhousing, double-bouncing (when two kids land close to each other at the same time) or clothing that could be dangerous, such as belt buckles and studs, and loose objects like key chains. If these rules aren’t being enforced, leave.
- The trampoline facility has a system in place to handle participants if they are not following the safety guidelines.
- Trampolines shouldn’t be crowded. They should be divided into clearly marked 6-foot-by-10-foot areas. Only one person at a time should be allowed to bounce in each area.
- Little kids should not be jumping with bigger ones. They should be separated by height and weight.
- All participants, even returning participants, must review the safety guidelines **before** participating in any activities on the trampolines. These safety guidelines are reviewed via video or in person at the facility.
- Participants are required to wear appropriate clothing, including footwear.
- For facilities with foam pits: Foam pits are cleaned weekly – foam squares are removed, disinfected, and returned to the pit. Damaged foam squares are replaced.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Indoor trampoline parks are not recommended for pregnant women and people with previous or recurring back, shoulder, or neck problems, and some facilities also have weight restrictions and requirements for participants. Note that some facilities may prohibit people with any of the previously mentioned conditions from participating. Get specifics from the indoor trampoline facility you plan to attend.

## Indoor Trampoline Gear

### Recommended Gear

- Comfortable clothes
- Appropriate footwear (as required by the facility)

## Prepare for Indoor Trampolining

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the trampoline court is staffed by employee “monitors” to monitor the safety of participants and ensure that participants are following safety guidelines. Staff should receive safety and emergency preparedness training on an annual basis.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Size up gear.** Make certain that girls with glasses or contacts have goggles that properly accommodate them.
- Safeguard valuables.** Don’t leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place. Most indoor trampoline parks provide a locker area for personal belongings. Check with the facility ahead of time about cost and availability of the facility’s storage amenities.
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults are not wearing jewelry, excessive clothing or hats.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of abrasions, sprains, and fractures. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is

located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See Volunteer Essentials for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of Trampolining

- **Girls learn how to trampoline safely.** All participants (including returners) will be given instruction in safety and jumping rules. All legitimate centers provide instruction; it is up to the adult organizing this activity to ensure this is so.
- **Safety rules include\*:**
  - You may not have anything in your mouth (gum, candy, etc.) on the court.
  - Empty your pockets entirely.
  - Do not sit or lie on the court. If you are tired and need to rest, you must exit the court.
  - No pushing, tackling, running, racing or horseplay of any kind.
  - Do not touch or hang on to any of the top pads on the court.
  - No double bouncing.
  - Single flips are permitted. No double flips, and do not flip over the pads.
  - No more than two flips in a row.
  - Flips and other tricks can be dangerous ... perform at your own risk.
  - You can bounce and flip off the sidewalls, but you must land on the first trampoline next to the wall you bounced off of. You must be in control of your body at all times.
  - Do not attempt anything outside of your personal limitations or abilities.
  - Jumpers are separated by size as best as possible. Be aware of those around you and jump with people that are of similar size.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Keep in mind, however, the buddy system only applies to activity **outside** the trampolines, as only one participant at a time is allowed on a trampoline.

## Indoor Trampoline Links

- International Association of Trampoline Parks:  
<http://www.indoortrampolineparks.org/assets/docs/iatp%20press%20release%203.3.15.pdf>

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## In-Line Skating and Roller Skating: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Originally developed as a way for speed skaters to train year-round, in-line skating is now a popular activity and sport that represents a modernized version of roller-skating. All skaters are encouraged to obtain safety rules from the adult or rink manager, and beginners should consider taking lessons from a certified skating instructor. Once girls are skilled skaters, they may wish to participate in more challenging skate activities such as skating backward or hosting skating competitions and games.

**Know where to skate.** Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, to find a skating rink by region, visit the rink locator link at [rinktime.com](http://rinktime.com). Girls skate at night only in well-lit areas.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Center on Health, Physical Activities and Disabilities](http://www.nationalcenteronhealth.com) provides to people with disabilities.

### In-Line and Roller Skating Gear

#### Required Gear (for skating outdoors and in-line skating)

- Bike helmet or other helmet with the American National Standards Institute or SNELL Memorial Foundation seal, or both (helmets must be as snug as possible and be worn low over the forehead, approximately 1 inch above the eyebrows)
- Snug-fitting elbow pads and kneepads

## Recommended Gear

- Wrist guards that fit like gloves
- Clothing that allows freedom of movement
- Long-sleeve shirt to help prevent scrapes
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Daypack to carry personal belongings if skating outdoors

## Prepare for In-Line and Roller Skating

- Communicate with council and parents.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Organize transportation and arrange for adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Adults keep a close watch on skaters from outside the main skating floor. Check with the rink supervisor in advance to learn how many adults, in addition to the rink staff, are needed to supervise the group.
- Select a safe in-line and roller-skating site\*.** Obtain council guidance in selecting the skating site; rinks are considered safest, but ensure that the rink has a smooth skating surface free of debris. The rink manager is called in advance to arrange for large groups or for practice sessions. The rink is adequately staffed to monitor the size of the crowd. Local ordinances or parks offices are checked to see whether skating is permitted on bike paths or in city parks.
- Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Select proper-fitting skates.** Girls receive instruction in selecting the proper skate size. Skates are properly fitted, securely laced, and properly tied. Skate wheels, boots, and plates are kept clean and in good condition and are inspected. Girls never skate with broken or missing laces. No dangling decorations are attached to the laces.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls, especially abrasions. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of In-Line Skating or Roller Skating

- Get a weather report.** If skating outdoors, on the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate, and if skating outside, make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Safeguard valuables.** Secure equipment and other valuables in a dry, locked storage area if skating indoors.
- Girls learn basic skating skills.** Girls receive basic instruction in skating skills, including how to fall and get up. Practice sessions are scheduled for beginners. Girls learn to perform basic skating skills before attempting more advanced skills. Gentle warm-up exercises are done before any strenuous skating; cool-down exercises end the sessions.
- Follow basic in-line and roller-skating safety standards\*.** Respect safety rules, such as:
  - Everyone skates in the same direction.
  - Girls do not stop in the main skating area (when skating in a rink).
  - Skaters yield the right-of-way to those already in the rink.

- Skaters do not cut across the paths of other skaters.
  - Skaters do not push, shove, or race.
  - A falling skater does not grab hold of another skater.
  - A fallen skater rises quickly, unless injured.
  - Girls do not skate faster than their ability to stop, and skaters do not wear headphones while skating.
  - Loose or sharp articles, such as handbags, combs, and keys are not carried in pockets, hands, hair, or any place where they might cause injury to the skater in the event of a fall, or injure another skater by falling to the floor.
- **Practice safe outdoor skating.** Outdoors, girls skate in areas where traffic or pedestrians will not interfere. Check local ordinances for any restrictions. Girls skate in the street or in a parking lot only if it is closed to traffic. When skating on a walkway, yield to pedestrians. Skate on the right side, pass on the left.

### In-Line and Roller-Skating Links

- Roller Skating Association International: [www.rollerskating.org](http://www.rollerskating.org).

### In-Line and Roller-Skating Know-How for Girls

- Keep skates in top shape. Avoid water, sand, and debris, which damage wheel bearings.
- Learn how to brake and stop. Before skating, read about the safest ways to stop, based on skating ability level, at [skatefaq.com](http://skatefaq.com). Moves include the wall stop, the brake-pad and the snowplow.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**





## Kayaking: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Kayaks come in a variety of styles and sizes, and like canoes are almond-shaped and powered by paddling. Kayaks tend to be smaller than canoes, sometimes covered by a deck and spray skirt, and seat one or two kayakers who sit with legs extended in front of them. Kayakers almost always use a two-bladed paddle. Beginners should be careful of overexertion, as girls who are not accustomed to using paddles may experience strained arm muscles. Kayaking is not allowed for Girl Scout Daisies. Girl Scouts of any age are never allowed Class III and above whitewater.

**Caution:** You must seek council permission for activities with uncontrollable and highly changeable environment conditions, such as unclassified rivers and some watercraft trips. Girls are never allowed on Class III and above whitewater.

**Know where to go kayaking.** Just about any body of water (lake, stream, river or ocean) is suitable for kayaking, as long as the proper equipment, instructions and safety precautions are used. Kayaking is done only on water that has been approved by your Girl Scout council or that has been run and rated. For whitewater, only Class I & II difficulty, as defined by the American Version of the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#) may be used for kayaking. The [American Whitewater Association](#) provides information about American and some international river locations, classes and levels. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the paddleability resources and information that the [International Canoe Federation](#) and [British Canoe Union](#) provide to people with disabilities.

### Kayaking Gear

#### Required Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket. Type III life jackets are recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).

- Kayak appropriately sized for the person using it, with an adjustable bracing system for the feet and bow and stern grab loops. Each kayak is outfitted with proper flotation. If used, air bags are checked before trips to ensure that the seals are intact. Float bags, if used, should be secured to the kayak
- Paddles that are of the [appropriate size and style](#) for the activity and person using them. For most children 14 years and under, paddles of 180 CM are optimum. Extras should be kept on hand.

### Recommended Gear

- Layered clothing that's easily changeable depending on temperatures (waterproof jacket and pants recommended)
- Change of dry clothing (store in waterproof bag secured to kayak)
- Boat shoes, closed-toe hiking/sport sandals with heel strap, water socks or shoes, or other nonslip footwear (no flip-flops). If using decked kayaks with foot pegs, sandals and shoes with laces should be avoided as there is the possibility of them becoming caught on the foot pegs.
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15)
- Lipbalm
- Sunglasses with retainer strap
- Emergency repair kit: duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers
- Compass and chart of the area (for each adult)
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, compressed air horn, or VHF radio on navigatable waters.
- Rescue sling used to get paddlers back into a canoe
- Protective clothing is recommended when the water temperature is below 70 degrees.
- A safety helmet with flexible, strong, plastic shell and chin strap, as well as openings for drainage should be worn when kayaking in waters that are Class II rated.
- Flashlight (and extra batteries)
- Bailer (a bucket or sponge that can be used to remove water from a boat), secured to the kayak.
- Spray skirt with release loop (provides a water-resistant seal around the waist; optional)
- Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, raincoat, pocket knife, minimum of 10 X 10 tarp, rope, drinking cup, food and appropriate liquids. Food and water bottles should be secured in the canoe
- Waist mounted tow system (lightweight nylon, polypropylene, or 50- to 100-pound monofilament fishing line) is carried for every three to four kayaks.
- Each adult carries a paddle, a first-aid kit, a repair kit, and standard safety equipment, including signaling equipment and an inflatable paddle float—a solid block of foam or inflatable nylon attached to a paddle that may be used as an outrigger for self-rescue.

### Prepare for Kayaking

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratio.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the skill level of the adults is higher than the difficulty of the intended activity. For each of the following types of kayaking, one adult must hold either:
  - American Red Cross Small Craft Safety certification (Kayaking and Moving Water modules, if on moving water), or

- One of the following certifications appropriate for the activity, or equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#)
- **River and whitewater kayaking.** River Kayaking Instructor certification from the American Canoe Association. Appropriate level of instructor based on the activity and location. Ratio of instructor to participant is 1 to 5 or 1 to 10 with a qualified assistant.
- **Sea/surf kayaking.** Coastal Kayaking Instructor from the American Canoe Association. . Appropriate level of instructor based on the activity and location. For sea kayaking, the adult is familiar with water and weather conditions and in tidal areas is aware of tidal fluctuations, currents, and wind patterns that may accompany tide changes. The ratio of instructor to participant is 1 to 4 or 1 to 8 with a qualified assistant.
- **Kayaking in a pond or lake.** The ratio of instructor to participant is 1 to 5 or 1 to 10 with a qualified assistant.
  - **American Canoe Association:** level 1 or above Coastal Kayak Instructor. . Appropriate level of instructor based on the activity and location.
  - **American Red Cross:** Small Craft Safety - Kayak
- **Select a safe kayak site.** Trips are not taken to unknown coastal areas, and locations of all boat channels are known and avoided. Kayaking is not permitted further than one mile from the nearest shore. Also make sure of the following:
  - Busy channels are not crossed.
  - Surf zones and areas with standing waves are avoided.
  - On long crossings, kayaks are close enough together so that a group decision can be made if wind and water conditions change.

**NOTE:** The instructor-to-participant ratio is NOT the same as the adult-to-girl ratio that is found in the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints. Both ratios MUST be complied with when girls are participating in kayaking. For example, if there are 15 Juniors participating in kayaking, there must be 3 instructors plus 2 adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).
- **Transport kayaks safely.** Kayaks are transported on car-top racks or trailers designed to haul kayaks. Kayaks are secured with two lines across the top and a line at the bow and the stern.
- **Compile key contacts.** Give an itinerary to a contact person at home; call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls' parents/guardian contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and council contacts—keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location.
- **Research water conditions and select kayaks appropriate to skill level.** Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment. Also make sure of the following:
  - Craft weight and capacity are not exceeded (some crafts clearly display maximum capacity).
  - Each kayak is sized for the person using it.
  - You are knowledgeable of the difficulty of the water run and the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#).
  - You are aware of possible changes in river level and weather and [their effects](#) on the run's level of difficulty.
- **Respect the environment.** Make sure kayaking on whitewater or semi-protected waters meets the [Safety Code of American Whitewater](#).
- **File a float plan.** If participating in a long-distance kayak trip, it is recommended that a float plan be completed and filed (left) with a person knowledgeable about the trip and when to expect the party back. Float plans cannot be filed with the U.S. Coast Guard. The USCG float plan is available [here](#) and should be used for all float plans.
- **Prepare for emergencies.** If a lifeguard is not on duty, an adult with rescue and resuscitation experience and/or certification is present; at least one adult has [small-craft safety certification](#) or equivalent experience (both of these qualifications can be held by one person). Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and

sunburn. If participating in whitewater kayaking or an overnight trip, or if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

- ❑ **If using decked kayaks.** All paddlers *must* be trained on how to perform a wet exit and execute one before being allowed to paddle on decked kayak. If spray skirts are used, wet exits must be performed before the outing can begin with spray skirts attached.
- ❑ **Know the Universal River Signals.** The adult and/or kayak instructor understands the [American Whitewater codes](#). Also, a set of whistle and visual signals is established that allows messages to pass between kayakers.
- ❑ **Kayaking participants know cold-water survival techniques and treatment for hypothermia.** Each person practices appropriate self-rescue and reentry techniques. (Basic information is available on the [U.S. Search and Rescue Task Force site](#).)

## On the Day of Kayaking

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** Never kayak on a stormy day. On the day of the activity, visit [weather.com](#), [Intellicast](#), or other reliable sources to assess weather conditions, water temperature, and river/wave conditions. If weather conditions prevent the trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.
- ❑ **Review rescue tips.** Know how to [right a tipped kayak](#) and other self and assisted rescue techniques.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, and stay low.

## Kayaking Links

- **American Canoe Association:** [www.americancanoe.org](#)
- **American Whitewater:** [www.americanwhitewater.org](#)
- **International Canoe Federation:** [www.canoeicf.com](#)
- **National Organization for River Sports:** [www.nationalrivers.org](#)
- **U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division:** [www.uscgboating.org](#)
- **Whitewater Rescue Institute:** [www.whitewaterrescue.com](#)

## Kayaking Know-How for Girls

- **Learn about the different types of kayaks.** Information on the major categories of kayakers can be found [here](#).



## Orienteering: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Orienteering is an activity that involves using a map, compass, and navigational skills to find your way around or across an unfamiliar area, and may also incorporate camping, backpacking, boating, hiking, cross-country skiing, or horseback-riding skills. Orienteering often takes place in the wilderness, although events can take place in just about any terrain such as a beach, urban area, or park. Orienteers often use control markers to flag various land features found on the map, serving as checkpoints along a course.

Orienteering is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies, but they may enjoy pre-orienteering activities such as “introduction to maps” and map-drawing.

**Caution:** Girls 12 years old and older must follow the Shooting Sports Safety Activity Checkpoints in order to use firearms, and must have both council and parent/guardian permission. Girls are never allowed to hunt, go on high-altitude climbs or to ride all-terrain vehicles or motor bikes.

**Know where to go orienteering. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, locate orienteering clubs in the U.S. and Canada at [us.orienteering.org](http://us.orienteering.org).**

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls of all abilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Contact national parks to inquire about their accommodations for people with disabilities. To learn more about adapting hiking activities visit [Disabled Sports USA](http://DisabledSportsUSA.org)

### Orienteering Gear

#### Required Gear

- Orienteering map
- Compass

- Emergency signaling whistle
- Watch
- Long pants
- Hiking boots or sneakers
- Daypack to carry personal belongings

### Recommended Gear

- Sunscreen with SPF of at least 15
- Insect repellent
- Sunglasses and/or hat

### Prepare for Orienteering

- Coordinate age-appropriate activity.** Girl Scout Juniors in small groups are accompanied on a course by an adult with basic instruction in orienteering. Girl Scouts Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors who have received training may orienteer in groups of at least two. Competitive Orienteering Courses often require participants to operate independently; solo competition is not recommended for inexperienced girls or Girl Scout Juniors. However, Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors whose skills match or exceed the demands of the course may participate in such competitions. As with all orienteering sites, there should be a clear area of safety (a safety lane), a specific finish time and location, and a search-and-rescue procedure designed by the competition's host and the Girl Scout adult volunteer.
- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Participants receive instruction from a person experienced in orienteering before navigating an orienteering course. First-timers participate on a beginner-level course. Girls with previous topographic map-reading experience may be eligible to attempt an advanced beginners' course.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Select a safe orienteering site.** Whenever possible, girls take part in a meet organized by an orienteering club. When other areas are used, check for the following: the site selected is a park, camp, or other area with a good trail network; proper landowner permission is secured to use the site; during hunting season, the orienteering site is in a "no hunting" area with sufficient separation from hunting activity to ensure no accidental contact between hunters and orienteers; out-of-bounds and dangerous areas are marked on the map; hazardous obstacles are marked on the ground—they are surrounded by surveyor's tape or a similar marking; and the orienteering map is sufficiently accurate so that the participants are not navigationally misled.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Orienteering

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if weather conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan, alternative activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm with lightning, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them.
- Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Follow basic orienteering safety standards.** Each participant is given a specific time limit to complete the course and must check in at the finish area whether or not she completed the course. Beginning and finishing course times of each participant are carefully noted to ensure that all participants have

returned. Girls take proper precautions in areas where poisonous plants or snakes or ticks are prevalent.

### Orienteering Link

- U.S. Orienteering Federation: [www.us.orienteering.org](http://www.us.orienteering.org)

### Orienteering Know-how for Girls

- **Map your course.** Get to know map symbols and how elements such as elevation and relief are communicated on maps at [4orienteering.com](http://4orienteering.com).
- **Learn about orienteering techniques.** Before participating in orienteering, get to know strategies such as pacing, thumbing, and handrails at [4orienteering.com](http://4orienteering.com).



## Other Land Sports: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Other land sports include team sports such as soccer, softball, and basketball, as well as individual activities such as dance, and track and field. In planning activities, ensure that girls aren't pushed beyond their capabilities. As is the case for all Girl Scout activities, a girl's participation depends on her readiness, level of maturity, physical conditioning, and level of training.

**Caution:** Girls are not allowed to use firearms unless 12 years old or older and with council permission, and are never allowed to hunt (see Sport Shooting SAC for guidance). Girls are NOT permitted to participate in any of the following activities: fly as passengers in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot air balloons and blimps; potentially uncontrolled free falls, such as bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing and outdoor trampolining; and riding on all-terrain vehicles or motor bikes.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Disabled Sports USA](#) and [Challenged Athletes Foundation](#) provide to people with disabilities.

### Gear for Other Land Sports

#### Recommended Gear

- Appropriate clothing, supplies, tools, and other equipment, depending on location and specific activity
- Ample drinking water
- Daypack to carry personal belongings, as appropriate
- Girls who wear eyeglasses have shatterproof lenses or wear eyeglass guards. A band should be worn to hold eyeglasses securely.
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses

### Prepare for Other Land Sports

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

- ❑ **Girls plan the activity** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the “Common Points” section in the *Introduction to the Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** In cases where instruction is necessary, ensure that instructors have adequate experience and knowledge of the activity (e.g. certification from a recognized organization) and/or have documented experience according to your council’s guidelines and *Volunteer Essentials* Where necessary, trained officials or referees administer rules of the sport, and girls are instructed in the rules of the sport, safety guidelines, expected behaviors and issues of fair play.
- ❑ **Select a safe site.** Playing surfaces for the activity are smooth and clear of obstructions, broken glass, and so on. Playing areas have clearly marked boundaries and adequate space for girls to move around freely. Where necessary, there is adequate protection for spectators.
- ❑ **Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls prepare for and practice the activity.** Girls do conditioning exercises and practice basic skills. Girls do a gentle warm-up, cool-down and stretching exercises to reduce sprains, strains and other injuries. In competition, girls are matched in age, weight, height, skill and physical maturity. In team sports, positions and sides are rotated to prevent domination of the game and to allow for full, fun participation. Practice sessions and games are properly supervised and of reasonable length. Practice or competition occurs only when an instructor and/or supervisor is present at the site of play.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of abrasions, sprains, and fractures. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Other Land Sports

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** If participating in an outdoor activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather source to determine if conditions are appropriate. Be prepared to alter the activity plan or have an alternate activity prepared if weather conditions change. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. If outdoors, in the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. Outdoor activities are suspended during an electrical storm or in very hot, humid weather.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Safeguard valuables.** Secure equipment in a dry, locked storage area or have girls wear a daypack to carry personal belongings.
- ❑ **Ensure that equipment is well-maintained\*.** There are sufficient floor mats for gymnastics, tumbling, and similar activities. Inspect rented or borrowed equipment carefully before using it.
- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity and take breaks.** Sharp objects, jewelry, and watches are removed and pockets emptied. Long hair is pulled back from the face and fastened to prevent tangling. Sufficient rest periods are given to avoid overexertion and to replenish fluids.
- ❑ **Take safety precautions.** Fatigued or injured girls are removed from competition and cared for promptly. A seriously injured girl is moved only by trained rescue personnel. An injured girl is not returned to practice or competition without the written approval of a physician.

### Other Land Sports Links

- [Shape America](#) (Society of Health and Physical Educators)





## Outdoor Cooking: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Historically, wood fires were the primary source of heat for camp cooking, but the practice of cooking with large fires is no longer recommended because of the detrimental effects on camping areas. Instead, use an established fire pit to ignite a small fire, or use alternative cooking methods such as a portable cook stove (electric or fuel-based). Extensive outdoor cooking is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies, but a less extensive activity, such as roasting marshmallows, is appropriate.

**Know where to cook outdoors. Preferably at campsites with designated fire-pit areas. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.**

**Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. To learn more about adapting activities visit [Disabled Sports USA](http://DisabledSportsUSA.com).**

### Outdoor Cooking Gear

#### Required Gear

- Pots and pans (as necessary for the cooking you are doing)
- Portable water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning
- Source of refrigeration to keep perishable foods cold such as Insulated cooler and ice for food storage
- Fuel source (as necessary for the type of cooking you are doing)
- Insulated fire retardant gloves
- Firefighting equipment, such as fire extinguisher, water, loose soil or sand, and a shovel and rake
- Hand sanitizer or soap and paper towels
- Non-breakable dishes for eating and serving food
- Knives

- Containers to store leftover food
- Can opener
- No plastic garments, such as ponchos, are worn around open flame
- Rubber band, barrette, or bandana to tie back hair

### Recommended Gear

- Biodegradable dishwashing soap
- Pot scrubber
- Mess kit with non-breakable plates, bowls, mugs, and cutlery in dunk bag
- Portable cook stove and fuel (as necessary for the type of cooking you are doing)
- Long-handled cooking utensils such as ladles (as necessary for the type of cooking you are doing)
- Water purification method (tablets or filter), if needed
- Sunscreen of SPF 15 or more
- Lipbalm
- Sunglasses

### Prepare for Outdoor Cooking

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios.*
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Consult with council about permits where necessary, and prepare for fire safety.** Connect with your Girl Scout council to inquire about permits with the local fire district, land-management agency, or conservation office. Fires are not permitted when there is excessive dryness or wind. The adult volunteer also checks the fire index with local authorities. Local air-pollution regulations are followed.
- Girls share resources.** Support girls in creating a checklist of group and personal equipment and distribute to group members. Girls learn to use a variety of cooking methods, including use of wood fire, propane, butane, and gas stoves, charcoal, canned heat, and solar energy. Repackage all food to minimize waste and the amount of garbage that needs to be removed from the campsite.
- Be prepared for primitive campsites.** If cooking in primitive areas with little to no modern conveniences, observe these standards:
  - Choose and set up campsite well before dark.
  - Use a previously established campsite if available.
  - Make sure the campsite is level and located at least 200 feet from all water sources and below tree line.
  - Avoid fragile mountain meadows and areas of wet soil.
  - Avoid camping under dead tree limbs.
  - Use existing fire rings if a fire is necessary.
  - If a latrine is not available, use individual cat holes—holes for human waste that are at least 200 feet away from the trail and known water sources—to dispose of human waste (visit [www.int.org](http://www.int.org) for more information). Note: cat holes are not permitted in some areas, so follow local sanitary codes in those areas.
  - Do dishwashing and personal bathing at least 200 feet away from water sources.
  - Store food well away from tents and out of reach of animals. Where necessary, hang food at least 10 feet high from a rope stretched between two trees. If the site is in bear country, check with local authorities on precautions to take.
  - See that garbage, tampons, sanitary supplies, and toilet paper are carried out.
- Take safety precautions.** Fire-safety rules, emergency procedures, and first aid for burns are reviewed with the group and understood. Procedures are established and known in advance for notifying the fire department or land-management agency officials in case of a fire. Fire drills are practiced at each site.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle

burns and other injuries related to the location, including extremes of temperature, such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke, frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, as well as sprains, fractures, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. If feasible, a vehicle is available to transport an injured or sick person. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Outdoor Cooking

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if weather conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan, alternative activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm with lightning, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Respect the environment and keep site clean.** Use the principles of minimal-impact camping. Store garbage in insect- and animal-proof containers with plastic inner linings, and cover it securely when there is a campsite garbage-pickup service. When there is no garbage-pickup service, remove garbage from campsite in plastic bags and discard, as appropriate. Recycle whenever possible. Do not bury food; carry out grease and fuel canisters. Do not remove natural materials, such as leaves or branches.

### Tips for Cooking with Cook Stoves and Open Fires

- ❑ **Prepare for safe usage of portable cook stoves.**
  - Portable cook stoves differ in size and in fuel use. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully, and closely supervise the girls when using any stove.
  - Take an adequate amount of fuel, and store the extra fuel supply away from the cooking flame. Do not overheat the fuel tank.
  - Never use portable cook stoves inside a tent.
  - Keep all stove parts clean. Check that lines and burners are not clogged. Do not refuel the cook stove or change canisters near an open flame.
  - Take care not to spill fuel; if fuel does spill, relocate the stove before lighting it.
  - Place portable cook stoves in safe, level, and stable positions, shielded from the wind and away from foot traffic. Do not pile rocks or other items around the cook stove for stability.
  - Use pots of appropriate size, so that the stove is not top-heavy.
  - Do not dispose of pressurized cans in a fire, leave them in direct sunlight, or keep them in enclosed areas where the temperature is high. See the manufacturer's instructions on the label. Store and dispose of fuel canisters in the recommended manner.
  - Be sure to check with local authorities to make sure cook stoves are permitted during times of extreme fire danger.
- ❑ **Cook safely with solar stoves.** If using solar cookware, remember that pots and food inside a solar oven are hot even if the stove does not feel hot. Use insulated gloves when removing pots and opening the lid.
- ❑ **Practice safe cooking with open fire.** If cooking over open flames:
  - Build fires in designated areas, and avoid establishing new fire sites. An established fire site is clear of overhanging branches, steep slopes, rotted stumps or logs, dry grass and leaves, and cleared of any burnable material, such as litter, duff, or pine needles.
  - Where wood gathering is permitted, use only dead, fallen wood, and keep the cooking fires small. Store wood away from the fire area. Watch for flying sparks and put them out immediately.
  - Before leaving the site, check that the fire is completely out by sprinkling the fire with water or smothering it with earth or sand, stirring, and then sprinkling or smothering again; finally, hold

hands on coals, ashes, partially burned wood, or charcoal for one minute to ensure it is cool to the touch.

- Make a plan for disposing of cold ashes and partially burned wood. You may scatter ashes and burned wood throughout the woods away from the campsite. Do not put ashes and burned wood in a plastic pail; do not leave a pail with ashes or burned wood against the side of a building or on a wood deck.
  - Obtain wood from local sources to avoid bringing pests and diseases from one location to another.
- Practice safe cooking with charcoal fires.** If using charcoal, fires are started with fuels explicitly labeled as “charcoal starters”—never use gasoline as a fire starter. Never add charcoal lighter fluid to a fire once it has started.

### Tips for Food Preparation and Storage

- Pack the appropriate amount of food.** In order to avoid discarding unused food, make sure to bring along the appropriate amount of food for the group. To properly plan food supplies, consider the activities you’ll be participating in, keeping in mind that girls will burn more calories and hence need to eat more when participating in rigorous activities. Also, more calories are needed during cold weather.
- Prepare nutritious meals.** Meals are prepared with consideration of food allergies, religious beliefs, and dietary restrictions (such as vegetarianism and veganism) of group members. Whenever possible, buy food and supplies that avoid excess packaging, and buy in bulk. Review health considerations, including the importance of keeping utensils and food preparation surfaces sanitized, cleaning hands, cooking meats thoroughly (use a meat thermometer to verify cooking temperatures), refrigerating perishables, and using clean water when preparing food. Do not use chipped or cracked cups and plates.
- Cook with caution.** Girls learn about the safe use of kitchen tools and equipment, including knives. Maintain discipline in the cooking area to prevent accidents with hot food and sharp utensils. Do not overfill cooking pots, and do not use pressurized cans, soda-can stoves, or plastic basins, bottles and cooking utensils near an open flame.
- Avoid spreading germs.** Each person has an individual drinking cup. Cooks roll up long sleeves and tie back long hair. Wash hands before food preparation and eating. No person with a skin infection, a cold, or a communicable disease participates in food preparation.
- Keep perishables cool.** Store perishables such as creamed dishes, dairy products, meats, and salads at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit in a refrigerator or insulated cooler with ice. If this will not be possible, use powdered, dehydrated, freeze-dried, or canned foods. On extended trips, do not use foods requiring refrigeration. Use safe drinking water (see the “Water Purification Tips”) to reconstitute powdered, dehydrated, or freeze-dried food. Once reconstituted, eat perishable items within one hour or refrigerate them. Dispose of leftover food to avoid food poisoning.

### Water Purification Tips

- Access a safe drinking water supply for cooking, drinking, and personal use.** Safe drinking water is defined as tap water tested and approved by the local health department. All other sources are considered potentially contaminated and must be purified before use. *Giardia lamblia* (a parasite) is suspected in all surface water supplies.
- Use one of the three water-purification methods.** First, strain water through a clean cloth into a clean container to remove sediment, and then choose one of the following methods:
- Boil water rapidly for a full minute and let cool.
  - Disinfect water with water-purification tablets, following the manufacturer’s instructions. Check the product’s shelf life to make sure it has not expired.
  - Process water through a water purifier or specially designed [water-filtration device](#) that removes *Giardia lamblia*. These filters will also remove many other contaminants. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions carefully.
  - Important note: These methods will not remove chemical pollutants. In addition, only boiling the water or processing it through a specially designed filter will remove *Giardia lamblia*.

## Dishwashing Tips

- Wash dishes in a prescribed area according to this procedure:
  - Remove food particles from utensils and dishes.
  - Wash dishes in warm, soapy water.
  - Rinse dishes in hot, clear water.
  - Sanitize dishes by dipping in clear, boiling water or immersing for at least two minutes in a sanitizing solution approved by the local health department. Use long-handled utensil, tongs, or tool to remove sanitized dishes.
  - Air-dry and store dishes in a clean, covered area.
  - Dispose of dishwashing and rinse water according to the campsite regulations. In backcountry areas, scatter wastewater on the ground at least 200 feet beyond any water source or trail.

## Outdoor Cooking Links

- OutdoorCook.com: <http://www.outdoorcook.com/>
- Leave No Trace: [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)
- Recreational Equipment, Inc.: [www.rei.com/learn](http://www.rei.com/learn)

## Outdoor Cooking Know-How for Girls

- **Learn how to start a fire without matches.** What are the ways that you can get a fire going without using matches or a lighter? Read camping how-to books or [online sources](#) to learn how.
- **Plan outdoor recipes.** Vote for your favorite meals and plan how to cook them outdoors. For additional outdoor recipe ideas read [Discover the Outdoors](#) and [outdoorcook.com](http://outdoorcook.com).





## Parades and Other Large Group Gatherings: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Whether you're participating in a parade or planning a Girl Scout event, series, or other large group gathering, it's important to represent Girl Scouts in the best possible way and encourage girls to plan the festivities.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations.

### Gear for Parades and Other Large Group Gatherings

#### Required Gear

- Girl Scout uniform, pin, or some other means of group identification
- Comfortable walking shoes

#### Recommended Gear

- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lipbalm
- Sunglasses
- Reusable water bottle and water for filling bottles

### Prepare for the Parade and Other Large Group Gathering

- **Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*.
- **Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Consider the appropriateness of the activity or event.** When planning parades or large group gatherings consider the following:
  - The needs, interests and readiness of the girls
  - The sponsor of the event or activity
  - The needs of the community to be served
  - Scheduling issues
  - GSUSA and council guidelines on fund-raising, endorsements, collaborating with other organizations and maintaining nonprofit status.
- **Respect parade and large-group gathering standards\*.** Local regulations and permit procedures are observed for public gatherings, facility use, food handling, certificates of insurance and sales or excise tax. Guidelines for personal protection are observed. Local authorities are contacted for safety and security suggestions and assistance applicable to the parade or event. For safety reasons, name tags or other personal identification are not worn in public places. GSUSA and council guidelines on publicity, photo releases, and interviews are observed.
- **Select a safe location\*.** The location for any community event, large group gathering, or parade is inspected in advance, with consideration for the following, as appropriate:
  - Accessibility to the group and to the public
  - Suitability to event size, age groups, and kinds of activities
  - Parking availability
  - Availability of restrooms
  - Security arrangements, including availability of police protection
  - Lighting for evening and indoor events
  - Vulnerability to inclement weather
  - Proximity to medical facilities
  - Fire safety, which includes: not exceeding the occupancy limits for indoor activities or events; sufficient emergency exits, which are well marked and operational; and having an emergency evacuation plan in place.
  - A food-preparation area used for large groups of people meets state and local standards, and includes sufficient potable water and restrooms for participants.
  - Provisions are made for garbage removal and site cleanup.
- **Make appropriate plans for parade floats\*.** Floats drawn by trucks and automobiles must be covered by automobile insurance in the name of the vehicle owners. Float construction is safe, using non-toxic or flame retardant materials, and secured to the body of the float and the vehicle. Floats are equipped with portable ABC fire extinguishers. Riders on floats have secure seating, or a secure handhold or safety harness if standing. Floats are not overcrowded. Participants do not walk close to moving floats. An adult accompanies girls on any moving float. Any coupling of a trailer to a vehicle is appropriate to the load and has a safety chain. Nothing is distributed to onlookers from a moving vehicle or a float.
- **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of abrasions, sprains, and fractures. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of the Parade or Other Large Group Gathering

- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or

postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

- Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Take safety precautions.** Instruction is given on safe pedestrian practices, when applicable. Adults know girls' location at all times. Advance arrangements are made for picking up the girls after the event and parents and girls understand the arrangements. Adults and girls pick a place to meet in case of separation from the supervising adult or the group.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**





## Playgrounds: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Playing is just as much a fun activity for kids as it is a critically important part of their creative and social development. [KaBOOM!](#) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure there's a "great place to play within walking distance of every child in America." With the help of sponsors and adults, the organization has developed hundreds of playgrounds in underprivileged areas.

Safety is an important part of having fun on the playground. Each year in the United States, more than 200,000 children are treated in hospital emergency departments for injuries sustained on playground equipment. Injuries can be reduced by placing resilient surfacing below equipment, better maintaining equipment, improving supervision and using age-appropriate equipment.

**Know where to play.** The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission provides a [Public Playground Safety Checklist](#) that aids with selecting a safe playground. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Accessible Playgrounds](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Playground Gear

#### Recommended Gear

- Clothing appropriate for the weather
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Portable drinking water
- Tissues and hand wipes

## Prepare for Playground Activity

- ❑ **Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints* for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios.
- ❑ **Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Select a safe playground.** Inspect the site to be sure it is free of potential hazards, including rocks, roots and ground protrusions, and ensure emergency medical care is accessible. Physical activities are separate from more passive or quiet activities, and areas for play equipment, open fields and sandboxes are in different sections of the playground. Equipment and activity areas are without visual barriers, with clear sightlines everywhere on the playground to facilitate supervision. Traffic patterns are clearly separate for individual pieces of equipment. Moving equipment, such as swings or merry-go-rounds, is located toward a corner of the playground.
- ❑ **Ensure that playground equipment is safe.** Equipment is anchored so that it does not tip, slide, or move in an unintended manner. All wood parts are smooth and free of splinters. Wet or damaged equipment is not used. All metal edges are rolled or have rounded capping. There are no sharp points, corners, or edges on any components of playground equipment. There are no accessible pinch, crush, or tearing points on individual pieces of equipment. Protrusions or projections of playground equipment cannot entangle girls' clothing.
- ❑ **Assess safety of playground surface.** Hard-surfaced materials, such as asphalt or concrete, are unsuitable under and around playground equipment of any height, unless they serve as a base for shock-absorbing materials, such as a rubber mat. Acceptable playground surfacing materials are rubberlike materials, sand, gravel and shredded wood products.
- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Clothing is snug-fitting or tucked in to avoid snagging or tangling in any of the playground equipment. Wearing clothing with drawstrings on a hood or around the neck is not permitted.
- ❑ **Be prepared for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of abrasions, sprains, and fractures. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of the Playground Activity

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the playground activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls learn about and practice safe playground activities.** Adults teach girls to use equipment properly, safely and as intended. Girls should not run, push, or shove on the playground. Girls should not stand close to a moving swing or other moving apparatus. Girls wait their turns to use equipment such as slides. Girls must not tease or play with neighborhood pets.
- ❑ **Keep track of girls' whereabouts.** Conduct a head count before and after playground activities. Ensure that girls know where to go and how to act when confronted by strangers or intruders and are able to sound an agreed-upon alarm.

## Playgrounds Link

- Safe Kids: <http://www.usa.safekids.org>

## Playground Know-How for Girls

- **Create your own games.** You've probably played capture the flag, hide-and-seek, and four square ([www.squarefour.org/rules](http://www.squarefour.org/rules)). What games can you create as a group?
- **Play it safe on the playground.** The [Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh](#) provides a playground safety checklist and a cartoon that covers important items such as keeping shoes tied and holding onto ladder rails.





## Recreational Tree Climbing Safety Activity Checkpoints



Explore the beauty and life of trees through recreational tree-climbing. Girl Scouts of all ages may participate in Recreational Tree Climbing. Recreational Tree Climbing uses ropes, saddles, and techniques proven safe for both climber and tree, to ascend into the crowns of trees and the canopies of forests for recreation, exploration, exhilaration, education, research, exercise and fun!

**Know where to climb.** Climbing may be done on any branch that has at least 6 inches of living tissue with a full inspection of the health of the tree and surrounding area. Connect with your Girl Scout council or local Tree Climbing facilitator for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls of different abilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Goodleaf Tree Climbing UK](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Tree Climbing Gear

#### Required Gear

- Sturdy shoes
- All equipment used for climbing—ropes, webbing, harnesses, hardware and helmets—is designed, tested, and manufactured for the purpose of this type of activity and appropriate for the size of the user.
- Climbing helmets that have the UIAA-approved label (Union of International Alpine Association) must be worn for all climbing situations where the participant is more than 6 feet off the ground or on belay. It is recommended that a disposable liner, such as a shower cap or surgical cap, be worn underneath the helmet to protect against the spread of head lice.

#### Recommended Gear

- Long pants or blue jeans are recommended for activities where skin abrasions on legs are possible
- Close-fitting clothing; avoid wearing loose clothing, especially around the head and neck
- Portable drinking water
- Sunscreen of at least SPF 15 and lip balm
- Raingear
- Sunglasses
- Nonperishable, high-energy foods such as fruits and nuts

## Prepare for Tree Climbing

- Communicate with council and parents.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See *the introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult to girl ratio, see *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. In addition, the instructor to participant ratio shall not exceed 1 instructor for every 6 girls.
 

**NOTE:** The instructor to participant ratio is NOT the same as the adult to girl ratio that is found in the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints. Both ratios MUST be complied with when girls are participating in tree climbing. For example, if there are 16 Juniors participating in a tree climbing activity, there must be 3 instructors plus 2 adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** An instructor with documented experience, indicating competence in equipment maintenance, safety and rescue techniques, proper use of the equipment and hands-on training or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials* directly supervises the group. The instructor has provided written documentation of the completed training. Ensure that there is a regular process of review and update for all instructors. Instructors are skilled in selecting appropriate activities, teaching and supervising climbing and decent techniques, and modifying tasks to provide an appropriate experience for the ages and skill levels in the group. Before use, instructors inspect all equipment, climb all ropes, and clearly designate a helmet-only area for safety.
- Select a safe site.** Permits and permission requests are filed as required for climbing trees. All trees are inspected and pre-climbed before the event to ensure participant safety. Plans and procedures are established to avoid unauthorized use of the site. Climbing areas are clearly marked so passersby will not be in danger of coming in contact with falling debris.
- Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle injuries from falls as well as abrasions and sunburn. A sharp knife, hardware, and extra rope of appropriate length are available at the site for rescue, and, emergency transportation is available. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid certification. Specialized safety and rescue procedures need to be planned and practiced to ensure the ability to remove a participant from a climbing situation. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Sharp objects, jewelry, and watches are removed and pockets emptied. Long hair is pulled back from the face and fastened under the helmet to prevent tangling.

## On the Day of Climbing

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [noaa.gov](http://noaa.gov) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. Be prepared to alter the activity plan or have an alternate activity prepared if weather conditions change. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Ensure that equipment is well-maintained\*.** There is a documented maintenance schedule and periodic inspection by instructors and outside professionals of all equipment and trees used in the activities. A use

log is kept on all equipment subject to stress, wear, and deterioration. A written equipment monitoring and retirement process is established and followed.

- ☐☐ **Participants learn about and prepare for climbing.** Instructors teach a set of readiness and action commands to all participants for climbing and decent. All participants utilize muscle warm-up and stretching activities before beginning physical activities. Instructors describe the objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants before beginning an activity.
- ☐☐ **Participants practice safe climbing and decent techniques.** All activities are appropriately supervised. Instructors are the only ones to clip participants in and out of their tie-in systems.

### Recreational Tree Climbing Links

- Global Organization of Tree Climbers: <http://www.gotreeclimbing.org>
- Tree Climbers International: <http://www.treeclimbing.com>

### Recreational Tree Climbing Know-How for Girls

- **Leave no trace.** While climbing in natural areas, it's important to respect the trees and the environment. Read tips from the [U.S. National Park Service Web site](#) or the [Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics](#).

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Rowboating: Safety Activity Checkpoints



One of the most historic means of transportation, row boating has evolved to become a leisurely activity and competitive sport. [Ocean rowing](#), competitive rowing and Venetian are just a handful of rowing styles available. In rowboat racing, an eight-oared shell can hit speeds of up to 16 miles per hour.

An excellent form of relaxation and exercise as a group or individual activity, beginners should be careful of overexertion. If girls aren't accustomed to using oars, they may experience strained arm muscles.

**Know where to rowboat.** Lakes, rivers, and ponds are most common for rowing, but the ocean can be suitable as long as waves are manageable. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Disabled Sports USA](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Rowboating Gear

#### Required Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).
- Emergency sound-producing device, such as a horn or whistle
- Oars

#### Recommended Gear

- Layered clothing that's easily changeable depending on temperatures (waterproof jacket recommended)
- Boat shoes, closed-toe and nonslip hiking/sport sandals with heel strap, or water socks or shoes (no flip-flops)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses or sunhat
- Insect repellent

- ❑ Emergency repair kit containing quick-repair items such as duct tape, rope, aluminum or fiberglass repair shields
- ❑ Waterproof flashlight
- ❑ [Bow and stern lines](#) to secure each end of the boat to the pier or dock
- ❑ Anchor that is appropriate for the water bottom (if necessary)
- ❑ Bailer (a bucket used to remove water from a boat)
- ❑ At least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water.

## Prepare for Rowboating

- ❑ **Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- ❑ **Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- ❑ **Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- ❑ **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios.*
- ❑ **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the adult or rowboating instructor holds an American Red Cross Small Craft Safety certification, or possesses equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#).
- ❑ **Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- ❑ **Select appropriate boats for water and passengers\*.** Make sure craft weight and capacity are not exceeded (some crafts clearly display maximum capacity). Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment.
- ❑ **File a float plan.** If participating in a long-distance rowboating trip, it is recommended that a float plan be completed and filed (left) with a person knowledgeable about the trip and when to expect the party back. Float plans cannot be filed with the U.S. Coast Guard. The USCG float plan is available [here](#) and should be used for all float plans.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** If a lifeguard is not on duty, an adult with rescue and resuscitation experience and/or certification is present; at least one adult present has small craft safety certification or equivalent experience. (Both of these qualifications can be held by one person.) Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from Emergency Medical Services response time, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of Rowboating

- ❑ **Get a weather and wind report.** Never rowboat on a stormy or extremely windy day. On the day of the rowboating trip or lesson, visit [weather.com](#) or other reliable sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If weather conditions prevent the rowboat trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- ❑ **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, head into the wind at a 45-degree angle, and stay low.

## Rowboating Links

- Boatsafe.com (safety tips, online courses, boating tips, etc.): [www.boatsafe.com](http://www.boatsafe.com)
- U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division: [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)
- U.S. Power Squadrons: [www.usps.org](http://www.usps.org)
- U.S. Rowing Association: [www.usrowing.org](http://www.usrowing.org)

## Rowboating Know-How for Girls

- Know the currents. On rivers, row upstream to avoid any uncomfortable rapids or waterfalls.
- Keep weight evenly distributed. Never stand in a boat as the shift in weight can cause the boat to overturn. Never sit on the side of a rowboat, always sit on the boat floor or seat. If places need to be changed while rowing, be sure the boat is stable enough. Try to keep weight low and centered in the boat as much as possible.
- Host a rowing event. In sculls, each rower uses two oars—one in each hand. In sweeps, each rower uses only one oar, extending out one side of the boat.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**





## Sailing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



The sport of sailing has become very high-tech and competitive since its humble beginnings, but sailors and racers still must rely on the force of wind to propel their boats. There are a wide variety of [sailboats](#), including small and large sailboats, keelboats, and multihulls. Sailing is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies.

**Caution:** Girls are not allowed to operate motorized boats without council permission and girls are never allowed to parasail.

**Know where to sail.** The ocean and lakes are ideal for sailing, but many sailing or yacht clubs offer instructions on reservoirs, rivers and ponds. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, the [U.S. Sailing Web site](#) provides a list of U.S. sailing camps, clubs, and associations.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [International Sailing Federation](#) and [Disabled Sports USA](#) provide to people with disabilities.

### Sailing Gear

#### Required Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).
- Boat shoes, closed-toe and nonslip hiking/sport sandals with heel strap, or water socks or shoes (no flip-flops)
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, fog horn or sounding flares

#### Recommended Gear

- Layered clothing that's easily changeable depending on temperatures (waterproof jacket recommended)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses or sunhat

- Sailing gloves (help save tender hands and improve grip)
- Rigging knife
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- [Emergency repair kit](#) (duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers, shackles, extra line, sewing kit, a spare [drain plug](#), extra cotter rings/pins, and a short piece of light [line/rope](#))
- Paddle (as second means of propulsion)
- Bailer (a bucket used to remove water from a boat)
- At least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water

## Prepare for Sailing

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the adult or sailing instructor is certified as a Sailing Instructor or Sailing Counselor by [U.S. Sailing](#), holds an American Red Cross Small Craft Safety certification, or possesses equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#).
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Select appropriate sailboats for water and passengers\*.** Make sure craft weight and capacity are not exceeded (some crafts clearly display maximum capacity). Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment.
- File a float plan.** If participating in a long-distance sailing trip, it is recommended that a float plan be completed and filed (left) with a person knowledgeable about the trip and when to expect the party back. Float plans cannot be filed with the U.S. Coast Guard. The USCG float plan is available [here](#) and should be used for all float plans.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from Emergency Medical Services response time, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of Sailing

- Get a weather and wind report.** Never sail on a stormy or excessively windy day. On the day of the sailing trip or lesson, visit [weather.com](#) (which includes marine forecasts, including water temperature and wave height) to determine if conditions are appropriate. [Intellicast](#) also reports on sailing conditions. If weather conditions prevent the sailing activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity.
- Review rescue tips.** U.S. Sailing provides instructions on [small-boat capsized recovery](#).
- Use the buddy system.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between

them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, head into the wind at a 45-degree angle, and stay low.

- **Ensure docking safety\***. Ensure that docking lines are in good condition. Follow general safety guidelines provided by boating facility for docking the craft, and ensure the boat is securely connected to the dock before participants exit.

### Sailing Links

- American Sail Training Association: [www.tallships.sailtraining.org](http://www.tallships.sailtraining.org)
- International Sailing Federation: [www.sailing.org](http://www.sailing.org)
- U.S. Sailing: [www.ussailing.org](http://www.ussailing.org)
- U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division: [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)

### Sailing Know-How for Girls

- Get ready to race. Read racing [rules set by U.S. Sailing](#) and [International Sailing Federation](#).
- Know the ropes. Sailing uses a number of special [knot-tying](#) techniques.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Scuba Diving: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Scuba diving is an eye-opening opportunity to experience the underwater world of sea life. Scuba is an acronym for “self-contained underwater breathing apparatus” and requires specialized equipment, most of which certified scuba-diving schools rent for lessons. Organizations such as the [National Association of Underwater Instructors](#) (NAUI) and the [Professional Association of Diving Instructors](#) (PADI) offer online tools to locate certified scuba instructors. Scuba diving is a challenging activity, and girls who wish to learn to scuba dive must be at least 12 years old and meet the health requirements set by the certifying agency.

**Know where to scuba dive.** You can dive in oceans, lakes, and rivers. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [Handicap Scuba Association](#) and [Disabled Sports USA](#) provide to people with disabilities.

### Scuba-Diving Gear

#### Required Gear

- When divers are waiting on a boat, participants wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).
- Wetsuit or dive skin
- Air tank
- Underwater compass, depth gauge, temperature gauge and bottom clock
- Snorkel
- Weight belt (weights help a diver descend into water)

- Floating dive flag
- Mask
- Mask defogger solution
- Fins
- Gloves
- Regulator
- Writing slate and pencil
- Lights
- At least one graspable and personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water

### Recommended Gear

- One-piece bathing suit (less cumbersome in the waves than a two-piece)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Beach towel
- Dry clothing and sunglasses to wear after scuba diving

### Prepare for Scuba Diving

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the scuba-diving teacher holds instructional certification from Scuba Schools International (SSI), PADI, the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), or the YMCA. The instructor-to-girl ratio is 1 to 4.  

**NOTE:** The instructor-to-participant ratio is NOT the same as the adult-to-girl ratio that is found in the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints. Both ratios MUST be complied with when girls are participating in scuba diving. For example, if there are 15 Juniors participating in scuba diving, there must be 4 instructors plus 2 adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Size up scuba gear\*.** Communicate girls' ages, heights, and weights to instructors and equipment providers to ensure the appropriate size of scuba gear is available. Be sure that the instructor and participants check equipment before use.
- Safeguard valuables.** Don't leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place. If working with a scuba-diving school or camp, inquire about the organization's storage amenities.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Scuba Diving

- ❑ **Get a weather and wind report.** Never scuba dive on a stormy or extremely windy day. On the day of the scuba-diving trip or lesson, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If weather conditions prevent the scuba-diving trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately, and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

### Scuba-Diving Links

- National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI): [www.naui.org](http://www.naui.org)
- Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI): [www.padi.com](http://www.padi.com)
- Scuba Schools International: [www.divessi.com](http://www.divessi.com)
- Scuba Diving Magazine: [www.scubadiving.com](http://www.scubadiving.com)

### Scuba-Diving Know-How for Girls

- **Learn how to conserve oxygen while diving.** Learning about [energy-saving techniques](#) that may help extend your diving experience.
- **Protect ears.** Underwater pressure can irritate a divers ears, so learn how to prevent discomfort [here](#).

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Segway: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Photo courtesy of Segway, Inc.

First produced in 2002, the Segway PT is a personal transportation device powered by an electric motor, and is a great way to tour urban and historic areas, such as Washington, D.C. Although not as fast as a bicycle, Segway PTs travel up to 12.5 miles per hour and glide under the control of the rider. Mobilized by two wheels, Segway PT riders stand on a platform that is balanced by the sensors and motors beneath. Riders lean forward to go forward and back to reverse, and turn left or right by using the handlebar, which resembles a video-game joystick (first-generation Segway PT models used a steering mechanism that resembles a motorcycle's throttle). The Segway manufacturer requires that riders weigh 90 to 250 pounds. State and local governments differ about location and age restrictions with regard to the use of Segways. Some Segway guided-tour and guided-ride organizations limit their services to participants ages 12 and older. Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors do not participate in Segway activities.

**Know where to participate in Segway.** Only in locations deemed legal and safe by state and local authorities and/or from experienced Segway tour and ride operators. [Citysegwaytours.com](http://Citysegwaytours.com) and [Segwayguidedtours.com](http://Segwayguidedtours.com) provide tour information, and [Segway, Inc.](http://Segway, Inc.) provides information about approved tours.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Disability Rights Advocates for Technology](#) provides to people with disabilities.

## Segway Gear

### Required Gear

- Protective helmet with properly fitting safety harness that meets the American Society for Testing and Materials ([ASTM](#)) F2416 or F1492 requirements, displaying the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal
- Sneakers or sturdy shoes
- Daypack to carry personal belongings

### Recommended Gear

- Clothing appropriate for the weather
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses

### Prepare for Segway

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the Introduction to the Safety Activity Checkpoints, keeping in mind that Segway use is restricted to Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that:
  - The Segway instructor has experience and skill in teaching and supervising Segway PT.
  - The instructor reviews the operating procedures with girls before riding a Segway.
  - The experienced Segway instructor teaches participants how to ride, turn, and stop in a controlled, safe location free of obstructions and traffic.
  - Segway PTs are ridden in pedestrian environments and not on streets.
  - The instructor supports and spots participants when they step on and off of a Segway, and ensures that riders are comfortable riding a Segway before participating in a Segway tour or ride.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of abrasions, sprains, and fractures. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. *See Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of the Segway Activity

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the Segway activity, check [weather.com](#) or other reliable weather sources to determine if weather conditions are appropriate. Do not ride Segways in rain or strong winds. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them.
- Use the buddy system.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Practice safe Segway procedures.**
  - Ensure that the practice of riding the Segway PT is legal in the planned location of activity.
  - Remember that, although most states allow Segway PTs on sidewalks, town and city laws may differ.

- Ensure the Segway riding location is safe; do not ride in traffic, on steep slopes or hills, on slippery surfaces, or on gravel, sand, or other loose surfaces.
- Girls are encouraged to plan details of their Segway trips.
- Beginners start by riding in Segway's slowest mode.
- Riders do not misuse or "push" a Segway past its limits; for instance, riders do not lean forward when the Speed Limiter Alert is on, nor do they continue to ride when the Stick Shake Warning is on.
- Take care when turning left and right and when stopping and parking a Segway.
- When riding on sidewalks in urban areas, be on alert for pedestrians, doors opening, and low overhead obstructions.
- Give right-of-way to pedestrians, and ride Segway on right-hand side of sidewalks and paths.
- Do not ride a Segway over curbs; use the cutout of a curb instead.
- When riding a Segway, keep at least two Segway tires' distance from another rider.

### Segway Links

- Segway: [www.segway.com](http://www.segway.com)
- Segway Online: [www.segwayonline.com](http://www.segwayonline.com)

### Segway Know-How for Girls

- **Learn about the mechanics of the Segway PT.** Computers and motors in a Segway PT's base keep the vehicle upright when powered on. To learn more about the mechanics of Segways visit [Segway.com](http://Segway.com).
- **Charge up the battery.** The battery life of Segway PTs differs, depending on the model. For instance, the Segway i-Series' maximum speed is 12.5 mph, and is capable of covering 15 to 25 miles on a fully charged battery. Batteries also recharge while riding downhill. Visit [Segway](http://Segway) for information about Segway batteries.





## Shooting Sports: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Why teach shooting sports? Good shooting requires learning positive traits such as patience, determination, focus, attention to detail, and persistence. Since these skills are likewise key elements of leadership, we encourage our girls to take what they learn from any sport or activity in Girl Scouting and apply it to their participation in their communities and the world. There are a variety of styles and sizes of firearms. The ones the girls will be learning about are expressly purposed to hit a target.

**Caution:** Girls are not allowed to use firearms unless 12 years old and older and only with council permission; girls are never allowed to hunt. Written permission **MUST** be obtained from your council in advance of the activity. Once approved, you must have written permission from each girl's parent/guardian before a girl is allowed to participate in sport shooting.

**Lead Caution\*:** Be aware of possible lead contamination at both indoor and outdoor ranges. Be sure that the Range Safety Officer and/or the instructor provide wet wipes for the girls to wipe their hands and faces immediately after shooting. In addition, the girls must return to a restroom facility and wash their hands and faces with soap and cold water. Cold water keeps the pores closed so less lead is absorbed into the blood stream. Also ensure that the instructor collects and counts all the casings at the end of each session to ensure that the girls do not take home any as souvenirs.

**Know where to participate in shooting sports.** Groups are required to use council approved indoor and outdoor firing ranges. Council must approve all sites in advance.

**Include girls of all abilities.** Communicate with girls and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#) and [Shooting USA](#) provide to people with disabilities.

### Shooting Sports Gear

#### Required Gear

- Firearm (automatic firearms are NOT permitted at any time)
- Ammunition
- Targets
- Safety Glasses
- Ear protection

### Recommended Gear

- sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Hat or Bandana or hair tie

### Prepare for Shooting Sports

- Communicate with council and parents.** Permission must be received in advance from your Girl Scout council, and from the parent/guardian of any participant, **prior** to any sport shooting activity. See *also the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for information.
- Arrange for adult supervision.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for adult-to-girl ratios for Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors*. In addition, make provisions for safe handling of firearms, ammunition and any other equipment to and from the shooting range. For sport shooting, the ratio of instructors to participants is given in the table below. In addition, a Range Safety Officer (RSO) must be on site at all times.

Shooting Sport	Required Minimum Age Level	Number of instructors required per number of participants
BB Guns	12 years and older	1 instructor to 10 participants
Rifle	12 years and older	1 instructor to 8 participants
Muzzle loading	12 years and older	1 instructor to 2 participants
Shotgun (Trap/Skeet/Sporting Clays)	12 years and older	1 instructor to 5 participants
Pistols	14 years and older	1 instructor to 4 participants

**NOTE:** The instructor to participant ratio is NOT the same as the adult to girl ratio that is found in the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints. Both ratios MUST be complied with when girls are participating in sport shooting. For example, if there are 15 Cadettes participating in a shotgun activity, there must be 3 instructors plus 2 adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).

- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** One adult is a certified [National Rifle Association](#) Range Safety Officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor or has equivalent certification. Documented experience and skill teaching/supervising firearm safety or shooting sports according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*. The instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand, and posts safety rules at the site. Shooting sports are well supervised and appropriate to age, skill level, and type of shooting.
- Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls learn about firearms & shooting sports\*.** Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, such as handling the firearm, loading the ammunition, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices. Before firearm activities, girls learn the following:

- ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction. This is the primary rule of gun safety. A safe direction means that the gun is pointed so that even if it were to go off it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control where the muzzle or front end of the barrel is pointed at all times. Common sense dictates the safest direction, depending on different circumstances.
  - Shooters stand or lay behind the shooting line to shoot as instructed.
  - Girls waiting to shoot stay well behind the firing range boundary. A table or shelf for holding extra ammunition is provided for all shooters.
  - Never point a gun at a person, even when not loaded.
  - Ammunition is not picked up until the “load” command is given.
  - Never shoot the firearm until the “fire when ready” command is given.
  - Never pull the trigger when the firearm is not loaded; this is called dry firing and can cause damage to the firearm.
  - When aiming the firearm, keep the barrel pointed toward the target. Shoot only at the target and never at anything else, including trees and animals. Never shoot a firearm straight up into the air.
  - Wait until the all-clear command is given before retrieving targets.
  - Shooter should keep finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
  - When holding a gun, shooters should rest their finger on the trigger guard or along the side of the gun. Until the command is given to fire, do not touch the trigger.
  - Keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.
  - Whenever a firearm is picked up, the safety device should be immediately engaged if possible.
  - If shooter does not know how to open the action or inspect the chamber(s), they should leave the gun alone and get help from someone who does.
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Also have girls tie back long hair.
  - 
  - Ensure that equipment is in good condition.** Make sure that firearm is clean and in good working order. Ammunition, backstops for targets and targets are in good repair.
  - Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with certificates in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of sunburn, puncture and bullet wounds. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a Wilderness First Aider. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of the Shooting sports Activity

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of an outdoor shooting sports activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the firearm activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.
- Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Safeguard valuables.** Firearms and ammunition are stored in separate and proper storage containers and locked with separate locks/combinations when not in use. Note: BB Guns do not need a trigger lock, but all other calibers firearms should have working trigger locks for storage.
- Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

## Practice safe shooting sports

## Follow all facility safety instructions\*.

- At an outdoor range:
  - Use approved designated ranges, which must include:
  - Targets placed away from houses, roads, and trails.
  - Avoid areas with pedestrian traffic.
  - Areas of brush are cleared; a hillside backstop is recommended.
  - Ensure the shooting area and spectator area (behind the shooting area) are clearly marked.
  - In the shooting area, ensure a safe distance of at least 100 yards behind the targets and 30 yards on each side of the range. An outdoor range is not used after nightfall.
  - Ammunition and guns must be stored separately in a locked cabinet when not in use.
- At an indoor range:
  - Targets are well-lit, and doors or entries onto the range are locked or blocked from the inside.
  - Do not block fire exits.

## Shooting Sports Links

- USA Shooting Sports: [www.usashooting.org](http://www.usashooting.org)
- Youth Videos and Resources from USA Shooting Sports: <http://www.usashooting.org/membership/youth-programs>
- National Rifle Association: <http://www.training.nra.org/nra-gun-safety-rules.aspx>
- National Shooting Sports Foundation: <http://www.nssf.org/safety/basics/>
- Revolutionary War Veterans Association: <http://www.appleseedinfo.org/>

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Skateboarding: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Invented in the 1930s by California surfers who were frustrated by bad waves, skateboarding has become a popular sport and pastime with competitions and professional skateboarders. Skateboarding schools and camps teach beginners how to ride, perform tricks, and skate ramps and half-pipes. In general, for groups learning to skateboard, four class sessions are recommended. Girl Scout Daisies do not participate in skateboarding.

**Caution:** Girls are not allowed to do aerial tricks on skateboards.

**Know where to skateboard.** Beginners skateboard in organized skateboarding facilities such as skate schools and enclosed areas. Experienced skateboarders skate in skate parks and other skateboarding-designated areas. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, [SkateboardDirectory.com](http://SkateboardDirectory.com) provides information about skateboarding parks and schools.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn about the resources and information for people with disabilities at [Disabled Sports USA](http://DisabledSportsUSA)

### Skateboarding Gear

#### Required Gear

- Skateboard (beginners should start with a standard skateboard, approximately 32 inches in length) with sturdy wheels
- Protective helmet with properly fitting safety harness that meets the American Society for Testing and Materials ([ASTM](http://ASTM)) F1492 requirements, displaying the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal

- Snug-fitting elbow pads and kneepads
- Skateboarding/in-line skating wrist guards
- Sneakers

### Recommended Gear

- Flexible, loose-fitting clothing that allows freedom of movement
- Long-sleeve shirts, which help to prevent scrapes
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15), if outdoors and lip balm
- Sunglasses (if outdoors)
- Daypack to carry personal belongings

### Prepare for Skateboarding

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the “Common Points” section in the *Introduction to the Safety Activity Checkpoints*, keeping in mind that Daises do not participate in skateboarding.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Instruction is given by a person with experience teaching and/or supervising skateboarding or has equivalent certification or skill in teaching and/or supervising skateboarding and has documented experience according to your council’s guidelines. Instructor certification is available through Skateboard Instructors Association, [www.skateboardia.org](http://www.skateboardia.org).
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Select a safe skateboarding site\*.** Obtain council guidance in selecting the skating site. Ensure that the site has a smooth skating surface free of debris. Beginners start on a flat, painted surface such as an outdoor basketball court. Avoid skate parks until girls are ready to skateboard at a higher level. When skateboarding at skate parks, the manager is called in advance to arrange for large groups or for practice sessions. The skate park is adequately staffed to monitor the size of the crowd. (Check with the skate park supervisor in advance to learn how many adults, in addition to the park staff, are needed to supervise the group.) Local ordinances or parks offices are checked to see whether skateboarding is permitted on bike paths or in city parks. Do not skateboard in back alleys, in the street, or on private property.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls, especially abrasions. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Skateboarding

- Get a weather report.** For outdoor skateboarding, on the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate, and make sure, if skateboarding outside, that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Safeguard valuables.** Secure equipment and other valuables in a dry, locked storage area if skateboarding indoors.
- Girls learn basic skating skills.** Girls receive basic instruction in skateboarding skills. Girls learn to perform basic skateboarding skills before attempting more advanced skills. Gentle warm-up exercises are done before any strenuous skating; cool-down exercises end the sessions.

- **Follow basic skateboarding safety standards\***. Be aware of surroundings and stay out of the way of other skateboarders. Follow skate park or facility rules. Loose or sharp articles, such as handbags, combs, and keys, are not carried in pockets, hands, hair, or any place where they might injure a skater in the event of a fall, fall to the floor, or injure another skater. Girls do not skate faster than their ability to stop, and skaters do not wear headphones while skating. To help avoid injuries, instruct girls to discontinue skateboarding if they're experiencing exhaustion or pain.
- **Practice safe outdoor skateboarding**. Outdoors, girls skate in areas where traffic or pedestrians will not interfere. Check local ordinances for any restrictions. Girls skate in the street or in a parking lot only if it is closed to traffic. When skating on a walkway, yield to pedestrians.

### Skateboarding Links

- International Skateboarding Federation: [www.internationalskateboardingfederation.com](http://www.internationalskateboardingfederation.com)
- Skateboard Directory: <http://skateboarddirectory.com/>

### Skateboarding Know-How for Girls

- **Learn about tricks**. Before trying them out in skate camp or school, learn about the ollie, kick flip, pop shuv-it, and other skateboarding moves at [Transworld Skateboarding](http://www.transworldskateboarding.com). **Caution:** Girls are not allowed to do aerial tricks on skateboards.
- **Start a skateboard club**. Don't have a skateboarding school, park, or club in your area? Consider starting one. For information and tips go to [Skateboard.About.com](http://www.skateboard.about.com)

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Sleds vary in design, shape, and material and can range from round plastic discs to rectangular wood structures with metal runners. A toboggan is typically a long, flat-bottomed sled made of thin boards that curve upward in a C-shape at one end. Snow tubes are inflatable, doughnut-shaped rubber or plastic inner tubes similar to those used in water tubing, but have dimpled centers.

**Know where to sled, toboggan, and snow tube.** Use designated sledding, tobogganing, and snow-tubing hills. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, [sledriding.com](http://sledriding.com) provides information about U.S. sledding-hill locations. In addition, some ski resorts offer snow-tubing classes and designated areas within the resort for snow tubing.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information for people with disabilities at [Disabled Sports USA](http://DisabledSportsUSA.org).

### Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing Gear

#### Required Gear:

- Hat
- Winter coat
- Waterproof winter boots
- Sled
- Toboggan
- Snow tube

## Recommended Gear

- Heavy, wool insulating socks (avoid cotton socks) Layered clothing
- Thermal underwear or long johns
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Snow pants or snow suit or waterproof pants over warm layers
- Bicycle helmet may be required by some snow-tubing facilities and some sledding hills

## Prepare for Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Select a safe site.** Ensure that sledding is conducted in an area free of vehicles and that the site has no obstructions such as rocks, trees, or signposts. The nature of the terrain, potential hazards (such as an avalanche or frozen lake), mileage, and approximate activity time are known to all group members in advance. When a latrine is not available, individual cat holes at least 200 feet away from water sources are used to dispose of and bury human waste; tampons, sanitary supplies, and toilet paper are packed out (visit [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org) for more information).
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls learn about sledding, tobogganing, and snow tubing.** Girls receive basic instruction in sledding safety and conduct rules. Girls learn to perform basic steering skills, including how to slow down and stop.

## On the Day of Sledding, Tobogganing, or Snow Tubing

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. [Xcski.org](http://Xcski.org) provides reports about snow conditions by region. If weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.
- Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Safeguard valuables.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Practice safe sledding, tobogganing, and snow tubing.** Conditions are monitored, and breaks are taken to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Girls slide downhill feet-first to reduce the potential for head injuries from collisions. Girls and adults agree on the portion of slope to be used for sledding and the portion to be used for walking uphill.

## Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow-Tubing Links

- Sled Riding: [www.sledriding.com](http://www.sledriding.com)

## Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing Know-How for Girls

- **Learn about competitive and Olympic sledding.** Find out about the sport of sled racing on the [USA Bobsled and Skeleton Federation site](http://USA Bobsled and Skeleton Federation site).

- **Know the history of sledding.** Traditionally sleds were used to transport goods and people in places where wheels couldn't operate. Toboggans made of poles tied together with leather were used by Native Americans to carry food, clothing, and other items through snow.



## Snorkeling: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Snorkeling is a great way to explore underwater life without the complicated equipment required of scuba diving. It's important to learn how to breathe using snorkels properly, and to receive instruction from an experienced snorkeler or equipment-rental facility. Coral, an ecosystem of shell and marine life, is a popular attraction for snorkelers and must be respected. As ocean organisms that support plants and fish, coral reefs are an essential part of the underwater ecosystem. Unfortunately, the coral reef is threatened by [climate change](#), [ocean acidification](#), and people who mistreat it. Touching coral can harm the delicate outer layer, which may take up to 100 years to recover.

**Know where to snorkel.** Just about any body of water is appropriate, but snorkeling is most recommended in warm ocean water with minimal waves or current. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Instructors Association for Divers with Disabilities](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Snorkeling Gear

#### Required Gear

- Consult your instructor to evaluate whether participants should wear a flotation device such as a simple waist belt or snorkeling vest. Water currents or surge, visibility, and participants' swimming ability should be considered. If life jackets are recommended by the instructor, then use U.S. Coast Guard approved life jackets (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).
- Snorkel
- Mask
- At least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water

#### Recommended Gear

- One-piece bathing suit (less cumbersome in the waves than a two-piece)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15); apply generously to back and backs of legs
- Beach towel
- Dry clothing and sunglasses to wear after snorkeling
- Wetsuit or dive skin recommended when swimming in cool water
- Mask defogger solution
- Fins

## Prepare for Snorkeling

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the snorkeling instructor holds instructional certification from [Scuba Schools International \(SSI\)](#), [Professional Association of Diving Instructors \(PADI\)](#), or has equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Size up snorkeling gear\*.** Ensure the appropriate sizes of masks, snorkels, and fins are available, and make sure that masks fit girls' faces securely and comfortably. An air space is needed in front of the eyes in order to see properly underwater. Also keep in mind that objects viewed underwater while wearing a mask appear about 25 percent larger and closer than objects seen through a mask out of water.
- Safeguard valuables.** Don't leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place. If working with a snorkeling school, inquire about the company's storage amenities.
- Prepare for emergencies.** If a lifeguard is not on duty, an adult with rescue experience and/or certification is present; if snorkeling from a boat, at least one adult has small-craft safety certification or equivalent experience. (Both of these qualifications can be held by one person.) Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of Snorkeling

- Get a weather and wind report.** Never snorkel on a stormy or extremely windy day; strong winds and large waves decrease visibility and make swimming difficult. On the day of the snorkeling trip or lesson, check [weather.com](#), or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If weather conditions prevent the snorkeling activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity.
- Use the buddy system.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately, and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

## Snorkeling Links

- National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI): [www.nauai.org](http://www.nauai.org)
- Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI): <http://www.padi.com>
- Snorkeling.info: [www.snorkeling.info](http://www.snorkeling.info)

### Snorkeling Know-How for Girls

- **Kick things up a notch.** There are several styles of kicks in snorkeling:
- **The flutter kick** is the most common and involves moving legs up and down while positioned horizontally in the water.
- **The dolphin kick** involves motioning fins in unison on downward and upward strokes.
- **The Frog kick**, fins are kept together with toes pointed as the snorkeler brings them closer to the torso by bending the knees.
- **Learn about underwater photography.** Borrow or rent a waterproof camera (appropriate for the depth of water you're diving in) to take photos of sea life and fellow divers.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Snowshoeing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Originating thousands of years ago as a means of trekking through snow, snowshoeing has evolved to become a competitive winter sport. Snowshoes also have evolved to become sophisticated sporting equipment. Traditional snowshoes are made of wood and rawhide lacings, and modern snowshoes are typically constructed from plastic, metal, and other synthetic materials. As for selecting appropriate boots, waterproof boots or snowboarding boots work well, as do waterproofed leather hiking boots for snow hiking, and trail-running shoes work well for snow-running. Contact ski facilities and outdoor equipment stores to inquire about renting snowshoe equipment. Girl Scout Daisies may participate in snowshoeing provided the proper sized equipment is provided and they have the physical skills and coordination required for the activity.

**Know where to snowshoe.** Snowshoe at Girl Scout camps, national and state parks, Nordic centers (usually located around a ski resort), and ski slopes. Backcountry destinations can be used by Seniors and Ambassadors only, provided they are led by a leader highly experienced in this type of activity. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, for information about snowshoe events, visit [Winter Trails](#).

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information for people with disabilities at [Disabled Sports USA](#)

### Snowshoeing Gear

#### Required Gear:

- Snowshoes and bindings that fit properly
- Hat
- Thick, water-resistant gloves or mittens
- Windproof, waterproof jacket or parka
- Waterproof boots
- Snow pants or Gaiters (for deep, new snow, so that the snow doesn't get into your socks and shoes)

## Recommended Gear

- Heavy, wool/synthetic insulating socks (avoid cotton socks)
- Layered clothing
- Thermal underwear or long johns
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses or ski goggles to protect eyes from bright snow glare
- Water bottle, high-energy food (such as fruits and nuts for longer trips),
- Daypack to carry personal belongings for longer trips. For balance, one or two snowshoe poles or ski poles that are proper size for the girls

## Prepare for Snowshoeing

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios see the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Instruction is given by an adult with experience teaching and/or supervising snowshoeing and has documented experience according to your council's guidelines
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Select a safe snowshoeing site.** Girls are encouraged to plan trip details and include adequate rest periods with opportunities to replenish fluids and eat high-energy foods (such as fruits and nuts). The nature of the terrain, potential hazards (such as an avalanche or frozen lake), mileage, and approximate snowshoeing time are known to all group members in advance. When a latrine is not available, individual cat holes at least 200 feet away from water sources are used to dispose of and bury human waste; tampons, sanitary supplies, and toilet paper are packed out (visit [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org) for more information).
- Map the course.** The route is marked on a map and before snowshoeing designate a meeting place where girls can contact a supervising adult.
- Ensure girls are prepared for snowshoeing.** Girls get in condition by exercising before snowshoeing. Ensure that equipment is appropriate for the type of terrain, the participants' body weight, and the weight of any backpack.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. Search-and-rescue procedures are written out in advance. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of Snowshoeing

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. [Xcski.org](http://Xcski.org) provides reports about snow conditions by region. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.
- Use the buddy system.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls are instructed in basic snowshoeing techniques.** Adults are aware of each girl's ability. Practice sessions are scheduled for beginners.
- Be prepared in the case of an emergency.** Girls are trained in winter survival (such as snow-cave building, whiteouts, and avalanche avoidance), as needed. Advance arrangements are made for medical emergencies and evacuation procedures.

## Snowshoeing Links

- National Ski Patrol: [www.nsp.org](http://www.nsp.org)
- Snowshoe Magazine: [www.snowshoemag.com](http://www.snowshoemag.com)
- The United States Snowshoe Association: [www.snowshoeracing.com](http://www.snowshoeracing.com)
- Leave No Trace: [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)

## Snowshoeing Know-How for Girls

- **Learn about types of snowshoes.** Aerobic/running snowshoes are the smallest and lightest; recreational are mid-size snowshoes designed for moderate walks; and mountaineering snowshoes are the largest snowshoes that are meant for intense, long-distance hikes.





## Spelunking: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Spelunking” (speh-LUNK-ing) or caving, is an exciting, hands-on way to learn about speleology (spee-lee-AH-luh-gee), the study of caves, as well as paleontology (pay-lee-en-TAH-luh-gee), the study of life from past geologic periods by examining plant and animal fossils. As a sport, caving is similar to rock climbing, and often involves using ropes to crawl and climb through cavern nooks and crannies. These checkpoints do not apply to groups taking trips to tourist or commercial caves, which often include safety features such as paths, electric lights, and stairways. Caving is not permitted for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies.

Never go into a cave alone. Never go caving with fewer than 4 in your group. Appoint a reliable, experienced caver, as the “trail guide” or “sweeper” whose job it is to keep the group together. When climbing in a cave, always use three points of contact, hands, feet knees and possibly, the seat of your pants (the cave scoot).

**Know where to go spelunking.** Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, the National Speleological Society provides an online search tool for [U.S. caving clubs](#), and the National Park Service provides information about National Park caves. [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Center on Health, Physical Activities and Disabilities](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Caving Gear

#### Required:

- Safety helmet; ensure that safety helmets fit properly, with a strong chin strap; for horizontal caves, bump helmets may be used; for vertical caves, use safety helmets carrying the Union of International Alpine Association (UIAA) seal, which is located on the inside of the helmet

#### Recommended Gear

- Sturdy boots with ankle protection (hiking boots for dry areas; rubber boots or wellies for wet caves)
- Warm, rubber gloves (to keep hands warm and protect against cuts and abrasions)
- Long Pants and long sleeved shirt
- Nonperishable, high-energy foods such as fruits and nuts
- Water
- Knee and elbow pads
- Water-resistant “wet socks” (for wet caves)
- Belt and harness
- Compass
- Three sources of light; the main light is electric and mounted on the safety helmet, while the other two light sources may be flashlights
- Spare bulbs and batteries
- Trash bag (use as a poncho or for covering dirty equipment after the caving activity; cavers keep an empty trash bag in their safety helmets)

### Prepare for Caving

- Communicate with council and parents.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for information*
- Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** Ensure that at least one adult is an experienced caver. For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios see *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** A guide with documented experience in cave exploration accompanies the group into the cave. A guide can also help decide which caves are suitable. Pre-trip instruction is given by an adult with documented experience according to your council’s guidelines.
- Select a safe site\*.** Obtain guidance from a local chapter of the National Speleological Society to select a cave to explore. Never explore a cave without a guide and without written permission from the site owner/operator. Check with your Girl Scout council for approval if needed.
- Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for information*
- Girls learn about caving.** Girls learn about basic caving guidelines before planning a caving trip, and they must understand safety procedures and know how to handle equipment.
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of soft tissue and bone injury, and hypothermia. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from Emergency Medical Services response time, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of Caving

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the caving activity, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the caving activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. Also, in wet weather, avoid caves with stream passages, as some caves can flood.
- Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

### Caving Links

- **American Cave Conservation Association:** [www.cavern.org](http://www.cavern.org)
- National Caves Association: <http://cavern.com>
- National Speleological Society: [www.caves.org](http://www.caves.org)
- Guide to Responsible Caving (published by NSS):  
<http://caves.org/brochure/NSS%20Guide%2062309.pdf>

### Caving Know-How for Girls

- **Leave No Trace in caving.** Learn about threats to cave and karst systems, which are underground drainage systems, from the National Park Service.
- **Get into archaeology.** Read up about the archaeological explorations in caving at [www.archaeological.org](http://www.archaeological.org)
- **White-Nose Syndrome (WNS).** Learn about the threat of white-nose syndrome to bat populations at <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>

**\*This checkpoint must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility where appropriate.**



## Standup Paddleboarding: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Standup Paddleboarding (SUP) is a surface water sport in which participants are propelled by paddling while standing on a paddleboard. Paddling is a total body effort utilizing core muscles, which minimizes the effort of the paddler's arms alone. Beginners, with proper instruction, can quickly learn to paddle on flat water bays or lakes, while experienced paddlers can tackle ocean surf or rivers. Boards and paddles are available in a variety of sizes and shapes to fit many body types and water conditions.

Beginners should be careful of overexertion as girls unaccustomed to paddling may experience strained muscles. All paddleboarders should pay close attention to their surroundings and not stray too far from shore or their launch point. Care should be taken to gain progressive experience and skills before taking on challenging waterways or conditions. SUP is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies, and surf and whitewater is not recommended for anyone without proper instruction from a certified instructor.

The U.S. Coast Guard considers stand up paddleboards as vessels when they are used outside of designated swim areas or ocean surfing zones. Therefore, federal regulations concerning life jackets, sound devices and lights apply.

**Caution:** You must seek council permission, and have received formalized training, in order go out on any body of water with a current, including rivers.

**Know where to go paddleboarding.** Many bodies of water (lake, bay, river and ocean) are suitable for SUP, so long as the proper equipment, instructions and safety precautions are used. Beginners should develop strong skills on flat water before taking on ocean water or surf. SUP is done only on water that has been approved by your Girl Scout council, so you should connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Additional information and resources are available at [Disabled Sports USA](#).

## Standup Paddleboarding Gear

### Required Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket. Type III life jackets are recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#). Belt type inflatables are not recommended.
- Paddleboard sized for the person using it, based on the paddlers weight and experience.
- Paddles of the [appropriate size and style](#) for each participant. Paddles should be 10” longer than the height of the paddler. The easiest way to make sure paddles of the appropriate size are available is to use adjustable paddles. Extras should be kept on hand.

### Recommended Gear

- One-piece bathing suit or T-shirt and shorts
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Goggles for girls who require glasses or contact lenses. If prescription goggles are too expensive for girls to purchase, non-prescription goggles that fit properly over their glasses may be used (fit should be tested before getting into the water); an eye glass strap (also known as a “croakie”) should be used for glasses or sunglasses.
- Boat shoes, water socks or shoes, or other nonslip footwear (no flip-flops)
- Dry clothing and sunglasses to wear after paddleboarding
- Protective clothing when the water temperature is below 70 degrees
- Paddle leash (leashes should not be used in rivers due to the risk of entrapment)
- Whistle
- For whitewater the following protective gear must be worn: helmets, chest protectors, and arm and leg protection. Rigid boards are not typically used in rivers with rapids, so an inflatable board is recommended. **NOTE: Whitewater SUP is not permitted without specialized training from a certified instructor and permission from your council**

## Prepare for Stand Up Paddleboarding

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants’ swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Instructors should be certified by the American Canoe Association (ACA) for [Stand Up Paddleboarding](#). For flat-water SUP, instructors should have completed both Level 1 and Level 2 certification. For whitewater and surf SUP, instructors should have completed both Level 3 and Level 4 certification. Ratio of instructor to participants is 1 to 5 for all water. As an alternative, instructors can hold the [American Red Cross Small Craft Safety certification](#). However, they still must be experienced in SUP, with a skill level greater than the skill level required for the activity (consult your councils guidelines for further information).

**NOTE:** The instructor-to-participant ratio is NOT the same as the adult-to-girl ratio that is found in the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints. Both ratios MUST be complied with when girls are participating in SUP. For example, if there are 15 Juniors participating in SUP, there must be 3 instructors, plus 2 adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).

- **Select a safe paddleboarding site\***. Ensure that the location chosen complements the girls' ability levels, and has a soft, sandy or muddy bottom (sharp-edged or rocky bottoms can be dangerous). Trips are not taken to unknown coastal areas, and locations of all boat channels are known and avoided. Also make sure:
  - The launching area is free of glass and debris, has a gentle slope and good footing.
  - Busy channels are not crossed.
  - Surf zones and areas with standing waves are avoided, except for advanced surf paddleboarding.
  - On long crossings, paddlers are close enough together so that a group decision can be made if wind and water conditions change.
- **Research water conditions and select paddleboards and paddles appropriate to skill level.** Consider skill level of girls and their physical abilities in choosing the appropriate paddleboard and paddles. Also make sure of the following:
  - Board weight and capacity are not exceeded.
  - Each board and paddle are sized for the person using them.
  - You are knowledgeable of the difficulty of the water run and the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#).
  - You are aware of possible changes in [river level](#) and weather, and their effects on the run's level of difficulty.
- **Transport paddleboards safely.** Boards are transported on car-top racks or trailers designed to haul paddleboards.
- **Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Respect the environment.** Make sure paddleboarding on whitewater or semi-protected waters meets the [Safety Code of American Whitewater](#).
- **File a float plan.** It is recommended that a float plan be completed and filed (left) with a person knowledgeable about the trip and when to expect the party back. Float plans cannot be filed with the U.S. Coast Guard. The USCG float plan is available [here](#) and should be used for all float plans.
- **Prepare for emergencies** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. Basic ice rescue techniques are understood and practiced. Appropriate rescue equipment is on hand (for example, ring buoy, rope, throw bag, pole, ladder, boat, where necessary). See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.
- **Know the Universal River Signals.** Ensure that the adults and/or paddleboarding instructor understand the [American Whitewater codes](#). Also, a set of whistle and visual signals is established that allows messages to pass between participants.
- **Paddleboarding participants know cold-water survival techniques and treatment for hypothermia.** When paddleboarding in cold water, each person practices appropriate self-rescue and re-boarding techniques (basic information is available on the [U.S. Search and Rescue Task Force site](#)).

### On the Day of Paddleboarding

- **Get a weather report.** Never paddle on a stormy day. On the day of the activity, visit [weather.com](#), [Intellicast](#), or other reliable sources to assess weather conditions, water temperature and river/wave conditions. If weather conditions prevent the trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.
- **Review rescue tips.** Know how to perform self-rescue techniques and ensure each participant is able to get herself/himself back on the board.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat

area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, and stay low.

### SUP Links

- American Canoe Association: [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)
- American Whitewater: [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)
- SUP Industry Association: [www.supindustry.org](http://www.supindustry.org)
- National Organization for River Sports: [www.nationalrivers.org](http://www.nationalrivers.org)
- U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division: [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)
- Whitewater Rescue Institute: [www.whitewaterrescue.com](http://www.whitewaterrescue.com)

**\*This checkpoint must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility where appropriate.**





## STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math): Safety Activity Checkpoints



Women have made incredible contributions to the STEM community and have, as a result, advanced culture and improved modern ways of life. Unfortunately, women are underrepresented in these fields, especially technology and engineering. A number of organizations work to encourage girls to enter the sciences and to connect girls with mentorship and education in the sciences (see the “STEM Links” section for resources). To encourage girls’ interest in STEM, it’s important to engage them in hands-on activities that provide ties to real-world applications. Activities should allow girls to explore the vast array of career opportunities available to them. Before working with girls, make sure you fully understand the STEM activity and make note of any additional safety precautions provided in the activity directions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Foundation for Science and Disability](#) provides to people with disabilities. [Do It](#) provides resources for teachers to make STEM activities accessible to girls with disabilities.

### Prepare for the STEM Activity

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*.
- Prepare for informative learning experiences.** Research STEM activity and encourage girls to take active roles in preparing educational and safety aspects. If using chemicals, prior to the activity, adults

and instructors should be familiar with safety procedures and possible side effects of contact with the chemical as listed on the chemicals' corresponding [Material Safety Data Sheet](#).

- ❑ **Select a safe location\***. Inspect the site to be sure:
  - It is free of potential hazards
  - Contains well-ventilated areas when using vaporous materials such as chemicals.
  - Flammable materials are kept in fireproof containers and in an area away from ignition sources.
  - Food or beverages are not consumed in an activity area, and hands are washed before eating.
- ❑ **Ensure safety of equipment and materials\***. The work area should be ample and appropriate for the science activity. When working with any chemical, plant, or animal, the following are observed:
  - Hands do not touch the mouth or face during the activity.
  - Facilities for washing hands and eyes are available at the site.
  - Hands are washed thoroughly after the activity.
  - Equipment is thoroughly cleaned.
  - Used materials are disposed of properly.
  - Chemical substances are used or mixed only when the adult in charge specifically knows the outcome.
  - When chemicals are used, goggles stamped ANSI Z87 on the frame and lens must be worn. Even the simplest experiment can be an eye hazard.
- ❑ **Ensure use of gloves when necessary**. Non-latex gloves made of nitrile or neoprene are worn when working with chemicals and unknown plants and substances. Vinyl gloves generally do not provide appropriate protection. The [American Chemical Society](#) provides additional information about chemical safety.
- ❑ **Compile key contacts**. See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity**. Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment.
- ❑ **Be prepared in the case of an emergency**. Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle burns. Emergency procedures are clearly posted for swallowing a chemical, getting a chemical in the eyes, skin contact with a chemical, and so on. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of the STEM Activity

- ❑ **Get a weather report**. If the activity is outdoors, on the morning of the science activity, check [weather.com](#) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate, and make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system**. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- ❑ **Communicate with girls about STEM safety**. Before beginning a STEM activity, talk with girls about safety and point out potential dangers and appropriate safety precautions to take.
- ❑ **Take care with animals\***. Whenever animals or objects they use—such as food bowls, water dishes, or toys—are handled, hands must be thoroughly washed with soap under running water. Iguanas, turtles and other reptiles, as well as pet ducklings and chicks, can harbor salmonella bacteria, which can be passed on to humans. Contact with these animals should be avoided. Activities with animals are carried out with sensitivity and concern for the needs of the animals. Aquariums and terrariums are kept in areas where proper care, temperature regulation and maintenance are always possible. Girls are aware of the proper care, feeding, and maintenance of animals and take responsibility for meeting these needs.

### STEM Links

- FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology): [www.usfirst.org](#)

- NASA: [www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)
- Society of Women Engineers: <http://societyofwomenengineers.swe.org/>
- Women in Science: [www.womeninscience.org](http://www.womeninscience.org)

### STEM Know-How for Girls

- **Learn about careers in the sciences.** Aerospace engineer, meteorologist, cryptographer—these are just some of the jobs in science, technology, engineering, and technology. Learn more about additional career options at [Engineer Your Life](#).
- **Pick cool STEM projects.** What do you want to learn about in science, technology, engineering, and math? Visit Girl Scout partner site [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org) to watch shows such as *Curious George*, *FETCH!*, *Design Squad*, *Cyberchase*, and *SciGirls*.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Surfing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Surfing (also referred to as “surfboarding”) is one of the most challenging water sports, but if a new surfer is well prepared, it can be a safe, rewarding experience that develops balance, agility, strength and confidence. With proper instruction from an experienced surfing instructor, many first-timers are able to stand up on their boards during the initial two- to four-hour session. While people learn at different paces, three to four lessons are recommended for beginners. Enrolling girls in a surf camp or daylong surfboarding lesson is highly recommended for beginners, and be sure to inform the surf school of girls’ ages, heights, and sizes to reserve appropriate surfboards and wetsuits. Surfing is not allowed for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies.

**Know where to surf.** The ocean is best, but some rivers and regions along the Great Lakes also can be suitable for surfing so long as the weather is warm. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with abilities.** Communicate with girls and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Disabled Sports USA](#) and the [Association of Amputee Surfers](#) provide to people with disabilities.

### Surfing Gear

#### Required Gear

- Surfboard (soft-deck longboards are generally recommended for beginners)
- At least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water

#### Recommended Gear

- One-piece bathing suit (less cumbersome in the waves than a two-piece)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15)
- Goggles for girls who require glasses or contact lenses (available at sporting-goods stores; if prescription goggles are too expensive for girls to purchase, make sure girls test non-prescription goggles to assure proper fit over prescriptive eyewear)
- Beach towel

- ❑ Dry clothing and sunglasses to wear after surfing
- ❑ Wetsuit is recommended for warmth and skin protection, especially when water temperature is below 70 degrees Fahrenheit (most surf schools rent full-body or partial suits)
- ❑ Leash (also referred to as a leg rope; a cord that attaches the surfboard to the surfer's ankle, so that she doesn't have to swim too far to catch up to the board after a wipeout; a leash is usually included with a rental surfboard)
- ❑ Wax, which is applied to the top or deck of a surfboard for traction (most rental surfboards will be pre-waxed)

## Prepare for Surfing

- ❑ **Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- ❑ **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints* for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios.
- ❑ **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Instructors should hold a certification from the [National Surf Schools and Instructors Association](#), the [International Surfing Association](#), or similar certification. Ocean lifeguard certifications are also recommended. The instructor-to-girl ratio is 1 to 4.  
**NOTE:** The instructor-to-participant ratio is NOT the same as the adult-to-girl ratio that is found in the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Both ratios MUST be complied with when girls are participating in surfing. For example, if there are 15 Juniors participating in surfing, there must be 4 instructors plus 2 adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).
- ❑ **Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Pick an ability-appropriate site.** Make sure the surfing location complements the surfers' ability levels. Some beaches designate areas for beginners, intermediate surfers, and higher-level surfers. If the surfing location does not designate areas by skill level, verify with the surfing instructor that the location is appropriate for the girls.
- ❑ **Select a safe location with a soft, sandy, or muddy bottom.** Scout out a location that does not have a sharp-edged or rocky bottom, which can be dangerous and can cut feet and limbs. The launching area should be easily accessible and clear of overhead power lines.
- ❑ **Safeguard valuables.** Don't leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place. If working with a surfboarding school or camp, call ahead to inquire about the company's storage amenities.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of Surfing

- ❑ **Get a weather and tide report.** Never surf on a stormy day. On the morning of the surf trip, determine whether conditions will be appropriate for surfing by searching for regional surf reports on [www.surfline.com](#), [www.freetidetables.com](#), [www.17ft.com](#), and [weather.com](#). If weather conditions prevent the surf trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity.
- ❑ **Assess wave heights.** Call the surf instructor on the day of the trip to confirm that wave heights are appropriate for girls. Wave heights rely heavily on wind strengths; two- to three-foot waves are

recommended for beginners. When waves surpass five feet, it can be difficult to paddle out from the shore.

- **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

### Surfing Links

- **Surfline Glossary of Terms:** [www.surfline.com/surfology/surfology\\_glossary\\_index.cfm](http://www.surfline.com/surfology/surfology_glossary_index.cfm)
- **Surfing Handbook:** Tips for beginners and intermediate surfers, plus overviews on ocean safety and gear - [www.surfinghandbook.com](http://www.surfinghandbook.com)
- **International Surfing Association:** <https://www.isasurf.org>

### Surfing Know-How for Girls

- **Know how to steer out from the shore.** When lying on boards and paddling from the shore and deeper into the water, keep the nose of the surfboard pointed toward the surf, in order to cut through the waves. Being positioned sideways opens up the possibility of getting caught by a wave and tumbled around.
- **Know the break line.** When paddling out from the shore, go around the break line (the point at which waves begin to break) and not through it. This allows other surfers plenty of space.
- **Share the waves.** Stay out of the way of other surfers, and never take off on a wave in front of another surfer (called “snaking”).
- **Hold on to the surfboard.** It’s dangerous to other surfers and swimmers to let go of surfboards (all the more reason to use a leash).



## Swimming: Safety Activity Checkpoints



A longtime Girl Scout tradition, swimming is one of the many ways that girls develop athleticism, leadership and team-building skills. Whether swimming outdoors at camps and competitive events or in indoor pools, safety is one of the keys to having fun in the water. Girls and adults adhere to council requirements for swimming levels—in addition to the requirements of the organization you are working with—to participate in water activities. Consult a local organization such as your local parks and recreation department, YMCA, or [American Red Cross](#) for swimming lessons. To find a local pool or club for swimming to [swim.com](#).

**Know where to go swimming.** Girl Scout camps, lakes, rivers, pools, and other camping facilities. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Disabled Sports USA](#) and [USA Swimming Disability Committee](#) provide to people with disabilities.

### Swimming Gear

#### Recommended/Rescue Gear

- Bathing suit (a one-piece is usually less cumbersome than a two-piece)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Beach towel
- Dry clothing and sunglasses to wear after swimming
- Goggles, swim cap, and/or nose and ear plugs for girls who need them
- Participants who are weak swimmers wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).
- Reaching pole
- Ring buoy or throw bag with firmly attached line approximately 30 feet long
- Rescue tube

- Backboard
- At least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water

### Prepare for Swimming

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Ensure the presence of lifeguards.** One adult lifeguard (certified in American Red Cross Lifeguard Training plus Waterfront Lifeguard course or the equivalent) is present for every 10 swimmers, plus one watcher. *Exception for pools:* For swimming activities in public pools, hotel and cruise-ship pools, and backyard pools, the lifeguards are at least 16 years old and have American Red Cross Lifeguard Training certification or the equivalent. When girls are wading in water more than knee-deep, an adult with American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue certification or with documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#) .
- Ensure the presence of watchers.** A watcher is a person who assists the group by watching the group for possible emergencies. Lifeguards and watchers are stationed at separate posts and stay out of the water, except in emergencies. An American Red Cross Lifeguarding Instructor or American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor (WSI) can provide training in Basic Water Rescue.

#### Swimming Lifeguards and Watchers Ratios

Number of Swimmers	Lifeguards	Watchers
1–10	1 adult (see exception for pools below)	1*
11–25	1 adult (see exception for pools below)	2*
26–35	2 persons, at least 1 is an adult; others may be 16 years of age or older.	3*
36–50	2 persons, at least 1 is an adult; others may be 16 years of age or older.	4*

\*Some states allow watchers to be under the age of 18, but in all states, they must be at least 16 years of age.

These numbers are a minimum. The ratio of lifeguards and watchers to swimmers may need to be increased depending on the number of girls in one area, swimming level and ability, girls with varying abilities, age level and ability to follow instructions, type of swimming activity (instruction, recreation), type of swimming area, weather and water conditions, and rescue equipment available. If you are unsure whether your swimming lifeguards and watchers ratios are sufficient, be sure to contact your council.

- Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.

**Note:** For backyard pools the homeowners' liability insurance is primary in the event of an accident, and should therefore be notified before any other insurance company.

- **Assess safety of swimming site.** Whether using council-owned or -operated swimming sites or using public, loaned, or donated facilities, the swimming site posts that its water quality passes the local [health-department tests](#) and sanitation regulations. In addition:
  - For pools:
    - Pool water depths are clearly marked, and shallow areas are marked “no diving.” Diving areas are separate from other swimming areas.
    - The facility makes periodic maintenance checks. Maintenance requests and repairs are documented, and records are retained.
    - Water pH and chlorine are tested and maintained at safe levels. Tests are documented, and records are retained.
    - The decks around the pool are kept clean and clutter-free.
    - The surrounding fence and gate or doors are locked when the pool is unsupervised.
  - For beach and other waterfront areas:
    - Hazards are eliminated or clearly marked.
    - Girls are instructed to avoid strong currents, sharp drop-offs, quicksand bottoms, rough surf, and other potentially dangerous conditions.
    - As best as can be determined, the water is free of dangerous marine life.
    - The bottom is relatively free of debris, sharp stones, and shells.
    - Swimming, diving, and small-craft areas are separate. They are clearly marked or roped off or both.
- **Follow sliding safety rules\*.** The following rules are respected for activities that include slides:
  - A watcher signals that the next person may slide when the landing area is clear.
  - Only one person may be on the slide at a time.
  - Girls slide in a sitting position, never headfirst.
  - The landing area is off-limits to other swimmers.
  - The water in the slide landing area is at least 4 feet deep.
- **Follow diving-area safety rules\*.** The following rules are respected for activities that include diving:
  - The diving area is divided from the swimming area by a buoyed line.
  - The water in the landing area is a minimum of 10 feet deep for recreational diving boards. The boards are usually 12 to 14 feet long and less than 3 feet above the water’s surface.
  - The water in the landing area is a minimum of 12 feet deep for competitive diving boards. The boards are usually 16 feet long and 3 to 10 feet above the water’s surface.
  - Diving is restricted to water of sufficient depth and checked in advance for submerged obstructions. Diving is prohibited in waters of unknown depth and conditions.
  - Recreational divers do not manipulate the adjustable fulcrum on the springboards. During recreational swimming periods, the adjustable fulcrum is locked in a fixed position, preferably in its most forward position, to reduce the spring of the board.
  - The maximum water depth extends 10 feet on each side of the center line of the board. If tides, drought, and similar forces affect the water depth, it is checked each time before diving is permitted.
  - Girls do not dive off the side of the board.
- **Follow water-park safety rules\*.** When participating in water activities at water parks, adults and girls must:
  - Read and follow all park rules and the instructions of lifeguards.
  - Know their physical limits. Observe a water ride before going on.
  - Not dive. Always know the depth of the water before wading in.
  - Not run. Most minor injuries at water parks are caused by slips and falls.
  - Use extra care on water slides. They cause a significant number of injuries. See “Follow sliding safety standards” outlined above
  - In wave pools, stay away from the walls.

- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.
- ❑ **Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

## On the Day of Swimming

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** If swimming outdoors, never swim on a stormy day. On the day of the activity, consult [weather.com](#) or other reliable sources to assess temperature and weather and water conditions. If weather conditions prevent the trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.
- ❑ **Safeguard valuables.** Don't leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately, and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, keep a sharp lookout for boats and other obstructions.
- ❑ **Keep track of girls' whereabouts.** In a controlled waterfront, a checkboard system is used to indicate which girls are in the water and in which swimming area. In crowded areas, a color system is used for identification (for example, non-swimmers, novice swimmers, and skilled swimmers each have a wristband, hair band, or other marker of a different color).
- ❑ **Monitor time in water.** The length of a swimming period is determined by the swimmer's condition and comfort, weather conditions, and water temperature. Generally, 30-minute swimming periods are sufficient.
- ❑ **Respect basic swimming rules and safety precautions.**
  - Girls do not dive into above-ground pools, shallow areas, etc.
  - Girls swim in supervised areas only.
  - Girls swim only during daylight hours or in a well-lit pool at night.
  - Girls do not swim immediately after eating, when overheated, or when tired.
  - Girls swim at a safe distance from any diving board.
  - Electrical appliances are not used in or near swimming areas.
  - Bottles, glass, and sharp objects are not allowed in swimming area.
  - An emergency telephone is available, whenever possible.
  - Drink water to avoid dehydration.

## Swimming Links

- **American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program:** [www.redcross.org/portal](http://www.redcross.org/portal) ⇒ Preparing and Getting Trained ⇒ Get Trained ⇒ Swimming and Water Safety ⇒ Learn to Swim
- **Swim America:** [www.swimamerica.org](http://www.swimamerica.org)
- **USA Swimming:** [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)
- **YMCA Safety Around Water:** <http://www.ymca.net/watersafety>

## Swimming Know-How for Girls

- **Learn swimming strokes.** To learn more about the different swimming strokes visit [enjoy-swimming.com](http://enjoy-swimming.com).
- **Create swimming games.** Marco Polo and Find the Penny are popular swimming games.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**





## Tubing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Tubing involves floating down a river or other body of water in a doughnut-shaped inner tube. Tubing is popular both as a relaxing leisurely activity (in slow-moving waters) and as an adventurous recreational activity in faster-paced rivers. As a safety precaution, keep in mind that tubes occasionally flip, causing tubers to sometimes fall out of their tubes as they travel over rapids and through rough patches of water. As river tubing is often a one-way trip, ensure to arrange transportation from the tubing final destination. If participating in speed-boat tubing, be sure to take safety precautions that comply with small-craft safety guidelines.

**Caution:** Girls are not allowed to operate motorized boats without council permission.

**Know where to go tubing.** Lakes or rivers. Find a list of tubing sites and outfitters at [River Tubing USA](#). Also, connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Center of Physical Activities and Disabilities](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Tubing Gear

#### Required Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).
- Tube

- Closed-toe sport sandals with heel strap, water socks or shoes (no flip-flops)

## Recommended Gear

- One-piece bathing suit (less cumbersome than a two-piece)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Beach towel
- Dry clothing and sunglasses to wear after tubing
- Wetsuit (recommended when water is colder than 70 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Tube cover or skin (optional)
- At least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water.
- Sunglasses

## Prepare for Tubing

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for recommended adult-to-girl ratios. In addition, one adult will be the lead tuber, while another adult will be the sweep tuber. The lead adult knows firsthand the hazards and rapids on any river to be tubed.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** One adult must be certified in American Red Cross Small Craft Safety, Moving Water module from the American Red Cross, have experience in teaching and/or supervising tubing activities, or have documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#).
- Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- All participants are instructed before beginning to tube.** Girls receive instruction on how to float through rapids, how to breathe while swimming in rapids, and how to swim to shore. There is only one person to a tube, and tubes that are tied together are secured very snugly, with no slack between the tubes. Avoid long, dangling ropes that can get snagged on various obstructions.
- Research river condition.** Never go whitewater tubing on water that has not been run and rated. No tubing is taken on whitewater more difficult than Class II, as defined by the American Version of the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#). Be aware of possible changes in river level and its effects on the run's level of difficulty; American Whitewater provides a [National Whitewater Inventory](#).
- Respect the environment.** Make sure tubing on whitewater or semi-protected waters meets the [Safety Code of American Whitewater](#).
- Prepare for emergencies. Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

## On the Day of Tubing

- Get a weather report.** Never go tubing on a stormy day. On the day of the activity, consult [weather.com](#) or other reliable sources to assess weather and river conditions and water and air temperature. If weather conditions prevent the trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.

- **Safeguard valuables.** Don't leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately, and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, keep a sharp lookout for boats and other obstructions.

### Tubing Links

- **American Whitewater:** [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)
- **River Tubing USA:** [www.rivertubing.info](http://www.rivertubing.info)
- **Whitewater Rescue Institute:** [www.whitewaterrescue.com](http://www.whitewaterrescue.com)

### Tubing Know-How for Girls

- **Know the river flow.** Be careful about where you roll out of a tube. If tubing in fast-moving water, the under-surface current may catch you off guard. Do not get out of a tube where the flow of water is fastest—just above the riverbed, where there is little resistance to flow.
- **Put on your “explorers’ cap.”** Create exploration games to see who can locate the most interesting nature gems, such as caves and peculiar plants.



## Vaulting on Horseback: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Vaulting is gymnastics in harmony with the moving horse and its history dates back to Roman times. It provides opportunities for team building and channels girls' energy into a positive learning experience. Vaulting teaches balance and confidence, which makes riders more successful in their arena and trial lessons. One of the most important aspects of vaulting on horseback is showing respect for horses. Before riding, inspect horses to ensure that they have no cuts, injuries, or rocks in their feet.

The purpose of these checkpoints is to provide tips for vaulting on horseback which requires special equipment, as well as horses and instructors with specialized training. Vaulting on horseback is not permitted for Girl Scout Daisies.

**Know where to vault.** Locations with firm grounding that are designated for vaulting on horseback. Vaulting is done during daylight hours; vaulting at night is in an enclosed, well-lit area. Avoid vaulting when it is raining, in wet areas, mud, and on streets and parking lots. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with of all abilities.** Communicate with girls of all abilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Saddle Up!](#) provides to people with disabilities.

### Vaulting Riding Gear

#### Required Gear

- Long pants and appropriate protective clothing (clothing that is stretchable and allows movement is encouraged).
- Closed-toe canvas shoes with a smooth flexible sole (no steel-toe shoes or heels, which can injure the horse during the activity)
- No jewelry
- Protective headgear with properly fitting safety harness that meets the American Society for Testing and Materials ([ASTM](#)) F1163-88 requirements, displaying the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal

## Recommended Gear

- Snaffle Bridle
- Side Reins
- Vaulting Surcingle
- Horse Pad
- A Lunge Line & Lunge Whip
- Vaulting Barrel
- Mats for practicing
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses

## Prepare for Vaulting on Horseback

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.
- Organize groups and arrange for adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios see the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience\*.** Vaulting instructors are adults (at least 18 years old) who have current Vaulting Coach certification from an accredited horsemanship instructor training organization, such as the [Certified Horsemanship Association](#), or documented proof of a minimum of three years' experience successfully instructing vaulting in a riding program. Assistant Vaulting Coaches are at least 16 years old and are certified by an accredited horsemanship instructor training organization or have documented proof of at least one year's experience successfully instructing in a general horseback riding program. Riders are supervised by instructors or assistant instructors at all times when in the proximity of horses, whether mounted or not. For vaulting, at least one instructor and one assistant instructor (who serves as a spotter) supervise a group of 8 or fewer riders. One additional instructor is required for every five additional riders. For beginners and younger girls, or for difficult trails, in trail riding, increased instructors may be needed.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Assess participants' maturity level.** Girls must possess sufficient physical coordination and balance to participate in riding. They are old enough to understand and practice safety procedures, to use good judgment in reacting to situations, and to take responsibility for themselves and their horses. (Some stables have weight limits for rider eligibility. Check when making reservations.)
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing jewelry. Riders may not ride barefoot, in sandals, or in hiking boots with lug soles. Riders do not wear backpacks, day packs, or fanny packs.
- Take safety precautions.** An emergency vehicle is readily available. Plans for communication with emergency services and fire officials are arranged in advance and known by each instructor. Plans for response in an emergency—such as a fire, severe weather, an injured rider, or an injured or loose horse—are known by all participants and instructors. At Girl Scout facilities, communication between the riding area and the site director or healthcare personnel is possible. In stable and ring areas, telephone numbers for the fire department, local hospital or emergency ambulance service, and veterinarian are conspicuously posted, and the location of the fire alarm is known to all girls and adults.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls as well as abrasions and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

## Selecting a Site

- **Select a safe site.** Check with council staff to see if an approved vendor list is offered.
- **If the council does not have an approved vendor list, complete the following steps to select a safe site\*:**
  - Before the activity, call the facility to determine the following safety information:
    - How is First Aid handled?
    - How far away is the facility from Emergency Services?
    - What forms of emergency communication are available?
    - The stable operator provides evidence of \$1,000,000 liability insurance and instructor certifications. References from other youth-group users of the stable are recommended.

**Note:** Girl Scouts are not allowed to use facilities that do not have a minimum of \$1,000,000 liability insurance coverage.

- **Check condition of the facility\*:** For both Girl Scout council–owned and non–Girl Scout riding facilities, the riding area is away from outside distractions and free of debris; the barn and riding areas do not have exposed barbed wire fencing; the instructional rings, corrals, paddocks, and stables have clearly posted rules and regulations; the horses are properly cared for, and the stables, corrals, and barns are clean and uncluttered. Tack (saddles, bridles, and so on) is clean and in good condition. Communicate with the horseback-riding organization about any rider weight limitations; in some cases, heavier riders can cause a horse pain, which, in turn, may cause horses to exhibit dangerous behavior.

## On the Day of Horseback Riding

- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of horseback riding, check [weather.com](http://weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Safeguard valuables.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Girls learn about safe horseback riding\*.** A pre-ride demonstration is given to first-time riders, including mounting, dismounting, starting, stopping, steering, safety rolls, maintaining a balanced body position, and landing technique for vaulting. Avoid changing clothing while mounted on the horse, because it may scare the horse; instead, dismount for clothing changes or adjustments.
- **Test and classify riders according to riding ability\*.** The horse and the riding area are assigned according to the rider's ability. Beginning riders attend an introductory safety lesson, including information on horse psychology and behavior and approaching, handling, and leading a horse. Before vaulting, all riders warm up with ground exercises to help prevent injuries and soreness. Ensure that riders feel confident and demonstrate basic skills in controlling the horse (stop, start, and steer) and maintaining proper distance.
- **Follow basic horseback safety standards\*.** To ensure that equipment fits properly and/or is properly adjusted, an instructor makes a safety check of each rider's clothing, footwear, helmet, and saddle. The instructor also checks the safety of the riding area before each session. Only one rider is allowed on a horse at any time, and there is no eating or drinking while riding. Riders should dismount before going through small gates. Riders should learn to vault on, vault off and master the basic level compulsories on the barrel before executing them on the horse.
- **Respect ring- or corral-riding standards.** Each horse and rider is under the observation of an instructor at all times, and the riding ring has good footing for the horses and is free of dangerous

obstructions. The fencing is at least 42 inches high, visible, and well maintained. Gates to the ring are shut.

- **Inspect and don't spook horses.** Horses displaying uncomfortable or abnormal behaviors should be dismounted and checked for injuries and poor equipment fitting, and may need to be walked back to the stable on foot. If a horse gets loose, do not chase it; instead, one person calmly attempts to retrieve the horse.

### Horseback Riding Links

- American Vaulting Association: [www.americanvaulting.org](http://www.americanvaulting.org)
- Certified Horsemanship Association: [www.cha-ahse.org](http://www.cha-ahse.org)
- International Federation for Equestrian Sports: [www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org)
- United States Pony Clubs: [www.ponyclub.org](http://www.ponyclub.org)

### Horseback Riding Know-How for Girls

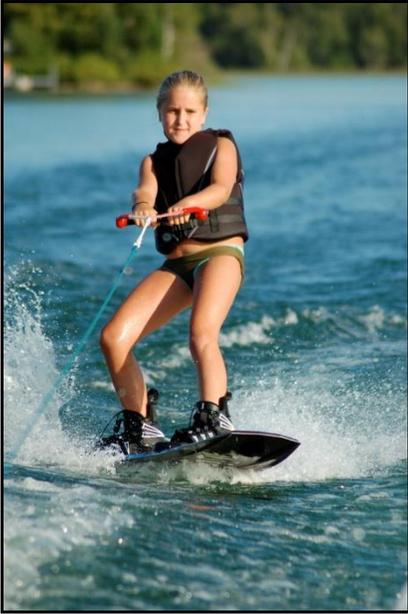
- Get to know your horse. Did you know there are more than 50 colors of horses? Thoroughbreds are identified by their colors, which include bay, black, chestnut, dark bay or brown, gray, and roan. Visit [www.thinklikeahorse.org](http://www.thinklikeahorse.org) to learn more about horses.
- Hold your horses. Before horseback riding, learn how to mount, dismount, rein, and other horseback riding procedures at [www.mahalo.com/how-to-ride-a-horse](http://www.mahalo.com/how-to-ride-a-horse).
- Respect the horse. Did you know that horses feel less comfortable when they can't see the rider's eyes? For that reason, avoid wearing sunglasses.

\* These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.





## Waterskiing and Wakeboarding: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Similar to surfing, learning to stand up on water skis or a wakeboard (a single board resembling a snowboard) is one of the sport's primary challenges, especially for beginners. Waterskiing requires thorough instruction and practice; key elements of successful waterskiing include balance, a strong grip, and proper-fitting skis/board and bindings. Beginners must learn the waterski position: knees bent and together, leaning back with weight on the balls of the feet, head up, arms straight, and skis pointing forward. To prevent injuries, water skiers must learn (contrary to instinct) to release the towline as soon as they begin to lose their balance. Skiers either wear one board (called slalom) or two skis (called combo); [barefoot waterskiing](#) is an advanced skill. Wakeboarding is not allowed for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies.

**Caution:** Girls are not allowed to operate motorized boats without council permission; girls are not allowed to do aerial tricks on water skis or wakeboards.

**Know where to waterski and wakeboard.** Wide-open bodies of water such as a lake are ideal. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Visit [USA Water Ski](#) for information about amenities for water skiers with disabilities.

### Waterskiing and Wakeboarding Gear

#### Required Gear

- Participants wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).

- Ski lines (tow lines) are at least 75 feet long; a single handle is used on the ski line
- Wakeboard or rounded (not pointed) skis that are appropriate to the skill and size of the skier
- Foot bindings appropriate for skier's weight and skiing speed
- At least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water
- Lifeboat and/or towing boat

### Recommended Gear

- One-piece bathing suit (less cumbersome than a two-piece)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Goggles for girls who require glasses or contact lenses (available at sporting-goods stores; if prescription goggles are too expensive for girls to purchase, make sure girls test non-prescription goggles to assure proper fit over prescriptive eyewear)
- Beach towel
- Dry clothing and sunglasses to wear after surfing
- Wetsuit is recommended for warmth and skin protection, especially when water temperature is below 70 degrees Fahrenheit

### Prepare for Waterskiing or Wakeboarding

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratio, keeping in mind that Daisies and Brownies do not participate in waterskiing or wakeboarding.* Further, in addition to the boat driver, ensure that a boat has at least one more adult observing the skier(s), and that another adult is on shore to help supervise girls waiting to ski.
- Verify instructor and boat-driver knowledge and experience.** Ensure that the adult or instructor is certified by [USA Water Ski](#), or possesses equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#). Confirm that the boat driver has an appropriate license, and is skilled in operating the craft.
- Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- Check the boat safety features\*.** Make sure the boat has sufficient power to tow the skier(s), and is equipped with a side-angle rearview mirror, fire extinguisher, flags, paddle, horn, bailing device, two gas tanks (for outboard motors), mooring ropes (extra line), boarding ladder, and throw bag.
- Prepare for emergencies.** If a lifeguard is not on duty, an adult with rescue and resuscitation experience and/or certification is present. Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, and is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

### On the Day of Waterskiing or Wakeboarding

- Get weather and wind report.** Never waterski on a stormy, foggy, or excessively windy day. On the day of the waterskiing trip or lesson, visit [weather.com](#) to determine if weather conditions are appropriate. If weather conditions prevent the waterskiing activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.
- Review rescue tips.** Paddling.net has instructions on [small-boat capsize recovery](#).

- ❑ **Keep track of water skiers.** Use a list or checkboard system to stay aware of waters kiers' whereabouts.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately, and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions.

### Waterskiing and Wakeboarding Links

- **USA Water Ski:** [www.usawaterski.org](http://www.usawaterski.org)
- **U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division:** [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)

### Waterskiing and Wakeboarding Know-How for Girls

- **Start the learning process on land.** Before entering the water, simulate the waterskiing process on a sandy beach. Wearing the skis and holding onto a water-ski handle, ask a partner to pull you around.
- **Stay behind the boat.** It's dangerous to curve around to the side of the boat. Also, skiing outside the wake is an advanced technique.
- **Communicate with hand signals.** Learn how to communicate while waterskiing on [adventure.howstuffworks.com](http://adventure.howstuffworks.com).
- **Learn by watching.** Videotape other Girl Scouts who are learning how to waterski, and watch the footage to learn how to improve performance.
- **Prevent hand blisters.** Some water skiers get blisters from the pressure of holding onto the rope handle; wearing gloves or taping hands can help. Learn how on [waterskimag.com](http://waterskimag.com).

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## White-Water Rafting: Safety Activity Checkpoints



White-water rafting is especially popular among adventure seekers, but is enjoyable for general outdoor lovers as well. The level of rafting difficulty is measured by white-water classification, which ranges from classes I to VI—Class I represents water with very few rough areas that are suitable for beginners; Class VI rapids are considered to be extremely dangerous and generally impassable. Rafts come in a variety of styles and lengths, the most common of which are between 11 and 20 feet in length and typically seat four to twelve rafters. It's nearly impossible to stay dry while white-water rafting, so it's important to dress for the water temperature, rather than the air temperature. If the water is cold, wear a wetsuit; on cool days with cool water, wear a wetsuit and a paddle jacket. Avoid wearing cotton because it makes the wearer cold when the clothes get wet. White-water rafting is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies; Class III and Class IV whitewater is not recommended for Brownies; Class IV whitewater is not recommended for Juniors.

**Caution:** You must seek council permission for activities with uncontrollable and highly changeable environment conditions, such as unclassified rivers and some watercraft trips; girls are never allowed on Class V and above whitewater.

**Know where to raft.** Rafters may take advantage of scores of American and international rivers suitable for white-water rafting, so long as the proper equipment, instructions, and safety precautions are used. Rafting is done only on water that has been approved by your Girl Scout council or that has been run and rated, and on whitewater only up to Class IV difficulty, as defined by the American Version of the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#). The [American Whitewater Association](#) provides information about American and some international river locations, classes, and levels. Also, [Rafting America](#) offers suggestions for global rafting locations. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that [Wilderness Inquiry](#) and [Splore](#) provide to people with disabilities.

## White-Water Rafting Gear

### Required Gear

- Participants wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Types III and V) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).
- Safety helmet (with flexible, plastic shell, chin strap, and openings for drainage) when white-water rafting in Class II waters or higher
- Wetsuit when water is colder than 70 degrees Fahrenheit
- Paddles (Select the appropriate size and style for the activity)
- Bailer (a bucket used to remove water from a boat)
- Foot pump
- Emergency sound device, such as a fog horn or sounding flares
- At least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water
- Whistle
- Emergency repair kit: duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers
- Emergency survival packet: waterproof matches, emergency food supplies, lightweight blanket
- Throw bag, throw line

### Recommended Gear

- Layered clothing that's easily changeable depending on temperatures (wool, nylon, or polypropylene under a jacket and pants made of coated materials to repel water); also take a change of dry clothing (store in waterproof bag)
- Closed-toe hiking/sport sandals with heel strap, water socks or shoes, or other nonslip footwear (no flip-flops)
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15)
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight (and extra batteries)
- Compass
- Knife
- Dry (waterproof) bag (to keep personal belongings dry)
- 

### Prepare for White-Water Rafting

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for recommended adult-to-girl ratios, keeping in mind that Girl Scout Daisies do not participate in white water rafting.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** At least one guide with documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#). Ensure that the guide has the appropriate safety and rescue certification according to the level of rapids and knows the American Whitewater International Scale of River Difficulty, Universal River Signals, and [Safety Code](#). All rafters are instructed in how to float through rapids, breathe while swimming in rapids, and swim to shore.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*

- ❑ **Select durable rafts that are appropriate size for rafting group\***. Make sure each raft is of heavy-duty construction and has at least four air compartments, an adequate number of large D-rings securely attached to the sides, and snug hand lines along the sides. Ensure that weight and capacity are not exceeded.
- ❑ **Research water conditions\***. Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment. Also make sure of the following:
  - Craft weight and capacity are not exceeded (some crafts clearly display maximum capacity).
  - You are knowledgeable of the difficulty of the water run and the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#).
  - You are aware of possible changes in river level and weather and [their effects](#) on the run's level of difficulty.
- ❑ **Respect the environment**. Make sure rafting on white-water or semi-protected waters meets the [Safety Code of American Whitewater](#).
- ❑ **File a float plan**. If participating in a long-distance sailing trip, it is recommended that a float plan be completed and filed (left) with a person knowledgeable about the trip and when to expect the party back. Float plans cannot be filed with the U.S. Coast Guard. The USCG float plan is available [here](#) and should be used for all float plans.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies**. If a lifeguard is not on duty, an adult with rescue and resuscitation experience and/or certification is present; at least one adult has small-craft safety certification or equivalent experience. (Both of these qualifications can be held by one person.) Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from Emergency Medical Services response time, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

### On the Day of White-Water Rafting

- ❑ **Get a weather report**. Never go white-water rafting on a stormy day. On the day of the activity, consult [weather.com](#) or other reliable sources of weather reporting to determine if outdoor conditions, water temperature, and river conditions are appropriate. If weather conditions prevent the trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system**. Girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl chooses a buddy and is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. If someone in the group is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.
- ❑ **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning**. Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other rafts and obstructions, and stay low.

### White-Water Rafting Links

- American Canoe Association: [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)
- American Whitewater: [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)
- International Rafting Federation: [www.intraffted.com](http://www.intraffted.com)
- Rafting America: [www.raftingamerica.com](http://www.raftingamerica.com)
- Whitewater Rescue Institute: [www.whitewaterrescue.com](http://www.whitewaterrescue.com)

### White-Water Rafting Know-How for Girls

- **Build arm strength and stamina.** White-water rafting can be a tiring sport, especially if participants are doing the bulk of the paddling. Before going rafting, make sure that your body (especially your arms) is in good physical condition. To build stamina, do push-ups and briskly walk or run.
- **Learn paddling techniques.** Before a rafting activity, learn about various paddling maneuvers, such as punching and high siding. Watch an [ehow video](#) to see how they're done.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Windsurfing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Windsurfing combines surfing and sailing, and is one of the fastest-growing water sports. Expert windsurfers (aka “boardheads”) seek out the challenges and freestyling opportunities that big waves provide, but beginners should windsurf on water with little to no waves. Windsurfing instructors usually begin the instructional process on land to guide students through a [startup sequence](#). The essence of windsurfing is to balance oneself on the sailboard while holding the sail and cruising with the wind. Learning how to turn is an advanced skill that takes some windsurfers years to master. Keeping in mind that people learn at different paces, with a good instructor, beginners are often able to learn how to windsurf in a single lesson. Windsurfing is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies.

**Caution:** Girls are not allowed to do aerial tricks on sailboards.

**Know where to windsurf.** Ocean, lakes, or even a large pond—in short, bodies of water that have enough wind to hoist the sail. Popular American windsurfing destinations include the Great Lakes and the east and west coasts of the United States. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, the International Sailing Federation provides information about windsurfing classes at [sailing.org](http://sailing.org).

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [Differing Abilities Program](#) and [Windsurfing for Life](#) provide to people with disabilities.

### Required Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears. Read about Coast Guard life jackets [here](#).
- Boat shoes, water socks or shoes, or other nonslip footwear (no flip-flops)

## Recommended Gear

- One-piece bathing suit (less cumbersome in the waves than a two-piece).
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15).
- Goggles or glasses guards for girls who require prescriptive eyewear (available at sporting-goods stores)
- Beach towel
- Dry clothing and sunglasses to wear after windsurfing
- Protective clothing when the water temperature is below 70 degrees
- At least one graspable and throwable personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) is immediately available for each group on the water
- Sailboards

## Prepare for Windsurfing

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios*.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that teacher holds a [Windsurfing Instructor Certification from U.S. Sailing Association](#), or has equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#). The instructor-to-girl ratio is 1 to 4.

**NOTE:** The instructor-to-participant ratio is NOT necessarily the same as the adult-to-girl ratio that is found in the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Both ratios MUST be complied with when girls are participating in windsurfing. For example, if there are 20 Juniors participating in a windsurfing activity, there must be 5 instructors, plus 3 adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).

- Ensure participants are able to swim** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Size up sailboards.\*** Communicate girls' ages, heights, and weights with windsurfing instructors to ensure the appropriate size equipment is available. Request that sails be the appropriate size (according to weight, height, and ability level) for windsurfers; the larger the sail, the more powerful the sailing capacity. Sailboard decks should be textured (not smooth) to provide traction.
- Select a safe location with a soft, sandy, or muddy bottom.** Choose a location that does not have a sharp-edged or rocky bottom, which can be dangerous and cut feet and limbs. The launching area should be easily accessible and clear of overhead power lines.
- Safeguard valuables.** Don't leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place. If working with a windsurfing school or camp, call to inquire about the organization's storage amenities.
- Prepare for emergencies.** If a lifeguard is not on duty, an adult with rescue and resuscitation experience and/or certification is present; at least one adult present has small craft safety certification or equivalent experience. (Both of these qualifications can be held by one person.) Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, and is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from Emergency Medical Services response time, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

## On the Day of Windsurfing

- **Get a weather and wind report.** Never windsurf on a stormy or extremely windy day. On the day of the windsurf trip or lesson, visit [weather.com](http://weather.com) to determine if weather conditions are appropriate. Windsurfing should be taught in a light breeze (in general, winds should be between 1 to 6 knots, or 1 to 7 miles per hour). Do not windsurf in offshore winds because windsurfers will drift away, making it nearly impossible to steer back to shore; the wind direction should be onshore or sideshore. If weather conditions prevent the windsurfing trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately, and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

### Windsurfing Links

- International Sailing Federation: [www.sailing.org](http://www.sailing.org)
- U.S. Sailing Windsurfing Course, how-to information, and safety tips: [www.windsurfing.sailingcourse.com/safety.htm](http://www.windsurfing.sailingcourse.com/safety.htm)
- U.S. Windsurfing Association: [www.uswindsurfing.org](http://www.uswindsurfing.org)
- U.S. Windsurfing directory of windsurfing schools: [www.uswindsurfing.org/shop\\_main.php](http://www.uswindsurfing.org/shop_main.php)

### Windsurfing Know-How for Girls

- Stay with the board. If remaining in the water while taking a break from windsurfing, stay near the board. Lifeguards become concerned if they see a windsurf board “missing” a windsurfer.
- Troubleshoot exhaustion. In the case of fatigue while in the water (and in light winds), raise the sail down over the back of the board, position leg on top of the sail to prevent it from falling off the board, and paddle (or walk, if water is shallow enough) back to shore. [U.S. Sailing](http://www.us.sailing.org) provides instructions.
- A heads-up on head protection. In the instance of losing balance on the board, before falling into the water, push the sail away from your body, so that the sail doesn’t strike your head. If unable to push the sail away from the body, make a fist and use your arm as a shield to protect your head.

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**



## Ziplining: Safety Activity Checkpoints



A zip-line consists of a pulley suspended on a cable, usually made of stainless steel, mounted on an incline. It is designed to enable a user propelled by gravity to travel from the top to the bottom of the inclined cable by holding on to, or attaching to, the freely moving pulley. The various types of ziplines include:

- **Playground ziplines.** These are short and low, intended for child's play and found on some playgrounds and recreation venues. All Girl Scouts are permitted to use them.
- **Ziplines.** These are launched from a platform usually accessed by a staircase, ladder, or climbing wall. They are sometimes found as part of a challenge course. Participants must be able to walk short distances and be able to climb stairs. Girl Scout Daisies are not permitted to participate in ziplines. In addition, check with the venue before arrival to determine their rules on age, height and weight restrictions.
- **Canopy Zipline Tours.** These are guided aerial explorations or transit of the forest canopy, most commonly done by means of a series of zip lines or aerial walkways with platforms. Canopy Tours are not permitted for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies. In addition, check with the venue before arrival as many have minimum age requirements, as well as height and weight restrictions.

**Know where to find ziplines.** Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Girl Scouts should use a venue that has professional accreditation by either the [Professional Ropes Course Association \(PRCA\)](#) or the [Association for Challenge Course Technology \(ACCT\)](#) to ensure a regulated experience. Both of these organizations are accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to develop industry standards and regulations. Note that each venue sets its own rules regarding the age and weight of participants, and some states regulate ziplines as amusement rides.

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Center of Physical Activities and Disabilities](#) provide to people with disabilities. Some facilities may have specialized harness and a ramp for people who use wheelchairs instead of climbing the stairs, tower or wall. Ensure that one of their staff has training and experience helping people with disabilities participate in ziplining. Note that some venues will not allow participation if a person has recent or recurring injuries or muscular or skeletal

disorders. It is recommended that women who are pregnant, and adults who have heart, leg, or back problems not participate in ziplining.)

## Zipline Gear

### Required Gear

- Helmet (supplied by the venue). It is recommended that a disposable liner, such as a shower cap or surgical cap, be worn underneath the helmet to protect against the spread of head lice.
- Harness (supplied by the venue).
- Sturdy closed toed athletic-type shoes.

### Recommended Gear

- Long pants or long biker-type shorts.
- Close-fitting top with sleeves.
- Safety gloves (supplied by the venue).
- Protective eye wear, i.e. sunglasses, goggles, etc.
- Sunscreen of at least SPF 15 and lip balm
- Cell phones and other mobile devices, wallets and other loose items should be locked in a locker or your vehicle.

## Prepare for Zip Lining

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios, keeping in mind that Daisies participate in playground zipling only, and Brownies are not permitted to participate in canopy ziplining tours.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** An instructor with [Association of Challenge Course Technology \(ACCT\)](#) certification or similar documented experience, which includes setting stop ropes, tying required knots, assisting guests in proper harness and helmet fitting, demonstrating proper zipping techniques, operating the zipline activity, breaking guest's speed upon incoming approach, performing retrievals and rescues, inspecting equipment, and educating guests about the venue. Ensure that the instructor has provided written documentation of the completed training, there is a regular process of review and update for all instructors.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED; who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls as well as abrasions and sunburn. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. *See Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Wear long pants or biker-type shorts, sturdy closed toed athletic-type shoes, Close-fitting top with sleeves. No dress shoes, sandals, water shoes or flip-flops. No skirts, regular shorts, ponchos, or dangling jewelry of any kind.

## On the Day of the Ziplining Activity

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](#) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. Be prepared to alter the activity plan or have an alternate activity prepared if weather conditions change.
- Use the buddy system.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.* In addition, each girl zip lines independently, but some venues offer dual or side-by-side ziplines.

- ❑ **Ensure that equipment is well-maintained\***. Before use, staff should inspect all equipment and gear, as everything will degrade in quality and strength over time. Zipline parts and materials are subject to the elements and high stresses and must all be inspected regularly for any damage, corrosion, splitting, cracking, stretching or abrasions.
- ❑ **Girls learn about and prepare for ziplining.** Instructors teach a set of readiness and action commands to all participants for beginning. All participants may be weighed and their height measured before beginning issued their ziplining equipment. Instructors describe the objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants before beginning an activity. Zip line participants should be provided with a hands-on walkthrough of what will happen at the landing zone when under full speed. Volunteers must attend the orientation session (even if they will not participate) along with the girls and learn what to watch for in order to supervise the girls in their care.
- ❑ **Girls practice safe zipline course techniques.** Zip line participants should be provided with an explanation of what each piece of gear is used for and participate in a hands-on walkthrough of what will happen at the landing zone when under full speed. Harnesses are designed to support the human body from the hips and hanging upside down is not permitted.
- ❑ **Zip line Courses Links**
  - Association for Challenge Course Technology: [www.acctinfo.org](http://www.acctinfo.org)
  - Professional Ropes Course association: [www.prcainfo.org](http://www.prcainfo.org)

### Ziplinings Know-How for Girls

- **Focus on team-building.** Ziplining relies on strong communication and trust. Is your team ready for the challenge?

### Additional Resources:

- <http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/056/056060000003500R.html>
- [http://www.skytourszipline.com/files/9613/2837/7136/Zipline\\_Guide\\_Job\\_Description.pdf](http://www.skytourszipline.com/files/9613/2837/7136/Zipline_Guide_Job_Description.pdf)
- <http://www.zipline.com/>
- <http://www.ziplinerider.com/>
- <http://explorebrowncounty.com/zip-lines>

**\*These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**