SAFETY ACTIVITY CHECKPOINTS

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Introduction

Safety Activity Checkpoints (SACP) is a resource that provides the standard safety guidelines for Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) approved activities.

GSUSA, local councils, and other units holding a credential – including USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO) – shall be responsible for seeing that all activities are planned and carried out in a manner that considers the health, safety, and general well-being of all participants in accordance with these standard guidelines.

Throughout *Safety Activity Checkpoints*, several individual activities, such as Paddling and Rowing, Climbing and Adventure, and Target Sports, are categorized under related sections to provide continuity as well as the grade level and skill progression.

Standard Safety Guidelines

This section provides GSUSA's standard safety guidelines, by topic, that apply to all Girl Scout activities. *Please read and become familiar with all topics in this section.* These standard safety guidelines are to be used together with the specific safety checkpoints for an individual activity along with reasonable common-sense adjustments to ensure a safe positive experience for girls. The intent of providing these standard safety guidelines is to establish a checklist for success and to foster confident leadership.

Note that throughout *Safety Activity Checkpoints*, several individual activities, such as Paddling and Rowing, Climbing and Adventure, and Target Sports, are categorized under related sections to provide continuity as well as the grade level and skill progression.

Adult Supervision. The adult supervision rule at Girl Scouts is a strict standard that requires whenever girls meet, whether in person or virtually, there must be *at least* two registered, approved adult volunteers who are unrelated (for example: not a sibling, spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, or anyone who would be considered a family member) and who do not live in the same residence with a minimum of one who is female. This applies to every Girl Scout gathering including troop meetings (in person and virtual), day trips, camp, sleep away travel, events, activities, and projects. There are no exceptions to this rule.

There are different specific adult-to-girl ratios requirements for Girl Scout troop meetings as compared to events outside of the regular Girl Scout troop meeting such as outings, activities, camping and travel. Activities and travel outside of the regular troop meeting space require more adult supervision.

For Troop Meetings

The adult-to-girl ratio means *a minimum* of two registered, approved, adult volunteers who are unrelated, including one female, for up to this number of girls:

- 12 Girl Scout Daisies
- 20 Girl Scout Brownies
- 25 Girl Scout Juniors

- 25 Girl Scout Cadettes
- 30 Girl Scout Seniors
- 30 Girl Scout Ambassadors

There should be one extra registered, approved, adult volunteer for every additional:

- 1–6 Girl Scout Daisies
- 1–8 Girl Scout Brownies
- 1–10 Girl Scout Juniors
- 1–12 Girl Scout Cadettes
- 1–15 Girl Scout Seniors
- 1–15 Girl Scout Ambassadors

<u>For Outings, Activities, Travel and Camping</u>

The adult-to-girl ratio means *a minimum* of two registered, approved, adult volunteers who are unrelated, including one female, for up to this number of girls:

- 6 Girl Scout Daisies
- 12 Girl Scout Brownies
- 16 Girl Scout Juniors
- 20 Girl Scout Cadettes
- 24 Girl Scout Seniors
- 24 Girl Scout Ambassadors

There should be one extra registered, approved, adult volunteer for every 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

Some high-adventure activities may require more adult-to-girl supervision than stated above. For those activities, the safety checkpoints will provide specific adult-to-girl supervision ratios. Remember, some activities are less safe for younger girls, particularly Daisies and Brownies. Younger girls may not be permitted to participate based on their age, as appropriate, and this will be specified on the individual activity. In cases where younger-girl participation is an option but only under certain conditions, this is indicated toward the top of the activity chapter (typically with an asterisk followed by an explanation further into the write-up).

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.

Council Approval Requirement. At the top of each activity page, you will see a field indicating whether your council's prior approval is required to perform the activity. Council prior approval is required for those activities that are rated as high risk by Girl Scouts' national insurance carriers. A council may approve an activity one

time for the duration of the year or require more frequent approvals each time the activity takes place. This is a council decision as local norms and laws vary from state to state.

- Required. You must check in with USAGSO for prior approval via the Activity Notification Form.
- Not Required. You do not need to check in with your council for prior approval.

Activities Not Listed in *Safety Activity Checkpoints*. In a challenging, learn-by-doing environment like Girl Scouts, it is only natural that girls will sometimes want to take part in activities that are not specifically addressed in *Safety Activity Checkpoints*. If a specific activity is not provided in Safety Activity Checkpoints the first step is always to contact your council to make sure your council approves of the activity.

Remember to have a plan or process in place for addressing and handling requests for activities that that are not specifically listed in *Safety Activity Checkpoints:*

- Consult your council for clarification and approval ***before taking girls***. Your council may or may not permit the activity. If your council does approve the activity, they may direct you to a specific vendor or facility or advise you to stay away from others.
- Investigate whether the activity is similar to another activity and if the safety checkpoints can easily translate and apply to a covered activity, then follow those checkpoints.
- Consider whether the proposed activity requires any additional expert supervision or special certification for the instructor.
- As with approved activities, think about the quality of the experience in terms of how participation ties back to long-term outcomes girls receive in Girl Scouting.

Selecting an Activity to do with Girls.

When considering what type of activities to do with girls, whether specifically listed in Safety Activity Checkpoints or not, be thoughtful and intentional with selecting the activity. Be mindful about the long-term positive outcomes that girls receive through Girl Scouting and think about how participating in the activity ties into at least one of these outcomes. Girl Scouts has proven to help girls thrive in 5 ways:

Strong Sense of Self
Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities and form positive identities.

Positive Values
Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly and show concern for others.

Challenge Seeking
Girls take appropriate risks, try things even though they might fail and learn from their mistakes.

Healthy Relationships
Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflict constructively.

Community Problem Solving
Girls contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create "action plans" to solve them.

Activities chosen should work towards intentionally helping girls be successful in these key areas. As part of the planning process, consider how and why the activity selected connects to the Girl Scout outcomes. Make it girl led by sharing these goals with girls and engaging them in the activity selection process.

Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts

The health and safety of girls are always the highest priority in Girl Scouts. Returning to in-person activities, especially after a long time of shelter in place for most communities, is a long-awaited development that everyone in Girl Scouts will need to continue to manage carefully. Recognize that COVID-19 health and safety guidance will continue to adjust as the coronavirus transmission risk changes over time.

Girl Scouts has provided COVID-19 guidance specific to the topics that touch our lives in Girl Scouts such as troop meetings, activities, and day trips. Your council's COVID-19 guidance is the first place to go for health and safety practices in Girl Scouting. You can access that guidance here: www.usagso.org

Remember, always make sure that your planned activity is also in compliance with the federal and state governmental health authorities where the activity will take place. This means the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and your State Department of Health (DOH) as well as local or county health directives. For example, if your county or region has a governmental directive that requires no large in-person gatherings, then that rule must be complied with. Girl Scouts are always obligated to comply with our governmental health authorities.

On the other hand, for a variety of reasons, there may be situations where your council's guidance is more strict than state or local guidance. If that is the case, either choose the rules that are most strict or contact your council for clarification.

Recognize that state and local rules concerning coronavirus safety can *vary* from place to place. Safety regulations will also *change* as the transmission risk changes. Be sure to stay current on what is required in your region but also consider that girls in your troop may reside in a different area with a different set of safety parameters to abide by. A good way to ensure you are following the proper governmental guidance is to follow the practices as established in local public schools.

Some basic safety standards that have been issued by the Center of Disease Control (CDC) for integrating back into in person gatherings are:

- Wear a mask (and make sure that girls wear a mask).
- Practice good hygiene by washing or disinfecting hands frequently.
- Remind girls and adults about social distancing when in public and with each other.
- Focus on scheduling activities outdoors instead of indoors whenever possible.
- Pre-screen for no symptoms, fever or sustained contact with a COVID-19 positive person
- Request that a girl or adult who is exhibiting symptoms of being sick not participate and return when she is no longer sick.
- Remember: If a girl or adult knows that they have been in close and sustained contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus, make sure that they comply with the appropriate quarantine period pursuant to the CDC before attending Girl Scout meetings or activities.

The CDC provides regular updates on their website which can be accessed here:

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) | CDC

Some excellent guidance for mask wearing and the effectiveness of double masking can be accessed here:

Use Masks to Help Slow Spread | CDC

Improve How Your Mask Protects You | CDC

Have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

The Girl Scout motto is "Be prepared.", and proper preparation is the key to success. An important thing to consider ahead of time, before taking girls out on a trip or to an activity, is an Emergency Action Plan. Volunteers can review their troop's Emergency Action Plan with girls as a learning experience for them, to the extent it makes sense according to their age and maturity.

For the adult volunteer, however, it is important to think about and document an emergency action plan in the event of an emergency or injury. Think through scenario of what can go wrong such as physical injury to a girl, severe weather, fire, intruder, missing girl or sudden illness. This simple step is invaluable. The key elements included in an effective risk management plan are:

- ***Identify*** – the type of emergency:
  - Medical, a member becomes suddenly ill,
  - Accidental injury, a member is hurt during an activity,
  - Weather related crisis or challenging environment as with backpacking
    - Pay attention to weather so that the activity can be rescheduled if there is a severe storm or weather-related risk,
  - Fire, become aware of all entrances and exits, and alternative routes out,
  - Missing or lost member.

- ***Mitigate*** – minimize the damage, injury or time element in seeking help. Make sure to know how far the activity is from the closest Emergency Medical Service (EMS).
  - If EMS is <u>more than</u> 30 minutes away, an Advanced First Aider should always be present with girls, preferably with Wilderness First aide (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder (WFR) credentials.
  - If EMS is <u>less than</u> 30 minutes away, a General First Aider should be present with girls.
  - If more than 200 people at an event, an Advanced First Aider should be added to the General First Aider for every 200 girls.
  - Make sure that emergency response vehicles can access the area where you are practicing an activity with girls. If an emergency vehicle cannot access the site, notify either local EMS or parks services or other authorities ahead of time of where you will be, what you will be doing and how many members are with you.

- ***Respond*** – having confirmed the properly trained first aiders are present:
  - Immediately engage the first aider to the accident scene involving an illness or injury
  - Notify and coordinate the arrival of emergency medical services or law enforcement.
  - Contact all relevant parties:
    - Parents or legal guardians
    - Council staff
    - Law enforcement
    - Property owner or facility manager

Some key components of an effective Emergency Action Plan include:

- **Contact List**. A chart, table, or simple list for all participants, including adults, with parent and legal guardian contact phone #s as well as key emergency phone #s, in addition to 911, such as the nearest hospital, medical center, law enforcement or emergency transportation.
- **Roles and Responsibilities.** A pre-determined and established emergency role assignment, who does what. For example, the leader stays with girls or the injured girl(s) while the co-leader calls for help and coordinates the arrival of emergency help and notifies the parents, or vice versa. Agree on this ahead

of time so that you are calm and prepared if the worst occurs. Also think through what you will do if the injured person is one of the adults.

- **Exit Strategy**. Become aware of all emergency exits and/or evacuate plans beforehand. Identify and communicate alternative exit routes.
- **Evacuation Meeting Place**. Determine and communicate a pre-agreed meeting place in case the group becomes separated, or a girl should become lost.
- **Communication Method**. Have a method of emergency communication that works. If camping or backpacking, consider a whistle or horn as an emergency call out. Make sure to inform girls that this is the sound of an emergency. When girls hear this sound, they know to gather to designated spot. If there is cell service at the activity site, save all contact names and numbers, including those for the appropriate authorities, in your mobile phones ahead of time before the activity takes place.

Activity Preparation. Communicate with 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. Follow council procedures for activity approval, certificates of insurance, and guidelines about girls' general health examinations. Girls are key to activity planning. Keeping their grade level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.

Review Safety Checkpoints with Instructors. These checkpoints should be reviewed with the vendor, facility, camp, or your council as appropriate to determine if the safety checkpoints can be complied with. Take any questions or issues with safety compliance to your council for guidance and next steps.

Itinerary and Key Contacts. Give an itinerary to a contact person at home. Call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list that includes girls' parent/guardian contact information, council contacts, and emergency services contacts. Keep this list on hand or post in an easily accessible location. Emergency and parent contact information should be saved to an adult's mobile phone on the trip and be provided to the contact person at home.

Safety Gear. Safety gear includes clothing and equipment girls will need to safely take part in the activity. These items are necessary to ensure safety. Always opt to take the safety equipment offered by an organization or facility, even if it is not specifically listed here. If the facility offers helmets, always accept the use of helmets for girls.

Required Gear. Required gear simply means the activity-specific gear that girls must have to participate in the activity. For example, skiing – a girl will need to bring or rent skis and poles.

Additional Gear. Additional gear may include items that support a safe and healthy outdoor learning experience. These are items that often make the experience with girls more comfortable. Recommended items, based on Girl Scout experience, include:

- Layers of clothing for wintertime or for activities on or by the water or mountains, where temperatures or wind can change dramatically within a short period of time.
- Sunglasses, sunscreen, hat, sun visor, lip balm
- Change of clothes for water-related activities or those involving dirt or mud, such as spelunking.
- Comfortable shoes and socks if hiking or spending long days outside in order to prevent ticks and blisters.
- Watch, compass, maps
- Insect repellent
- Towels for waterfront, pool, and paddling activities
- Bottle of drinking water, healthy snacks
- Backpacks—girls carry their own gear and supplies!

Always take additional gear into consideration when planning an outdoor activity or trip in addition to the safety gear required for the specific activity.

Instructor Credibility. Verify instructor knowledge, experience, and maturity. Ensure the volunteers or on-site instructors possess the proper skill set, knowledge, training and certification, or documented experience required to meet your council's guidelines and as outlined in the specific approved activity.

With respect to instructing and safeguarding children, maturity level and years of experience can positively impact the support needed for volunteers to safeguard girls. For example, while the legal definition of an adult lifeguard is 18, qualified lifeguards of 21 years of age are preferred whenever possible.

General Insurance. Commercial general liability insurance protects the Girl Scout organization. The facility or vendor that hosts your troop event (for example, a riding stable, a hotel, or a bus company) should carry general liability insurance, and auto liability when motor vehicles are involved. A facility that carries valid general liability insurance has almost always been examined for risk by its insurance carrier. If a place does not carry general liability insurance, it's a red flag. It may not be safe, so it would be best to select another place.

When your council requires you to provide documented evidence of insurance, ask the facility for a certificate of insurance for your records. But be aware that some places do not provide documented evidence of insurance to all customers, or only provide a certificate of insurance when a group is large or if the group plans to pay a certain amount.

When planning to use a written contract with a facility or when considering a new vendor, remember to consult your council for the proper insurance requirements and see if they use an approved vendor list. Check to be sure the certificate of insurance you will be obtaining validates the insurance limits outlined in your contract or agreement.

Activity Accident Insurance. Activity accident insurance is a supplemental health insurance that protects registered Girl Scout members. Registered members are automatically covered under activity accident insurance when participating in all Girl Scout events and activities including trips that involve two (or less) overnight stays. The Basic Plan does not cover trips of more than two overnight stays.

Important! Trips that are three overnights or more are not covered under automatic activity accident insurance. Also, non-members are not automatically covered persons and international trips are not automatically covered trips. Activity accident insurance must be individually purchased for coverage under these scenarios.

So, you will *need to purchase extra activity accident insurance* for outings and events that:

- Involve three or more overnight stays,
- Take place outside U.S. territory,
- Include non-members, such as siblings and friends.

** When participating in Girl Scout activities not covered under the Basic Activity Accident Insurance (Plan 1), the purchase of supplemental insurance is recommended but no longer required. USAGSO committees operating in countries that either require or provide insurance may opt out of purchasing supplemental insurance. Please see the both the Insurance Memo and Insurance Quick Guide for additional details.*

When planning trips, always consult your council to see if extra activity accident insurance is needed.

Leave No Trace. Search the web for tips on environmental responsibility, and remember our principle of Leave no trace (scroll down to the "How to Leave No Trace Outdoors" video)—and, in fact, Girl Scouts have a long

tradition of leaving an area better than we found it. Doing so will teach girls responsibility and also safeguard your troop and local council from complications or issues involving the use of public property.

Emergency Preparation. Familiarize yourself with basic first aid, emergency response requirements, and other precautions. Know how far away and where emergency medical and law enforcement services are located. Understand your surroundings in relation to the closest medical facility or hospital. Also, familiarize yourself with the forms of emergency communication and emergency transportation options that are available.

Weather Conditions. Always monitor the weather in the days preceding an activity or trip. Check the local weather report on the day of the trip. For circumstances in which forecasted weather could be a risk to safety, consider scheduling alternatives. In the case of severe wind, lightning, hail, ice, snowstorm, flood warnings due to heavy rain, or a hurricane or tropical storm, make contingency plans for itineraries and transportation. Reschedule the event if the weather report is severe. Adhere to public safety announcements concerning staying indoors or evacuating the area. In extremely hot weather, girls should do outdoor activities in the morning and late afternoon hours, and during the hottest time of day stay in a shaded area or inside with air conditioning. It is important on extremely hot days to plan for easy access to plenty of drinking water to prevent heat exhaustion or dehydration.

If extreme weather or temperature conditions prevent a trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.

Buddy System. Always use the buddy system with all ages of girls, which means pairing girls up as partners. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy throughout a trip or activity. A buddy can warn her partner of danger, give a helping hand, or get immediate assistance when the situation warrants it. All girls are encouraged to stay near the group so that if someone is injured or not feeling well, there are others, including an adult, close by to seek help.

Permission Slips. Annual permission slips are parental or legal guardian consent forms for girls' attendance at regular troop meetings throughout the year. If annual permissions are practiced in your council, in addition to the specific activity permission slips, volunteers should keep copies for all their girls.

Day trips and activities – It is imperative to secure a signed permission slip from a girl's parent or guardian for any trip or special activity outside the troop meeting space. This applies to all girls under the age of 18. Always keep a copy of these permissions.

In most cases, one parental consent or one legal guardian is legally acceptable. However, there may be circumstances regarding a custody situation or a standard in your council where dual parental consent is required. For international trips, written consent is generally required from both parents or legal guardians. If there is a question about single versus dual parental consent, please consult your council and they can consult local or state laws for specific local guidance.

Overnight Trips. Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in the planning so they know what to expect. On trips where male volunteers are part of the group, it is not appropriate for them to sleep in the same space as girl members. Always support and maintain an all-girl atmosphere for sleeping quarters. Men may participate only when separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms are available for their use. Men should not be in situation to walk through girls' sleeping quarters for entrance, exit or to access restrooms. In some circumstances, such as a museum or mall overnight with hundreds of girls, this type of accommodation may not be possible. If this is the case, men do not supervise girls in the sleeping area of the event and the adult volunteer-to-girl ratio is adjusted accordingly.

An exception is made for family members during events such as parent-daughter or family overnights where one family may sleep together in an area specifically designated to accommodate families. Also please make note of the following:

- Each participant has her own bed.
- Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed.
- Girls and adults do not share a bed; however, some councils make exceptions for mothers and daughters.
- It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area (tent, cabin, or designated area) with the girls, but if an adult female does share the sleeping area, there should always be *two unrelated adult females* present.

Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway. See the Travel/Trip chapter for specific safety checkpoints when utilizing Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway. There are specific steps that must be followed when utilizing these privately owned property rentals, steps that are not necessarily taken with every traditional commercially owned and operated property such as hotels.

Modeling the Right Behavior. Adult volunteers should adhere to the Girl Scout Promise and Law. When spending time with girls or representing Girl Scouts do not consume alcohol, smoke, vape or use foul language. Always obey the law, for example, by not talking on a phone or texting while driving.

Drugs and alcohol. Volunteers and adults may not purchase, consume, possess or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs/substances, or prescription or over-the-counter medications which impair performance or judgment while participating in Girl Scout sanctioned activities, in the presence of girls, while conducting Girl Scout business, or in Girl Scout branded clothing. Alcohol or any substance which may impair one's judgment must never be used by volunteers, adult members, or any other adult in the presence of a girl member, immediately prior to, or during a girl member activity. Alcoholic beverages may be served to/consumed by adults of legal age at Girl Scout events when girls are not present only when previously approved by the Council Board of Directors or Chief Executive Officer.

Firearms. Firearms and/or weapons are prohibited at any Girl Scout activity and on Girl Scout-owned or leased property except when in the possession of a sworn officer of the law, council-authorized property staff, a certified instructor, licensed wildlife control personnel, and/or trained adult while conducting a Council-approved Girl Scout program activity. Volunteers and adults do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls, unless given special permission by your council for target sport activities.

Online Safety. Instruct girls never to put their full names, location 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 location or contact information. Teach girls the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge and ask them to read it, understand it, discuss it and commit to following it.

Money-Earning Activities. Safety is an important consideration throughout money-earning activities, including Girl Scout Cookie sales and other council-sponsored product sales. 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 serve as their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot raise money for other organizations, participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or are not Girl Scout–approved product sales and efforts. It is imperative that Girl Scouts do not partake in anything that can be construed as unrelated business income. This is essential to protect our organization's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. If there is a questionable circumstance, consult your council.

Volunteer Essentials. A key resource for Volunteers in Girl Scouting is Volunteer Essentials. While Safety Activity Checkpoints focuses on safety guidance and parameters, Volunteer Essentials will address an array of topics such as Engaging Girls and Families, Troop Management, Product Program, Troop Finances, and Leader's Guide to Success. All Girl Scout Volunteers are instructed to review and understand and practice the principles and standards in both Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Understanding Which Activities Are Not Permitted

After being thoroughly investigated, some activities are clearly classified as “not permitted.” Each sport or activity on the “not permitted” list is evaluated annually with respect to safety factors, council feedback, insurability, and accident history. These activities pose a high risk of bodily injury, require extensive prior experience to safely participate, or may require a driver’s license such as with ATVs. Activities with a poor accident history based on loss data gathered from various industries are not approved and therefore “not permitted.” The purpose of prohibiting certain activities is first and foremost to protect girls, but also to safeguard the financial and reputational well-being of your local council and the Girl Scout organization.

GSUSA does not approve, endorse, or provide safety checkpoints for “not permitted” activities.

The following activities are in the **not permitted** category:

- Bungee jumping
- Flying in privately owned planes, helicopters, or blimps
- Hang-gliding
- Untethered hot-air ballooning
- Hunting
- Snowmobiling
- Riding a motorbike
- Riding electric Scooters
- Using outdoor trampolines
- Parachuting or skydiving
- Parasailing
- Paintball tagging
- Riding all-terrain vehicles (ATVs)
- Stunt skiing
- Zorbing

Bungee Jumping. Bungee jumping is not highly regulated for safety or consistent in terms of facilitation from one place to the next. It is an activity that carries a significant risk of bodily injury. Most insurance companies that have access to the accident history of bungee jumping have deemed this activity high risk and dangerous.

Hang Gliding, Parasailing, Zorbing, Parachuting/Skydiving, and Untethered Hot-Air Ballooning are sports that also have inconsistent safety regulations, inconsistency of facilitation, and specific insurance implications or exclusions. These are activities that carry a significant risk of bodily injury. Insurance carriers with knowledge of these activities, from a loss experience perspective, view them as a high safety risk, meaning they see frequent and/or severe accidents associated with these sports.

Privately Owned Aircraft. Flying in privately owned aircraft is a very clear exclusion under GSUSA and (most) councils’ commercial general liability insurance policies. In the event of an incident involving an aircraft accident, your council would be financially liable for potential liability and resulting lawsuits. Even with a specific non-owned aviation liability policy (if your council purchases this type of policy, which it may not), a private plane is a separate and distinct insurable interest (compared to a professional chartered aircraft tour). In other words, even under non-owned aviation insurance, privately owned and/or operated planes are often excluded.

Outdoor Trampolines. Outdoor trampolines, particularly those with stilted metal frames, pose a high risk of injury. The activity can result in sprains and fractures in the arms or legs—as well as potentially serious head and neck injuries. The risk of injury is high in the case of children that the American Academy of Pediatrics

strongly discourages the use of trampolines at home. Outdoor trampoline park injuries also are an area of emerging concern. Indoor trampolines in a confined padded indoor facility with higher supervision are far safer, but still not recommend for children under six years old. See for reference: AAOS

Paintball Tag. Paintball tag is offered in specialized parks where participants shoot pellets of paint at each other throughout an obstacle course, woods, or maze. The pressure used in a paintball gun is quite strong. When hit by a paintball pellet, a girl is certain to experience some pain, swelling, and perhaps a bruise or welt for a couple of days. Shooting a girl with a paintball pellet is likely to cause a minor injury and has the potential to cause a more serious injury to eyes, mouth, ears, and throat. For these reasons, paintball tag is prohibited Target paintball shooting, however, is permitted.

Hunting. Hunting is a sport that requires handling firearms in the wilderness, high maturity levels, and the availability of expert guides. Shooting accidents are not uncommon during hunting trips. This is also a sport which rarely, if ever, comes up as a requested activity. A very large majority of councils do not commonly hunt or request hunting trips.

Jet Skis, Motor Bikes, ATVs, Snow Mobiles and Electric Scooters. Jet skiing, motor biking, and riding snow mobiles, ATVs and electronic scooters are prohibited due to the extremely high incidence of serious injury involved. Most insurance carriers are not comfortable with these activities due to poor accident history. Insurance companies require that an operator hold a valid driver's license. Adults and children riding on the back of motor bikes and jet skis as passengers are exposed to a high risk of serious injury with no active opportunity to actually learn the skill.

Chartered Aircraft Trips and Aviation

Chartered small aircraft trips require prior council approval for every flight. This activity is permitted *only with trip-specific council prior approval*. The safety factors involving chartered aircraft, equipment and pilots are transparent and readily verifiable, unlike private aircraft. Confirm with your council ahead of time that chartered aviation participation is covered under your council's general liability policy or non-owned aviation liability insurance policy. Again, these policies will almost always exclude *privately owned aircraft*.

Your council will confirm that the aviation company has evidenced proper insurance showing at least one million dollars aviation liability insurance and five million dollars umbrella. It is strongly recommended that your council consult with their insurance broker and/or GSUSA Risk & Insurance via LShimborski@girlscouts.org for assistance with vetting insurance issues and implications.

Tethered Hot-Air Ballooning. Some outdoor parks may offer the opportunity to learn the skill of hot-air ballooning in a relatively safe and controlled environment utilizing a tethered hot-air balloon. Consult your council so they can check their general liability insurance or non-owned aviation liability policy to determine if this activity is covered. A hot-air balloon is an aircraft and viewed the same as small planes or helicopters from an aviation risk perspective. Therefore, the same standard applies—professionally chartered and tethered hot air balloon rides will be considered, but private hot air balloons will not – private hot air balloons are not permitted.

Other Actions Girls and Volunteers Should Not Take

For legal reasons, there are other activities that girls and volunteers are not permitted to participate in while representing Girl Scouts. Avoiding these will preserve the integrity of our organization. These include:

- Endorsement of commercial products or services
- Solicitation of financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting
- Participation in political campaigns or legislative activities unless the legislative activity has been specifically council approved.

First Aid

Make sure at least one adult member who is certified in first aid / CPR accompanies the troop / group on activities.

What To Do If There Is An Accident

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe council procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the injured person. Follow established council procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of council staff, parents/guardians and emergency services such as the police, fire department or hospital. Check with your council for emergency contact information and keep you Emergency Action Plan current with the appropriate contacts.

Your council may either have specific emergency contact information or a 24- hour emergency number or both. You should reach out to them for assistance. If a Girl Scout needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. You will need the exact time and location of the incident, a description of the incident and the names of the people involved and any witnesses. After receiving a report of an accident, council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance at the scene, if needed, and will contact parents/guardians, as appropriate. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with respect to notifying parents or legal guardians. If the media is involved, let council-designated staff discuss the incident with media representatives.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, the police must be immediately notified. A responsible volunteer must remain at the scene the entire time. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings and follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, your council and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

When Someone Needs Emergency Care

Girls need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting to volunteers any accidents, illnesses, or unusual behaviors during Girl Scout activities. You can help girls by keeping in mind the following:

- Know what to report.
- Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.
- Know the type of extreme weather to expect in your area (tornadoes, hurricanes, and lightning). Please consult with your council for the most relevant information for you to share with girls.
- Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost persons, and building-security issues. Every girl and adult volunteer must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.
- Assemble a well-stocked first aid kit that is always accessible. First aid administered in the first few minutes can make a significant difference in the severity of an injury. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911, and then administer first aid, if appropriately trained.

First Aid/CPR

For many activities, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer be first aid/CPR-certified. You can take advantage of first aid/ CPR training offered by organizations such as:

- American Red Cross
- National Safety Council
- EMP America
- American Heart Association

- American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI)
- Medic
- Other sponsoring organizations approved by your council.

Caution: Internet first aid / CPR training that is offered online may be necessary due to COVID-19 restrictions. Whenever in person training is safely authorized in your jurisdiction, opt for in-person training for in-person opportunities to practice and receive feedback on life saving technique. If taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous paragraph, or taking any course that has online components, get approval from your support team or council prior to enrolling in the course to ensure you are using a council approved vendor and that an online training is acceptable.

First-Aider

General First Aider. A general first-aider is an adult volunteer who has taken Girl Scout approved first aid and CPR training that includes specific instructions for adult and pediatric CPR, first aid, and AED as well as AED (Automated External Defibrillator) training that, minimally, includes face to face, hands-on skills check for:

- Checking a conscious victim
- Checking an unconscious victim
- Adult & Pediatric CPR
- Adult & Pediatric Conscious choking
- Controlling bleeding
- Sudden illness

If, through the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, or American Heart Association, you have a chance to be fully trained in first aid and CPR, doing so may make your activity planning go a little more smoothly.

Advanced First Aider. An advanced first aider is an adult with general first aid certification with additional health, safety or emergency response expertise such as, for example, a physician; physician's assistant; nurse practitioner; registered nurse; licensed practical nurse; paramedic; military medic; wilderness training, certified lifeguard or emergency medical technician (EMT).

The Safety Activity Checkpoints always tell you when a first aider needs to be present. Since activities can take place in a variety of locations, the presence of a first aider and the qualifications they need to have are based on the remoteness and scope of the activity. For example, if you take a two-mile hike in an area that has cell phone reception and service along the entire route and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) is within 30 minutes away then the first aider will not need to have knowledge of wilderness first aid. If, on the other hand, you take the same two-mile hike in a more remote area with no cell phone service and where EMS is more than 30 minutes away, the advanced first aider must have knowledge of wilderness first aid (see the chart below).

Access to EMS Minimum Level of First Aid Required	**Level of First Aid Required**
Less than 30 minutes	General First Aid
More than 30 minutes	Advanced First Aid or Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder (WFR)

Although a WFR is not required, it is strongly recommended when traveling with groups in areas that are greater than 30 minutes from EMS.

It is important to understand the differences between a first aid course, and a wilderness rated course. Although standard first aid training provides basic incident response, wilderness-rated courses include training on remote-assessment skills, as well as emergency first-aid response, including evacuation techniques, to use when EMS is not readily available.

Note: The presence of an ***advanced first aider*** is required at resident camp. For large events—200 people or more—there should be, additional to regular first aider(s), ***one advanced first aider*** for every 200 participants. The following healthcare providers may also serve as advanced first aiders for large groups: physician; physician's assistant; nurse practitioner; registered nurse; licensed practical nurse; paramedic; military medic; and emergency medical technician.

First Aid Kit

Make sure a general first aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its Anatomy of a First Aid Kit (note that the Red Cross's suggested list includes aspirin, which you will not be at liberty to give to girls without direct parent/guardian permission). You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites and the like.

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain your council and emergency telephone numbers (which you can get from your council contact). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms and health histories may also be included.

Overall Health, Well Being and Inclusivity

Health History. Girl Scout councils require an annual health history form to be completed and signed by one parent/guardian for every Girl Scout and filed with the troop leader.

Follow council guidelines to comply with this. The form should reflect any significant medical condition, health issue, or allergy and be updated each year. The form can also reflect any over-the-counter medication that a girl is not permitted to take, if there are any.

If parents send medication on trips or activities, it should be in an original labeled container, controlled and administered by one designated adult. Health history forms can be shared with the site or camp physician or nurse ahead of time.

Keep a current and signed health history form for each girl with you when traveling. You may require an updated mid-year health history for overnight trips. For physically demanding activities, such as water sports, horseback riding, or skiing, an additional current health history form may be obtained to make sure all adults are aware of any current medical conditions or special needs. Councils will retain all health history forms in accordance with state record retention requirements and laws.

Health Exams. Some councils also require a health exam for any activity that is three overnights or longer, which may include resident camp. Again, follow your council guidelines with respect to health exams. In most cases, the health exam needs to have been completed within one year of the last date of the trip for a girl to participate. Your council may require a current health exam for adult volunteers who participate in trips of three nights or more, so ask your local council about their policy. A health exam can be given by a licensed physician, a nurse practitioner, a physician's assistant, or a registered nurse. The health exam form must be signed by the medical provider.

For large events or trips longer in duration, such as resident camp or a weeklong trip to a ranch, the designated health professional at the trip location is responsible for collecting all health exam forms and health history forms for girls and adults.

Health exam forms and health history forms are to be shared only with designated health professionals and your local council staff responsible for coordinating them. All health and medical information are private (by law) and must not be shared or publicly available, so keep it safe and secure. Only share information on a need-to-know basis.

Councils will retain all health exam forms in accordance with individual state record retention requirements and laws.

Vaccination and Immunization. Issues or questions with respect to vaccination exemption periodically arise with activity and trip participation. Vaccine exemption laws vary by state and focus on public and private school attendance more directly than they do for youth organizations. Therefore, it is best to obtain local state legal guidance and proceed in accordance with the state law as it applies to school attendance. A general overview of state laws regarding school immunization exemption is provided and annually updated on the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

If you have any questions about your obligation to communicate a girl's non-immunization with other troop parents, contact your local Girl Scout council for legal guidance as privacy laws may apply. Absent state laws that speak directly to vaccines and communicating non-immunization with parents of youth groups, the guidance is to follow the standard and protocol as it pertains to school attendance.

The COVID-19 vaccine is not expected to become available for children until the end of 2021. GSUSA is strongly encouraging adult volunteers who are able, and who qualify in their home state, to receive the vaccine but it is not a requirement to participate in Girl Scouts. However, since state laws may vary, contact your council to confirm its specific vaccination policy as it relates to adult volunteers.

Mosquitoes, Ticks, and Lyme's Disease Prevention. Mosquitoes, ticks, and insect bites are an inherent risk to any warm weather outdoor activity. Ensure parents and guardians are aware of the need to have their girls properly covered, preferably with closed shoes and light-colored clothing and socks. It is important to advise parents, guardians and girls of this risk and the safety precautions they should take. The understanding that your troop or council cannot be held responsible for tick bites which can be reinforced with a waiver reference on a permission slip.

An excellent resource for learning more is the Tick and Lyme disease prevention section of Up To Date.

To learn more about using insect repellent safely, visit the Environmental Protection Agency website at EPA Using Repellents Safely. To learn more about safely using DEET directly on the skin and on children, check out EPA DEET. And for more on skin-applied and clothing-only repellent education, review EPA Insect Repellents.

Emotional Safety. Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouts 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 this agreement. Team agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting diverse feelings and opinions, resolving conflicts constructively, avoiding physical and verbal bullying or clique behavior, practicing fairness, and showing positive, respectful and helpful communication with others.

Physical or Sexual Abuse. Physical, verbal, emotional or sexual abuse of girls is forbidden. Sexual pressure, sexual advances, improper touching, sexual communication such as text messaging and sexual activity of any kind with girl members is not tolerated. If you witness or experience any behavior of this nature, notify the appropriate council staff immediately. Volunteers are responsible for following their council's guidelines for reporting any direct information or concern around physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse with respect to girls.

Child Abuse. All states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have specific laws which identify persons who are required to report suspected child abuse to an appropriate agency. Therefore, if you witness or suspect child abuse or neglect, whether inside or outside of Girl Scouting, always notify your council immediately and follow your council's guidelines for reporting your concerns to the proper agency within your state.

For additional information please check the following resources:

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: Child Welfare

- How to Report Suspected Child Maltreatment: Reporting Abuse
- Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect: Mandatory Reporters

Mental Health and Safety. As an adult volunteer overseeing the activities and behaviors of young girls, and similar to child abuse, you may witness other signs of harmful tendencies such as self-harm. Self-harm can take a physical form such as cutting, burning, bruising, excessive scratching, hair pulling or poisoning or drug use. Other tendencies of self-harm are suicidal ideations that can be expressed verbally or with the written word. Another harmful expression involves harm to others which can be detected verbally or with physical aggression. If a situation of this nature is observed or comes to your attention in any form, always notify an appropriate council staff member immediately and follow your council guidelines with respect to next steps.

Equity. Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity 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.

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Including Girls with Disabilities. Girl Scouts is committed to making reasonable accommodations for any physical or cognitive limitations a girl may have. Communicate with girls of all abilities and/or their caregivers to assess special needs and accommodations. To learn more about the resources available, visit Disabled World. Whenever possible, the individual activity chapter will provide resources specific to that sport or activity so always check when planning to include a girl with a disability, our goal is to include all girls with a desire to participate.

Transporting Girls

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility.
For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities, in which a group will be transported in privately-owned vehicles, arrange qualified drivers:

- Every driver must be a registered, background-checked member (approved volunteer) at least 21 years old, and have a good driving record, (more specific, without not driving restrictions) a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls during activities or field trips.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, registered background checked members (approved adult volunteers) in the vehicle, one of whom is female.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, registered background checked members (approved adult volunteers), one of whom is female.

Plan for safe driving:

- Review and implement the standards in the Checklist for Drivers, below.
- Share the Checklist for Drivers with all drivers, in advance.
- Build possible delays into your schedule. Allowing time for traffic or other delays will help prevent urgency and stress, which can be dangerous when driving.
- Provide directions for each vehicle.
- For driving trips of more than a few hours, plan a stop where all cars can gather up. This will avoid having drivers follow too closely or worry about being separated from the group.

- Anticipate stops every couple of hours, for drivers to rest and refresh. Let drivers know they can stop more often, if needed.
- Arrange for relief drivers if trips will last 6 hours or more.
- In each vehicle, there should be a first aid kit, and the permission and health history forms for each person in that car.

When borrowing or renting vehicles, drivers may rent cars or minivans in their own names, without council staff signature. Make sure the car is adequately insured; consult the driver's auto insurance company. Know who is responsible for damage to, or loss of, the vehicle. Be sure the vehicle is used only for Girl Scout purposes, as non-related use can compromise coverage. Read rental agreements to be familiar with the terms of the agreement, to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. For example, in many cases the minimum age of drivers is 25, and the maximum age is often under 70.

Chartered vehicles—such as buses--are contracted, usually with the driver or operator, for a group's exclusive use. Volunteers may not sign contracts for charters, even if there is no cost.

Taxis and ride-sharing services, including Uber and Lyft, may be used with these guidelines:

- An adult should ride in each vehicle with girls when multiple vehicles are being used.
- Wait for your ride in a safe place. For taxis, when possible, call (or ask your hotel to call), rather than hailing from the street. Use a taxi stand at airports. Stand away from traffic while waiting.
- For taxis: Check that the taxi is appropriately marked.
- For ride-sharing services:
    - Check that the vehicle's license plate, make and model match what is shown in the app.
    - Compare the app's photo with the driver. Ask for their name and be sure it matches the app.
    - Ask, "who are you here to pick up?" They should have your first name, but not other info about you.
- If you feel uncomfortable for any reason, do not get in the vehicle. If you become uncomfortable, end the ride. Report your experience to the taxi service or ride-sharing app.
- Send your in-town contact the name of the driver and your destination. Most apps have a sharing feature for this purpose.
- Do not share information about the group or where you are staying to any stranger.
- Each passenger must wear a seat belt. Enter and exit curbside.
- In foreign countries, consult a local expert about how to best call for taxis or rides. Reputable practices vary.

Recreational vehicles, campers, and trailers—whether privately-owned or rented--may be used if the driver has the appropriate training and license for the vehicle. Passengers must use seat belts when the vehicle is in motion and may not ride in a trailer or in the bed of a truck.

Vans Designed for 15 Passengers – Volunteers are not encouraged to operate 15 passenger vans as the design of the vehicles makes them inherently unsafe for the average non-professional driver. For untypical circumstances, when another option is impossible, make sure to follow this checklist before driving girls in a van designed for 15 passengers:

- Prior council approval must be obtained.
- The van was built in 2013 or later.
- Driver assistance technology has been installed.
- Insurance is valid. Check with the auto insurance company to confirm.
- All other safety measures are in place; see the Checklist for Drivers, below.
- No gear is loaded on top or heavy gear in the back of the van.

- The driver has the appropriate license in the state(s) where the van will be driven. This type of van may need a commercial driver's license.

These rules do not apply to commercial or professionally operated services such as airport shuttles. Professionally operated commercial vans designed for 15 passengers are permitted.

Commercial and common-carrier transportation is available to the public. They include buses, trains, airlines, ferries, and similar modes of transportation. In the United States, these are regulated and can be considered safe. Girls can compare fares and schedules and make decisions with adult support.

When traveling internationally, consider the transportation options available in the host country and determine safety and accessibility specific to the location.

Checklist for Drivers:

When driving a car, RV, or camper, take the following precautions and ask all other drivers to do the same:

- Ensure all drivers are volunteers at least 21 years old.
- Girls should not transport other girls.
- Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer.
- Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first-aid kit and a flashlight.
- Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns, and fluid levels before each trip, and recheck them periodically on long trips.
- Load gear appropriately. Heavy objects and luggage can affect vehicle stability and handling. Avoid overloading, especially on the top or back of any vehicle.
- Keep all necessary papers up to date including, but not limited to your driver's license; vehicle registration; any state or local inspections; and insurance coverage.
- Wear seat belts and insist that all passengers do the same. Each person must have their own, fixed seatbelt.
- Girls under 12 must ride in the back seats. Use car seats and boosters as required in your state.
- Follow best driving safety practices:
    - Keep at least a two-car-length distance between you and the car ahead of you.
    - Do not talk or text on a cell phone or other device.
    - Do not use ear buds or headphones.
    - Turn your lights on when your windshield wipers are on
- Know what to do in case of breakdown or accident. It is smart to have reflectors, a flashlight, a few tools, and a good spare tire.
- Take time to familiarize yourself with any new or rented vehicle.
- Take a break when you need it. The volunteer in charge of your trip will plan occasional stops, but it is ok to pull over to a safe place whenever you are too tired to continue. Relief drivers are planned for long drives.
- Do NOT drive when you are tired or taking medication that makes you drowsy.

Troop Meeting Space

Always choose a safe meeting space. Careful considerations should be used to find appropriate facilities for the age of the girls to be served and the activities to be conducted. A meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls. You might consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, houses of worship, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. For teens, you can also rotate meetings at coffee shops, bookstores, and other places girls enjoy spending time.

Here are a few points to keep in mind as you consider meeting locations:

- **Accessibility:** Be sure the space can accommodate girls with disabilities, as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.
- **Allergen-free:** Ensure that pet dander, smoke, and other common allergens won't bother susceptible girls during meetings.
- **Availability:** Be sure the space is available for the day and the entire length of time you want to meet.
- **Communication-friendly:** Be sure your cell phone works in the meeting space or there is a land line for emergencies. Internet accessibility is also helpful.
- **Cost:** The space should be free to use. However, you may wish to develop a partnership to provide service or offer a donation toward maintenance or utilities.
- **Facilities:** Sanitary and accessible toilets are critical.
- **Resources:** Determine what types of furnishings come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby or closet of some sort, where you can store supplies.
- **Safety:** Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards, and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure a first-aid equipment, smoke detectors and fire extinguisher are on hand.
- **Size:** Make sure the space is large enough accommodate the whole group and all planned activities.

Can we meet in a private home? It is not recommended to hold troop meetings in a private home. If you are considering meeting in a private home, please check with your council to make sure it is permitted based on council policy. In addition to the above, please remember to ensure these standards:

- Always obtain the prior approval from your council.
- The private home must the home of registered, council approved Volunteer.
- Girls may not meet in a home where a registered sex offender lives.
- Some councils may require membership and background checks for all adults living in the home.
- The troop needs to be able to focus without disruptions from other household members.
- Animals should be kept in a place that is separate from the meeting space.
- Homeowners should consider any personal insurance implications. The Homeowner should ask their personal Homeowner's insurance carrier if there are any insurance concerns with troop meetings at the home. Also, volunteers should confirm with the council that troop meetings in the home are covered by council's liability insurance carrier.
- Weapons must be out of view and in a locked space. Medication, cleaning products, or any poisonous substance must be stored in a secure space out of sight, preferably locked.

Activities at a Glance

Activities in Girl Scouting require consideration by the safe and caring adult who guides the girls through the planning of each activity. Noting the abilities of girl and considering the progression of skills it takes from the easiest to the most difficult part of the activity is the role of the adult. Making sure the complexity of the activities does not exceed girls' individual skills is the reason why the Safety Activities Checkpoints are based on progressive experience.

Certain Activities have been rated by Girl Scouts' national insurance company as high risk. High risk activities are those that, if practiced unsafely or in an unsafe environment, could cause serious injury or death to a participant, could require crisis communication if an injury occurs, or if not handled appropriately, could negatively impact the Girl Scout reputation or brand. High risk activities require council prior approval. A council can provide approval for an activity in a manner that does not require approval every single time the troop practices an activity. However, a volunteer must confirm that the activity is approved by your council Activity Notification Form prior to taking girls whenever "Required" is indicated.

As you explore the many options to engage girls in exciting activities, you will notice that there are recommendations for some activities to start at an older grade level. These recommendations have taken into consideration the emotional, physical, and developmental stages of girls and should guide you as you plan activities with the girls. Please reach out to your council if you have specific questions about the progression. Guidelines may differ from state to state. The ultimate goal is for girls to feel confident and comfortable with each planned activity.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Amusement Parks	D	B	J	C	S	A		May Be Required	Follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Aerial Fitness				C	S	A		May Be Required	Includes silks, hoops and trapeze. Follow the adult to-girl-ratios listed in the introduction. Verify instructor experience and credentials.
Animal Interaction and Adventure	D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	Follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Backpacking	*	*	J	C	S	A	**X**	Required	Backpacking is not recommended for Daisies and Brownies, due to weight restrictions on their small frames, and the need when backpacking to be able to carry all their supplies needed to camp. *(FOR DAISIES AND BROWNIES-REFER TO HIKING)
Bicycling	D	B	J	C	S	A		May Be Required	Follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction. Council approval may be required for long rides or difficult terrain.
Camping	D	B	J	C	S	A		Required	Ensure that at least one adult is trained for camping as required by your council. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Climbing and Adventure									
Challenge Courses	*D	*B	J	C	S	A	**X**	Required	Instructor trained and certified by a verified agency who demonstrates competence in equipment maintenance, safety and rescue techniques, proper use of the course, and hands-on training. In addition, follow the adult to-girl ratios listed in the introduction. *Daisies and Brownies may participate only in activities that have been designed for their grade levels and that have equipment that suit the size and ability of each girl. Outdoor high ropes, and high elements are only permitted for Juniors and older.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Climbing and Rappelling	*D	*B	J	C	S	A	**X**	Required	*Daisies and Brownies are permitted to boulder, slackline and do low challenge elements. Note that Daisies and Brownies may participate only in activities designed for their ages, with equipment suitable to the size and ability of each girl. Outdoor high ropes, high elements, and rappelling are only permitted for Juniors and older. *Brownies can participate in most indoor climbing activities. 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 meet girls' needs. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Recreational Tree Climbing			J	C	S	A	**X**	Required	A certified instructor with documented experience in leading and teaching tree climbing is required. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction. In recreational tree climbing, girls use ropes, harnesses, saddles, and climbing techniques to ascend into the crowns of trees.
Zip Lining		*B	J	C	S	A	**X**	Required	Not permitted for Daisies, except for playground zip lines. *Canopy tours are not permitted for Daisies or Brownies on non-girl scout sites.
Community Clean-Up	D	B	J	C	S	A	**X**	Required	Check grade permission levels that apply for the individual type of projects which are outlined in this activity chapter. For example, beachfront, waterways, parks, and roadside.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Computer and Internet Use	D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	All girls, as well as their parents/guardians, must read, agree to, and abide by the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge when going online.
Internet Safety Pledge	D	B	J	C	S	A			All girls take the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge.
Virtual Troop Meetings	D	B	J	C	S	A		May be Required	Adults check with their local Girl Scout council if they have any questions about which free video conferencing service to use. Councils may prefer to utilize only specific conferencing services, or they may leave this entirely up to the volunteer. Always follow the safety checkpoints for virtual meeting.
Cookie and Product Sales	D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	Adults must accompany Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors when they are selling, taking orders, and delivering.
Cross-Country Skiing	*D	B	J	C	S	A		May be Required	First-aider has a current certificate in first aid, including adult and child CPR or CPR/AED, and is prepared to handle cases of frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. Not recommended for Daisies due to complexity and strength.
Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding	D	B	J	C	S	A	X	Required	Instructors are certified by the Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) or possess equivalent certification.
Fencing		B	J	C	S	A		May be Required	One adult is a certified fencing instructor or has equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines. Ensure that there is a ratio of one instructor for every ten girls. Additional adults must be present to meet the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Fishing and Ice Fishing	D	B	J	C	S	A		May be Required	Adult or 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 one to ten. Additional adults must be present to meet the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Geocaching	*D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	*Daisies are permitted when working with older girls and adults as part of another outdoor activity.
Go-Karts			*J	C	S	A	X	Required	*Juniors cannot operate self-driving go-karts and must participate in activities on a rail system.
Hayrides	D	B	J	C	S	A		May be Required	Qualified driver who is licensed to drive a vehicle in the jurisdiction, is at least 21 years of age, and has experience hauling the trailer and driving the vehicle being used. Additional adults must be present to meet the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Hiking	D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	Adults must be present to meet the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the Introduction.
Horseback Riding	*D	B	J	C	S	A	X	Required	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, or documented proof of a minimum of three years' experience successfully instructing in a general horseback riding program. Additional adults must be present to meet the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction. *Daisies are only permitted on pony rides and hand-led horseback walks.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Ice Skating and Roller Skating	D	B	J	C	S	A		May Be Required	Adults must be present to meet the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction. Council approval may be required for frozen lakes.
Indoor Skydiving			J	C	S	A	X	Required	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.
Indoor Trampoline		B	J	C	S	A		May Be Required	Adults must be present to meet the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Inflatables									
Aquatic Bounces and Slides		B	J	C	S	A		May Be Required	Aquatic bouncy houses and inflatable bounce bubbles and slides are approved for Brownies and above.
Aquatic Climbing Walls			J	C	S	A		May Be Required	Aquatic climbing walls are not permitted for Daisies and Brownies. Juniors and above may participate in aquatic climbing walls only when they are strong swimmers and can swim in water deeper than five feet.
Bounce Houses	*D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	*Daisies can only participate in bounce houses that are specific for their age, height, and/or weight.
Log Rolling		B	J	C	S	A		May Be Required	Log rolling is not permitted for Daisies.
Bubble Soccer			J	C	S	A		Not Required	Bubble soccer is not permitted for Daisies and Brownies.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Land Sports (See Miscellaneous SACP)	D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	Ensure that adults are well versed in rules and aware of safety concerns for the designated sport.
Laser Tag (See Miscellaneous SACP)	D	B	J	C	S	A		May Be Required	Verify vendor is licensed and carries insurance.
Offshore Water/Large Passenger Vessels	D	B	J	C	S	A	X	Required	Vessels (ferries, cruise ships, whale-watching watercraft, and airboats) must be licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard. Follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Orienteering			J	C	S	A		Not Required	Orienteering is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies, but they may be ready to learn pre-orienteering activities such as map reading, navigation, and map-drawing. Follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the Introduction.
Outdoor Cooking	D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	Ensure that at least one adult is trained for outdoor cooking as required by your council. In addition, always adhere to the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Paddle Sports									
Canoeing	*D	B	J	C	S	A	X	Required	Follow Master Paddling Chart for certification by water type. At least one adult instructor or guide is currently certified by the American Canoe Association, or other sponsoring organization approved by your council. Certifications must be appropriate for the activity. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the Introduction. *Not recommended for Daisies except with an experienced adult in each canoe on flat water.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Corcl Boats		B	J	C	S	A		Required	Lifeguards have current certification in the American Red Cross (ARC) Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module or equivalent and have the proper training, experience, and rescue equipment for the body of water being used. In addition, follow the adult-to girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Kayaking		*B	J	C	S	A	**X**	Required	Follow Master Paddling Chart for certification by water type. At least one adult instructor or guide is currently certified by the American Canoe Association, or other sponsoring organization approved by your council. Certifications must be appropriate for the activity. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction. *Flat water only for Brownies.
Row Boating	*D	B	J	C	S	A		Required	*Daisies may use basic row boats only if they have an adult in the boat with them. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Standup Paddle Boarding			J	C	S	A	**X**	Required	Lifeguards have current certification in American Red Cross (ARC) Lifeguarding with Waterfront module or equivalent and have the proper training, experience, and rescue equipment for the appropriate body of water. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the Introduction.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Whitewater Rafting		*B	**J	C	S	A	X	Required	Follow Master Paddling Chart for certification by water type. *Brownies (Class I–II rapids only), **Juniors (Class I–III rapids only), Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors (Class I–IV rapids only). No Girl Scout is permitted on Class V or VI rapids. Guides have American Canoe Association (ACA) Rafting Level 4 Instructor or higher certification, and/or International Rafting Federation (IRF) Guide certification. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Parades and Other Large Group Gatherings	D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	Follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Pocket Knife and Jackknife Safety	*D	B	J	C	S	A		May be Required	See individual activity chapter for all instructor requirements and grade level recommendations. Daisies can learn pocketknife and jackknife safety with cardboard or wood examples.
Rocketry / Model Rocketry			J	C	S	A		Required	Daisies and Brownies are not quite ready to participate in model rocketry as defined in this activity. Daisies and Brownies can participate in simple science experiments like air powered drinking straw rockets, balloon rockets, stomp rockets or water powered bicycle pump rockets. Daisies and Brownies may observe model rocket launches at a safe distance.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Sailing		*B	J	C	S	A	X	Required	Ensure that the adult or sailing instructor is certified as a sailing instructor or sailing counselor by U.S. Sailing, holds American Red Cross Small Craft Safety Certification, or possesses equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines. The instructor-to-girl ratio is 1 to 4. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction. *Thoroughly verify Brownie maturity level for sailing.
Scuba Diving				C	S	A	X	Required	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 one to four. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Segway (See Miscellaneous SACP)					S	A		May Be Required	Vendor must be licensed and carry insurance. Segway is only permitted to be used in a pedestrian environment, not on public roads.
Skateboarding (See Miscellaneous SACP)		B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	Skate parks should only be used by non-beginner skaters. Follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing	D	B	J	C	S	A		May Be Required	Follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction. Girls must go feet-first and helmets are strongly recommended for all girls. Girls are not permitted to be towed behind any vehicle, including snowmobiles. No sledding near trees, buildings, or roadways.
Snorkeling			J	C	S	A	X	Required	Snorkeling instructor holds instructional certification from Scuba Schools International (SSI) or the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) or has equivalent certification. If the scuba instructor is not also a certified lifeguard, you will need a lifeguard present. Lifeguards need current ARC Lifeguarding plus Waterfront Module, or YMCA Waterfront Lifeguarding certification or equivalent. One lifeguard is needed for every 25 girls. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the Swimming SAC.
Snowshoeing	D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	Instruction is given by an adult with experience teaching and/or supervising snowshoeing or has documented experience.
Spelunking/Caving			J	C	S	A	X	Required	A guide with documented experience in cave exploration accompanies the group into the cave.
STEM, Arts, Crafts (See Miscellaneous SACP)	D	B	J	C	S	A		Not Required	Follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Surfing			J	C	S	A	X	Required	Instructors should hold a certification from the National Surf Schools and Instructors Association, the International Surfing Association, or similar certification. Notify lifeguards and point out location of surfers. Ocean lifeguard certifications are required. The instructor-to-girl ratio is one to four. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in the Swimming SACP. Girls must demonstrate appropriate swim skill level.
Swimming	D	B	J	C	S	A		May be Required	Follow the lifeguard certification requirements and ratios listed in the Swimming SACP.
Target Sports									
3-D Archery				C	S	A	X	Required	One adult is certified by the National Field Archery Association, USA Archery, or Easton Foundation. In addition, one adult to every ten Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required.
Air/BB Guns		B	J	C	S	A	X	Required	One adult is a certified National Rifle Association range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor. In addition, one adult to every five Brownies and one adult to every ten Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required.
Archery		B	J	C	S	A	X	Required	One adult has certification from the National Field Archery Association, USA Archery, or Easton Foundation. In addition, one adult to every five Brownies and one adult to every ten Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required unless on a Girl Scout site.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Ax/Hatchet Throwing				C	S	A	X	Required	One adult instructor trained in hatchet/ax throwing safety, form and technique, range rules, and emergency procedures. In addition, one adult to every two Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required.
Knife Throwing				C	S	A	X	Required	One adult instructor trained in knife throwing safety, form and technique, range rules, and emergency procedures. In addition, one adult to every two Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required.
Muzzle Loading				*C	S	A	X	Required	*Girls must be 12 years or older to participate. One adult is a certified National Rifle Association range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor. In addition, one adult to every two Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required.
Pistol					*S	A	X	Required	*Girls must be 14 years or older to participate. One adult is a certified National Rifle Association range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor. In addition, one adult to every four Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required.
Rifle				*C	S	A	X	Required	*Girls must be 12 years or older to participate. One adult is a certified National Rifle Association range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor. In addition, one adult to every eight Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required.
Shotgun—Trap/Skeet Shooting				*C	S	A	X	Required	*Girls must be 12 years old or older to participate. One adult is a certified National Rifle Association range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor. In addition, one adult to every eight Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required.

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
Slingshot	D	B	J	C	S	A		May be Required	One adult instructor trained in slingshot safety, form and technique, range rules, and emergency procedures. In addition, one adult to every five Daisies and Brownies and one adult to every ten Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required.
Target Paintball		B	J	C	S	A		May be Required	One adult is trained in paintball safety, range rules, and emergency procedures. In addition, one adult to every five Brownies and one adult to every ten Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors is required.
Tethered Balloon Rides			J	C	S	A	X	Required	Ensure operators have liability insurance and are licensed through the Federal Aviation. Administration. Pilots must be currently licensed. In addition, follow adult-to-girl ratios listed in the intro.
Tools – Hand and Power	D	B	J	C	S	A		May Be Required	See the specific activity for grade level permission and progression. Certain power tools are not permitted which apply to all grade levels.
Travel/Trips	D	B	J	C	S	A	X	Required	See SACP for grade-level trip and travel length recommendations. Follow adult-to-girl ratios listed in the introduction.
Tubing			J	C	S	A	X	Required	One adult must be certified in American Red Cross Small Craft Safety and the Moving Water module from the American Red Cross and have experience teaching and/or supervising tubing activities. If tubing behind a motorboat, make sure the driver is an adult and has a valid license to operate the motorboat. Girls are not permitted to be towed by jet skis or wave runners. Follow

Activities at a Glance	Daisies	Brownies	Juniors	Cadettes	Seniors	Ambassadors	High Risk	Council Approval Required	Required Instructor Certifications; Experience; Verification; Additional Comments
									the lifeguard certification requirements and ratios listed in the Swimming SACP.
Waterskiing and Wakeboarding			J	C	S	A	**X**	Required	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. Confirm that the boat driver is an adult, has an appropriate license, and is skilled in operating the watercraft. Follow the lifeguard certification requirements and ratios listed in the Swimming SACP.
Windsurfing/Sail Boarding			J	C	S	A	**X**	Required	In addition to a lifeguard, at least one adult present should have small craft safety certification or equivalent.

Aerial Fitness

Council Approval: May Be Required

Activity Permitted for: C, S, A

Includes:

- Silks
- Hoops
- Trapeze

About Aerial Exercising

Aerial Fitness is more than just a fun activity. Using silks, hoops, and trapeze, it provides a range of health benefits that target physical strength and support a positive mental state by fusing together a variety of activities and skills such as stretching, Pilates, cardio, strength training, concentration and fun.

This is a great way for to get healthy outside of the normal gym workout. Aerial Fitness allows for the freedom for the different design of body types, personality types and in different levels of challenge for reviving or restoration. Aerial Fitness has a special focus on 3-dimensional movement, conditioning and joint rotation and mobility.

Aerial Fitness uses a variety of equipment to support and suspend the body to work with your body type using the effects of supported body weight and gravity to lengthen, strengthen, contract, extend muscles improve posture, add gentle traction effects, optional inversions, and align joints.

Learn More:

- American Circus Educators
- Circus Safety Strategies
- Aerial Essentials
- Guide to Safety in Circus Arts

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the location in advance and ask about accommodating people with disabilities.
For more information:

- Aerial Yoga for Wheelchair Users
- Children with Special Needs Soar in Circus

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints which apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others**.**

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Instruction is to be given by an adult with experience teaching and/or supervising Aerial Fitness for the ages involved, has necessary certifications, or has substantial documented experience. Ensure that the instructors have the appropriate qualifications and skills to undertake all aspects of the course, that they are aware of their responsibilities and that they are willing to comply with the relevant legislation.

Select a safe site:

- Location and equipment are cleaned, sanitized and free of debris and or odors.
- Care and storage should be taken for the proper maintenance of equipment in accordance with the specifications set by the manufacturer.
- Any broken or damaged equipment should be removed immediately.
- Safety mats/nets are clean and placed appropriately under participants.
- All stations should have well maintained rigging and set up that is inspected by a certified person on daily basis as well as regularly scheduled inspections based on your local regulations.
- Enough information and guidance are provided to ensure that the risks involved in a lesson are minimized.
- Participants are taught how to use the equipment properly and safely.
- Ensure that no student can access the equipment without supervision.

- Ensure that when girls are participating in activities that do not provide a harness, they cannot be more than 6 feet from the ground.
- Facility should have enough ventilation and temperature control for the space.
  .

Contact the location regarding any physical concerns. Students with certain health conditions, existing or previous injuries should contact the school office prior to registration. Typically, anyone over 200 pounds should contact the school office to discuss safety and other considerations.

Girls learn about and prepare for aerial fitness. Instructors teach a set of readiness instructions and commands. All participants should use gentle muscle warm-up and stretching activities before beginning physical activities. Instructors must describe the objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants before beginning an activity.

On the day of the Activity:

Dress appropriately. Make sure girls and adults wear clothing that is comfortable, snug fitting, covers the knees. Have the appropriate footwear by activity. Avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Tie back long hair.

Ensure the instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand. The instructor covers safety procedures, including:

- No gum or candy
- Drinking plenty of water and resting when tired
- Being aware of other participants

Safety and Required Gear

Hoops, silks or trapeze equipment

- Harnesses and safety nets for trapezing
- Harnesses potentially for silks

Amusement Parks

Includes:

- Large theme parks
- Smaller amusement-type parks/Free-standing rides
- Carnivals / County Fairs
- Waterparks or facilities (more than a swim pool)
- Themed adventure parks
- Controlled go-kart activities

Council Approval: May Be Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Amusement Parks

Adventure parks take a wide variety of forms depending on where they are geographically located and the audience they are geared toward. These parks are 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 to be sure they are in compliance.

Currently 44 out of 50 states regulate amusement parks. The six without state oversight are Alabama, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, Wyoming, and Utah. These states contain few, if any, amusement parks. (Wyoming has no parks.)

Keep in mind that some locations may have certain activities that are not permissible Girl Scout activities, such as bungee jumping. Be sure to identify these prior to making final plans and communicate with girls and adults which activities may be restricted because of age, height, and weight. Also, discuss ride and crowd safety, have a designated meeting space, and encourage girls to act responsibly.

Learn More:

- Saferparks database
- Guide to U.S. theme parks
- International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions

Amusement and other types of adventure parks, as listed above, can be found in most states.

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Always be sure to contact the location in advance to ensure they are able to accommodate those with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Connect with your Girl Scout council for approved sites or site suggestions to ensure the location is vetted. If it is not, allow enough time to have the location approved.

Inquire about adequate insurance. The park you attend may or may not be able or willing to provide evidence of one million dollars General Liability insurance and instructor certifications upon request, depending on the size of the group. It is best to at least inquire and have the conversation in order to verify credibility of the park's management.

Ensure safety of theme-park rides. Obtain full information about the rides and other activities and evaluate them for safety especially concerning the age, height, and weight levels of girls.

Follow the "Swimming" safety activity checkpoints. Pay particular attention to water park safety rules. Ensure there are certified lifeguards at each activity. Girls will need to complete a swim test prior to the trip to ensure they can swim.

Know where girls are at all times. 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.

Review plans upon arrival. Adults should obtain a copy of the park guide to facilitate the visit and gain important information on park policies, as well as the location of restrooms and the first aid station. Plan the rides or events to attend with predetermined groups.

Determine a meeting spot beforehand. Adults should discuss plans for the visit with girls and set a place to meet, establishing a home base spot for girls to go if they get separated from the group.

Verify first aid particulars. Know where the first aid station is located. 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.

Animal Interaction

Includes:

- All animal tourism and interaction
- Farm animals and home pets
- Wild animals (e.g., dolphin rides)
- Rescue, shelter, and therapy animals

Council Approval: Not Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Animal Interaction

Planned interaction with animals is a popular and desired activity for many Girl Scouts, from petting zoos to therapy dogs to rescue animals. Through these activities, girls can learn about animals and have memorable experiences.

Unplanned interaction with animals can occur during other activities, such as hiking. Prepare for those ahead so girls know that not interacting with an animal will provide both safety and a valuable learning opportunity.

This activity primarily focuses on planned animal interaction under a controlled environment, including all educational programs, wildlife tourism, and farm animals.

Learn More:

- International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- Benefits of interacting with animals: UVA School of Medicine study
- Child safety around animals: HealthyChildren.org

Animal Safety and Health Reminders

Partner with reputable organizations. Ensuring they have liability insurance helps credibility.

Assess your girls. Ensure they are mature enough to follow rules and exercise self-control. Do not allow children under age five to interact with reptiles, amphibians, baby chicks, ducklings, or petting zoo animals (per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Control their interaction. Let girls know that it's not okay to tease, hurt, or play roughly with any animal.

Keep it clean. Have girls wash hands before and after contact with animals, animal bedding, or waste.

Be vigilant. Treat bites or scratches according to the first-aider's training to avoid infection. Report animal aggression, bites, or other concerns to the authorities and to your council.

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Always be sure to contact the location in advance to confirm that they can accommodate those with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Review some basic animal interaction rules:

- Do not pet or otherwise disturb an animal that is sleeping or eating.
- Stay away from an animal's food.
- Do not tease or abuse an animal.
- Watch for warning signs like growling or hissing.
- Never pet an unfamiliar dog, cat, or other animal.
- Be cautious about touching animals, such as puppies and kittens, within view of their mother.

In addition, in the case of dogs for example, do not run when approached by an unfamiliar one. Running may make the dog aggressive. Instead, slowly back away, avoid sudden movements, and avoid direct eye contact, but keep the dog within view.

Pets, Therapy Animals, and Rescue Shelters

Protect girls as well as hosts' house pets. This should be taken into consideration during meetings, overnights, and activities. Secure all pets out of reach when girls are present.

Certified, trained service animals like guide or hearing dogs must be welcomed. Please be welcoming and follow their handler's instruction regarding petting or engaging with them.

Follow rules. These are often provided by animal rescue facilities and shelters.

Supervise girls closely. Watch the girls and practice the buddy system.

Be clean. Take care to wash hands and sanitize footwear to protect girls from disease and to prevent spreading disease from one animal to another.

Make it a learning experience. Talk to girls and research the root causes that lead to animals being in shelters. Brainstorm Take Action projects the troop might plan to help.

Avoid these activities while at the rescue or shelter:

- Eating or drinking
- Sitting or playing on the ground
- Feeding the animals, unless supervised by shelter's personnel and animal contact is controlled with barriers.
- Contact with animals if you or the animal has an open wound.
- Contact with animal waste.

Petting Zoos and Animal Ambassadors

- Follow rules provided by the zoo.
- Take care to wash hands and sanitize footwear, as directed.
- Do not handle bedding, food, water, or manure unless trained to do so.

Drive-Through Zoos and Parks

- Drive vehicles with secure roofs and with doors and windows that fully close.
- Keep windows rolled up.
- Do not get out of the vehicle.

Swimming with Dolphins and Other Interactive Experiences

- Choose a safe and responsible animal organization. See the "Selecting a Partner Organization" section below.
- Review safety management with the organization before visiting the site.
- Make sure predators are secured or separated from girls.
- Contact your council for specific approval and guidance for wolf, big cat, shark, or similar interactions.
- Follow any related safety activity checkpoints. For example, follow the swimming checkpoints when swimming with dolphins.

Farm Animals and Husbandry

- Ask permission before entering a farm or barnyard.
- Ask if there are areas to avoid.

- Get an orientation from an on-site expert. Learn and follow their safety rules.
- See the safety activity checkpoints for horseback riding if you will work with or ride horses.

Wild Animals

- Learn about the animals that live in the area you frequent or will visit.
- Never approach wild animals. Generally, animals will not attack or bite if left alone.
- Back away if you come across baby animals and assume that there is a protective mother nearby. Backing away protects you and the babies.
- Report animals that appear sick or that behave strangely to the authorities.
- Take special care in snake country:
    - Do not stick your hand or foot in places you can't see.
    - Wear closed-toed shoes.
    - Use a flashlight when walking at nights to avoid stepping on a snake.
    - Do not handle snakes, even if you think they are dead.
    - Back away slowly if you encounter a snake.
- Never feed wild animals.
- Store food well away from tents or cabins and out of the reach of animals. If the site is in bear country, check with local authorities on precautions to take, and ask if a bear-proof canister is required for food.

Choosing Partner Organizations

Select those that have visitor safety and animal well-being as top priorities.

For visitor safety, look for organizations that:

- Provide handwashing stations,
- Provide an orientation or training on safety rules,
- Supervise visitors,
- Limit visits so that animals do not get overwhelmed,
- Keep the environment clean, especially with manure picked up,
- Have food stations for visitors that are separate from animal enclosures.

For animal well-being, look for organizations that:

- Keep animals healthy and cared for with food, clean water, and a sheltered place to rest,
- Do not have animals that sway or pace in their enclosures, as these behaviors can be signs of stress.
- Keep exotic or wild animals only while they recover or because they can't be reintroduced into the wild
- Do not engage in the commercial trade of animals or animal parts,
- Do not breed animals and have measures in place to prevent breeding, unless the animals are part of an authorized release program,
- Do not take in more animals than they can humanely handle,
- Do not use animals for entertainment, forcing animals to perform acts such as rides, shows, or tricks,

- Operate in the best interest of the animals, rather than for profit,
- Do not allow venomous animals to be handled.

Note: Be wary of places that claim to be sanctuaries, especially those overseas. They often operate for profit and are likely to exploit animals. Wildlife tourism sites, including those that offer elephant rides, the opportunity to hold newborn cubs, or the chance to pet tigers, are also potentially exploitive and dangerous. Investigate these beforehand at the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries or WASP. Ethical tour operators can be found here.

Help girls learn about animal exploitation in the cub petting or elephant riding industries. Share this *National Geographic* article that explains why girls may want to forgo activities that include wild animal interaction.

Backpacking

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: J C S A

Not Recommended For: Daisies and Brownies

About Backpacking

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.

Backpacking is not recommended for Daisies and Brownie because of the equipment used in backpacking trips (see below) and the longer duration of the activity. Hiking is recommended for Daisies and Brownies to prepare them for the adventure of backpacking at the next grade level.

When choosing a destination, connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions, such as Girl Scout camps.

Learn More:

- AmericanTrails.org
- Backpacker.com
- Trails.com
- LeaveNoTrace.org

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. To find backpacking programs for youth of various abilities contact No Barriers USA and Wilderness Inquiry.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity, and review it with the girls so they, too, are prepared. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Encourage girls to share resources. Have girls make a list of needed gear and supplies and determine which items can be shared. This way no girl is carrying a heavier backpack than necessary.

Choose an appropriate backpacking route. The route chosen needs to be within the ability of every person in the group, and the pace needs to accommodate the slowest backpacker. Determine the length of the trip by the backpackers' grade levels, level of experience and ability, physical condition, nature of the terrain, and weight of the load to be carried as well as the season and weather conditions, the water quantity and quality, and the activities planned along the way.

Assess the safety of backpacking sites. The route needs to be known to at least one of the adults or a report should be 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, information about 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 need to be trained to be observant of the route, the surroundings, and the fatigue of individuals. Instruction should be 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 caused by extremes of temperature, such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke, frostbite, cold exposure, and hypothermia, as well as sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. Ensure that 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 certification. The designated adult should have a working cell phone for emergencies.

Take safety precautions. Create a risk management plan with the girls and leave a copy at home. Search-and-rescue procedures for missing persons should be 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, should also be arranged in advance. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans that cover any situation with girls.

Practice safe backpacking. Hiking after dusk is not permitted. Off-trail hiking must be done with an experienced leader. The group must hike away from the edges of waterfalls, rock ledges, and slopes with loose rocks. Girls are never allowed to go on high-altitude climbs.

Safety Gear

Backpacking requires various equipment dependent on the length of trip, location, and weather.

- Lightweight, layered clothing and outerwear appropriate for weather conditions
- Water bottle or hydration pack (each girl should carry at least one quart)
- Non-perishable, high-energy, lightweight foods such as dehydrated meals, fruits, and nuts
- Whistle
- Ten-essentials emergency survival kit, including a flashlight, first aid kit, extra clothing (including a waterproof jacket), snacks, tablets for purifying water, emergency shelter, matches in a waterproof container, a knife, a map, a compass or GPS, and a water bottle,
- 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), high-tech socks designed for hiking along with wicking-liner socks to keep moisture away from feet,
- Map and compass or compass and GPS
- Sleeping bag, preferably a mummy or lightweight sleeping bag; closed cell sleeping pad
- Potable water or water purification supplies to remove potential contaminations from natural water sources; use water filters designed to remove Giardia lamblia—see the outdoor cooking safety activity checkpoints for purification tips,
- Unbreakable, lightweight knife/fork/spoon combo, with a 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 a cat hole, hand sanitizer)
- Food storage (check local regulations to find out if a bear-proof canister is required)

- A working cell phone for emergencies (in the hands of an adult) or a specific backup plan
- Hat or bandana

Bicycling

Council Approval: May Be Required

(especially for long trips)

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Bicycling

Cycling is a fun activity that girls can enjoy their entire lives. As with all activities, progression through skill building and conditioning are very important. Long day cycling trips, mountain and road biking, and long-distance cycling trips can be strenuous. The terrain may be difficult. Girls must also carry more gear and supplies than on short day trips. For this type of cycling, it's essential for girls to have opportunities to condition themselves beforehand. When training for lengthy bicycle trips, set realistic goals for mileage. Plan to gradually increase the distance. For instance, one week aim to ride ten miles. Strive for 15 the next.

Learn More:

- Middle and high school mountain biking teams: National Interscholastic Cycling Association
- American Bicyclists
- People for Bikes
- International Mountain Bicycling Association
- Teen Trail Corps
- Adventure Cycling Association
- USA Cycling
- Tread Lightly

Learn about road bike routes at AdventureCycling.org. Find out about mountain bike trails in your area at MTBproject.com. Check in with your local bicycle coalition or mountain bike association for events that can help you learn. Contact local bike shops and ask if they will host a maintenance clinic or guided ride for your group.

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 Activity and Disability provides for people with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, breakdown, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or illness.

Organize cycling groups. Participants should travel in groups of five or six, unless on a bike path. An adult must ride at the head and rear of every two groups. Groups should ride with at least 150 feet between them so that vehicles may pass. Each girl must have her own bike, unless riding tandem. Girls riding tandem bikes must have their own seats.

Select a safe cycling site or route. A community bike park is an excellent place to evaluate and practice bike handling skills. When selecting a trip route, use designated bicycle paths whenever possible. Avoid routes with heavy traffic and observe all state and local biking rules.

Make careful plans for the type of road or trail to be traveled. For example, secondary roads are quiet, but may have trees, curves, and hills that obstruct visibility. When planning to cycle on trails, check that trails are authorized for cycling by contacting land managers or checking jurisdictional websites and maps. Notify jurisdictional authorities about the group's trip when necessary.

Know your surroundings. Check the location of emergency and medical services along the route.

Consider your riders. Ensure that the length and terrain of the route, the time of day, weather, and the equipment are appropriate for the girls' experience level and physical condition. Review the route together and practice map-reading skills.

Check the ABCs:

- **Air:** Check tire pressure and ensure that it meets the tires' specific air requirement.
- **Brakes:** Check that pads and brakes are adjusted appropriately.
- **Chain:** Make sure that the chain is engaged with gears and shifting smoothly.

Ride safely. Plan to ride only during daylight hours. Ride with the flow of traffic. Obey traffic regulations, signals, lane markings, and local ordinances pertaining to bicycling. When on natural surface trails, cyclists yield to all others on the trail including hikers and those on horseback. Review trail etiquette guidelines.

Help girls learn to:

- **Watch the road.** Recognize and avoid common roadway hazards like drainage grates and manhole covers, sand, gravel, glass, wet leaves, litter, and other road and trail hazards.
- **Communicate and cooperate with other road and trail users.**
- **Ride defensively.** Girls should stay aware of their surroundings and put themselves in the best position for safety.
- **Prepare for the unexpected.**
- **Pack light.** In addition, cyclists should carry a load weight on practice rides which is similar to the load weight they will carry on the planned, longer trip.
- **Practice packing and storing gear.** Light gear is stored in bicycle panniers (foldable carriers) or packs on the back of the bike.
- **Practice bike-riding skills in traffic.** These include signaling, scanning ahead and behind (especially before moving left), yielding to oncoming traffic, and making left turns. Girls should ride single file with traffic but can ride side-by-side briefly in order to pass a slower rider.
- **Keep a safe distance from the vehicle ahead.**
- **Be aware of hazards.** Understand that motor vehicle traffic presents the greatest danger to cyclists. Other hazards that also can cause cycling accidents include oil, wet leaves, parked cars, parked cars with doors that open in front of a cyclist, and rocks.
- **Brake early.** Girls should slow down and brake gradually and early before necessary, especially on curves and when going downhill.
- **Stop fully.** It is important to 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.
- **Walk bikes across busy intersections. Signal properly.** Use hand signals to let other cyclists and drivers know when they plan to turn and stop. Girls should also let other cyclists know when they plan to pass before actually passing.
- **Use lights.** Keep lights on to increase visibility.
- **Make basic repairs.** This should be based on what is age appropriate.
- **Dress the right way.** Dress in layers in cooler temperatures and shed layers as you get warmer. Avoid cotton and use synthetic fabrics instead because they wick sweat away from skin. Wear reflective or light-colored clothing when cycling at dusk and wear bright-colored or fluorescent clothing during the day. On longer trips in cooler weather, carry extra clothing and rain gear. Do not wear dangling earrings, bracelets, or necklaces that can tangle in equipment.

Learn emergency moves. Read about and practice the quick stop, rock dodge, and instant turn at Bike League, which also provides tips for beginners.

On bicycling day:

- **Stretch your muscles.** Before cycling, always warm up. Try walking, jogging, or cycling slowly before going faster. Gently stretch your hamstrings, quads (against a wall), and calves, before and especially after riding.
- **Be prepared in case of an emergency.** Provide a detailed itinerary and plan to call and check in with someone 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. Check handlebars after adjusting the seat for proper leg extension. When stopping for the day, cool down gradually by walking around for a few minutes—do not stop cycling abruptly. Watch girls so that they do not push beyond their endurance levels.

Safety Gear

Safety gear needed will depend on the length of your trip, the location, and the weather.

Bicycles should be in in good working order and appropriate for the type of riding planned. Seats should be adjusted to the right height for each rider. Girls should have a slight bend in the knee when seated. A seat that's set too low is a common problem and causes significant discomfort. Watch for seats set too high, too; A girl's legs should never be fully extended.

It's also important for girls to have appropriate pedals for their experience level. Beginners should use flat pedals; experienced riders may choose clip-in pedals. Protective bicycle helmets with properly fitted safety straps are also required. 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.

The helmet should meet the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F1163-88 requirements. Check the helmet for a Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal.

You will also need a cycling repair kit for each group. Each kit should contain:

- Tire pump
- Spare tubes of appropriate size
- A tire patch kit
- Tools, including tire irons, a screwdriver, an adjustable wrench, pliers, and hex-head (Allen) wrenches.
- Lubricating fluid
- Front and rear lights, for visibility during the day and at dusk
- Bike bell
- Reflectors
- Two water bottles or a hydration pack
- Day pack
- Appropriate clothing, such as bike shorts designed for cycling with wicking fabric.
- Non-perishable, high-energy foods such as energy bars, fruits, and nuts
- Cycling gloves
- Stiff-soled athletic shoes such as court shoes or cycling shoes for beginners. Shoes with clips for experienced riders using clip-in pedals.

- General map and/or bike route map or map app on a smart phone

Camping

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

Required: At least one adult must be trained in camping as required by your council.

About Camping

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 weather-appropriate clothing. 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.

You can add to the experience with a camp kaper chart. Divide up cooking duties and get creative about preplanning outdoor meals. Be ready with camp entertainment. Before you go camping, read about camping stories, songs, activities, and games.

Note: When planning activities to do while camping, remember that girls are never allowed to hunt, go on high altitude climbs, or ride all-terrain vehicles or motor bikes.

For travel camping—camping as you travel—note the additional safety precautions listed.

Learn More:

- American Camp Association
- Go Camping America
- Leave No Trace
- ACA Coronavirus Safety at Camp

Coronavirus Safety at Camp

The health and safety of Girl Scouts at camp has always been and continues more than ever to be our highest priority. All the health and safety precautions taken to keep girls healthy and safe have never been more important as the world returns to what is likely the new normal, after months of shelter in place is most communities.

As with any Girl Scout activity, adults and girls should be very mindful to abide by the guidance that has been issued by the Center of Disease Control (CDC) for integrating back into regular life, which is to practice the basics:

The American Camp Association has provided an excellent source of guidance at: COVID-19 Resource Center for Camps. Adults and girls should learn and follow the guidance set forth here by the American Camp Association. Informative and helpful topic-specific links from the COVID-19 Resource Center for Camps are here:

Health and Wellness
Ways to Promote a Child's Resilience

Implement practices that minimize potential for communicable disease once camp is in session:

- Wear a mask and have girls wear a mask.
- Practice social distancing and proper spacing between campers.
- Appropriate hand washing and/or hand sanitizing. This assumes adequate wash basins and/or sanitizing pumps are at key locations.
- Cough/sneeze "into your sleeve." Covering coughs/sneezes with one's hands is no longer desired behavior; bury coughs/sneezes in one's shoulder. Note: view "Why Don't We Do It in Our Sleeves?" on YouTube.
- Keep peoples' hands away from their faces.
- Make it a camp rule that personal supplies – hairbrushes, pillows, caps, contact lens solutions, make-up – belong to the owner and should not be shared with others.
- Make it regular practice that one drinks only from one's personal drinking cup; no sharing, even "to be nice."
- Increase the social distance between people, especially in dining rooms.
- Sleep head-to-toe rather than nose-to-nose – in bunks, tents & so forth. Go for the greatest distance between sleeping heads.
- For resident camps: maintain distance, ideally six feet, between beds and sleep head-to-toe (top bunk has the person's head at one end, the bottom bunk has the person's head at the other end). Utilize universal precautions – for and by everyone. *See the ACA Operating Guidance for specific recommendations by state. State Operating Guidance for Summer 2021 | American Camp Association (acacamps.org)
- Direct Health Center staff to isolate people with questionable symptoms until communicable illness can be ruled out.
- Instruct staff to direct campers complaining of gastro-intestinal upset to the Health Center for assessment. Do not wait for kids to throw up!
- Make certain that food service staff know and implement safe food handling practices.
- When food service personnel have questionable symptoms, especially those associated with the gastro-intestinal track, keep them away from food preparation until appropriately improved.

Camping with 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 Daisies and Brownies.

Know where to camp when camping with Daisies and Brownies, which includes 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.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Safe camping locations are 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. The campsite should be able to provide evidence of one million dollars General Liability insurance and instructor certifications upon request.

Verify leader/instructor knowledge, experience, judgment, and maturity. Ensure that at least one adult is trained or possesses knowledge, skills, and experience in the following areas:

- Outdoor program activities and leadership
- Girls' emotional responses to trips, including homesickness.
- Trip planning in a girl-led environment
- Safety management
- Program activities specific to the trip
- Group dynamics and management
- Outdoor cooking (if relevant)

Ensure that supervision of girls and adults for travel camping include at least two adults who 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 support the group.
- Chosen mode(s) of transportation.
- Site orientation
- Emergency procedures
- Minor maintenance for equipment and vehicles, as appropriate

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 any vehicle or vessel being used (canoe or kayak, for instance).
- For trips that involve swimming, one adult who is present is currently certified in basic lifeguarding.
- Each driver of motorized transportation is at least 21 years old and holds a valid license appropriate to the vehicle.
- No adult drives more than six hours per day, with rest breaks every two hours.
- If a trailer is used make sure it complies 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 the cell phone numbers of other drivers.
- Ensure that girl and adult participants receive information about first-aid procedures, emergency and rescue procedures, environmental awareness, and program plans for mode of travel and geographic area, as well as operational procedures (water purification, food preparation, camping equipment, sanitation, and food storage procedures).

Sleeping Arrangements

On trips where male volunteers are part of the group, it is not appropriate for them to sleep in the same space as girl members. Always support and maintain an all-girl atmosphere for sleeping quarters. Men may participate only when separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms are available for their use. In some circumstances, such public venues as a museum or mall overnight with hundreds of girls, this type of accommodation may not be possible. If this is the case, men do not supervise girls in the sleeping area of the event and the adult-volunteer-to-girl ratio is adjusted accordingly.

Always avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. An exception is made for family members during events such as parent-daughter or family overnights where one family may sleep together in an area specifically designated to accommodate families. Also please note the following:

- Each participant has her own bed. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed.
- Girls and adults do not share a bed; however, some councils make exceptions for mothers and daughters.
- It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area (tent, cabin, or designated area) with the girls, but if an adult female does share the sleeping area, there should always be two unrelated adult females present.

If possible, men should have their own designated bathroom. If a unisex bathroom is used the door must have a working lock, or a system for notifying others that the bathroom is in use. This system should be reviewed and understood by all girls and adults.

Men should not have to walk through the girls' sleeping area to get to the bathroom. When camping in tents or single room cabins, men must stay in a tent or a cabin that is separate from the girls or women.

During family or "he and me" events (in which girls share sleeping accommodations with men), ensure the sleeping details are clearly explained in a parent/guardian permission slip.

More than one family may use a tent or single-room cabin during these events only if both families agree.

In public venue overnights, such as museums or at malls, ask if there is a separate sleeping area and bathrooms for men. If no such area exists, designate an area out of the way or off to the side so that men are not sleeping alongside the girls.

For long-distance travel, men must have separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms away from girls. Each participant should have her own bed. If girls want to share a bed, they must obtain parent/guardian permission. Girls and adults may not share a bed, however, though some councils may make exceptions for mothers and daughters.

Women are not required to sleep in the sleeping area (for example, a tent or cabin) with girls, but if a woman does share the sleeping area, two unrelated women must always be present.

For sites without electric lights and toilet facilities (otherwise known as primitive campsites):

- Choose and set up your campsite well before dark.

- Use a previously established campsite if available.
- Make sure the campsite is level, below tree line, and located at least 200 feet away from all water sources and.
- Avoid fragile mountain meadows and areas with 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. *Note:* Cat holes are not permitted in some areas, so follow local sanitary codes or alternative instructions in those areas.
- Wash dishes and do personal bathing at least 200 feet away from water sources.
- Store food in a secure location away from tents and out of reach of animals.
- Where necessary, use a bear-proof container to store food or, if allowed or appropriate, hang food at least ten (10) feet off the ground from a rope that's stretched between two trees. If the site is in bear country, check with local authorities for additional precautions.

Safety Gear

- Clothing, including a 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)
- A sleeping bag that is rated for the anticipated temperature
- A flashlight and other battery-powered lights for indoor use (no candles, kerosene lamps, portable cook stoves, heaters, or other open-flame devices are to be used inside tents)
- A first aid kit
- Insect repellent
- A hat or bandana
- A hat, gloves, and thermal underwear for cool temperatures
- Flame-resistant tents or tarp (no plastic tents)
- A map and either a compass or a GPS
- Mosquito netting, where necessary
- Cooking supplies (pots, pans, utensils, mess kit, dunk bag, etc.)
- A cooler for food storage
- Portable cook stoves and fuel whenever possible (to reduce the use of firewood)
- A flashlight or propane-fueled lantern (for outdoor use)
- A water purification kit

Climbing and Adventure Sports—Master Progression Chart

Climbing Type	Grade Levels	Safety Standards and Gear	Additional Information
Slacklining	D, B, J, C, S, A	Sneakers Comfortable clothing Specific uniform or costume Slackline Check anchors	Baseline for Beginners Slacklining Outdoor Slacklining
Initiatives and Low Elements (any element that has a fall distance of 6 feet or less)	D, B, J, C, S, A	Sneakers Comfortable clothing appropriate for weather Activity elements and supplies	Ultimate Campsource Team Building Team Building and Low Challenge Elements
High Elements (any element that has a fall distance of 6 feet or more)	B, J, C, S, A Brownies can participate only with indoor high elements specifically designed for small children.	Climbing helmets (Union of International Alpine Association–approved) Belaying equipment: ropes, webbing, harnesses, hardware, and helmets that are designed, tested, and manufactured for the purpose of climbing and size appropriate for user.	Association Challenge Course Technology. *Note:* if the hosting facility or instructor indicates the use of helmets is hazardous for belay – follow those instructions. They may not offer helmets for this reason. When the hosting facility or instructor indicates a helmet is required, always opt for the helmet.
Bouldering (any element that has a fall distance of 6 feet or less)	D, B, J, C, S, A	Comfortable clothing Sneakers Spotters	Bouldering Low Elements
Artificial Climbing Walls (indoor and outdoor)	B, J, C, S, A No free climbing above 6 feet, Brownies on indoor walls designed specifically for small children only.	Auto belay/harnessed indoor ropes Belaying equipment: ropes, webbing, harnesses, hardware, and helmets that are designed, tested, and manufactured for the purpose of climbing and size appropriate for user.	Expert Advice Indoor Climbing *Note:* if the hosting facility or instructor indicates the use of helmets is hazardous for belay – follow those instructions. They may not offer helmets for this reason. When the hosting facility or instructor indicates a helmet is required, always opt for the helmet.

Challenge Courses

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Challenge Courses

A challenge course is a set of structures that provide a setting for physical challenges designed to increase participants' self-confidence and physical coordination, to increase group cooperation, and to be 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 six feet or more off the ground. A safety belay (a rope to secure a person to an anchor point) is used with a harness, and participants wear helmets unless the hosting facility or instructor indicates the use of helmets is hazardous for belay. 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 understand the safety procedures and consequences of her actions. Connect with your council for suggestions and site approval.

Note that Daisies and Brownies may participate only in activities designed for their ages, with equipment suitable to the size and ability of each girl. Outdoor high ropes, and high elements are only permitted for Juniors and older.

Learn More:

- Association for Experiential Education
- Association for Challenge Course Technology
- List of accredited vendors: Professional Ropes Course 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 the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability provides for people with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. High ropes courses require an instructor trained and certified 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.

Qualified instructors will have competence in equipment maintenance, safety techniques, proper use of the course, and hands-on training. Ensure that the instructor has provided written documentation of the completed training as well as proof of participation in routine instructor review and updates. Instructors need to be 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 should inspect all equipment, course components, and landing areas. A minimum of two instructors must be present.

Ensure that equipment is well-maintained. There needs to be 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 should be kept on all equipment that is subject to stress, wear, and deterioration. A written equipment process for monitoring and retirement should be established and followed by the facility.

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 should use gentle muscle warm-up and stretching activities before beginning physical activities. Instructors must 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 should match participants according to size and skill level, if appropriate. Instructors must supervise all tie-ins, belays, and climbs on high ropes courses and spotting on low elements courses. Participants must not be stacked more than three levels high vertically (in a pyramid, for example) at any time. No one should stand on the middle of someone else's back.

Instructor-to-participant ratios must meet the standard as identified by the course manufacturer or installer and need to comply with industry best practice standards.

Safety Gear

- Sturdy shoes
- Climbing helmets (with Union of International Alpine Association–approved label) must be worn for all climbing activities in which the participant is more than six feet off the ground and by participants standing in the "fall zone" beneath a climbing element. Helmets are also required for belay, unless the hosting facility or instructor indicates the use of helmets is hazardous for belay.
- Disposable shower cap liner, for use with public rental helmets
- Belaying equipment—including ropes, webbing, harnesses, hardware, and helmets—designed and tested for this type of activity and appropriate for the size of the user.
- Long pants or bike pants for activities that may lead to skin abrasions on legs.
- 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 climbing.

Climbing and Rappelling

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Climbing and Rappelling

Girls may participate in various types of climbing, rappelling, and rope adventures.

Note:

- Daisies and Brownies can do bouldering, slacklining, and low-challenge elements.
- Daisies and Brownies may participate only in activities that are designed for their ages, with equipment suitable to the size and ability of each girl.
- Outdoor high ropes, high elements, and rappelling are only permitted for Girl Scout Juniors and older.

Bouldering. This sport involves 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 when descending and ascending high elements or climbing routes.

Top Roping. In this climbing method, 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 the 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, this is 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 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.

Free Climbing. This method, which involves climbing on rocks or walls without a belay system in place, is not approved.

Slacklining: A sport and an art that can involve balance training, recreation, and moving meditation. It is similar, at first glance, to tightrope walking and is accomplished by stretching and tensioning a 1-inch to 2-inch length of nylon/polyester webbing between two anchor points, most often trees. It is a way of passing time while maintaining concentration, fitness, core strength, and balance. It can be used as a team-building activity in which spotters safeguard the movements of each member of the group.

Artificial climbing walls and harnessed indoor ropes are great learning options too.

Learn More:

- International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation
- RockClimbing.com
- Indoor climbing advice: REI
- All about rock climbing: Mpora.com

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.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. For bouldering, top roping, and multi-pitch climbing, an instructor with documented experience—indicating competence in equipment use, safety and rescue techniques, proper use of the course, and hands-on training (must provide certification) or documented experience according to your council's specific guidelines—directly supervises the group. Ensure that there is a regular process of review and update for all

instructors. A minimum of two instructors need to be present and instructors should be 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 must inspect all equipment, course components, and landing areas.

Facilitators of indoor or outdoor artificial climbing walls and auto belay or harnessed indoor ropes courses should 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 must be present, and facilitators need to be 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 should inspect all equipment, course components, and landing areas.

Indoor or outdoor artificial climbing walls and auto belay or harnessed indoor ropes courses are activities that do not incorporate an element of high risk and can be done by Brownies through Ambassadors. However, all ages must have appropriately sized harnesses. If no harness properly fits a child, that child cannot participate in climbing and/or rappelling. Daisies are not permitted to participate in climbing and rappelling.

The instructor-to-participant ratios are:

- **Bouldering and top roping:** one instructor to ten participants
- **Multi-pitch climbing:** one instructor (qualified lead climber) to three participants.

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.

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 take part in 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 should be appropriately spotted. For activities where partners are needed, instructors must match participants according to size and skill level, if appropriate. Instructors should supervise all tie-ins, belays, and climbs on climbing sites and spotting on bouldering sites.

Safety Gear

- Climbing helmets with the UIAA-approved label—worn for all outdoor natural climbing situations where the participant is more than 6 feet off the ground and by participants standing in the “fall zone” beneath a climbing element. Helmets are also required for belay, unless the hosting facility or instructor indicates the use of helmets is hazardous for belay.

- A disposable liner, such as a shower cap or surgical cap, to wear underneath the helmet to protect against the spread of head lice.
- A chest harness with a seat harness or a full-body harness, required for specific climbing or ropes activities.
- Sturdy shoes
- Close-fitting clothing—loose clothing should be avoided, especially around the head and neck.
- Portable drinking water
- Raingear, as necessary
- Long pants or bike pants are strongly recommended for activities involving potential skin abrasions on legs.

All equipment used for belaying, such as ropes, webbing, harnesses, hardware, and helmets, should be designed and tested for the purpose of this type of activity and appropriate for the size of the user.

Recreational Tree Climbing

Council Approval: Required.

Activity Permitted for: J C S A

About Recreational Tree Climbing

In recreational tree climbing, girls explore the beauty of living trees with guided facilitator support. Recreational tree climbers use ropes, harnesses, saddles, and climbing techniques to ascend into the crowns of trees and the canopies of forests. Care should be taken to keep climbers and trees safe.

Climbing may be done on branches that have at least 6 inches of living tissue. A full inspection of the health of the tree and surrounding area must be made.

Leave No Trace

While climbing in natural areas, it's important to respect the environment. Read tips from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.

The Global Organization of Tree Climbers has an interactive map to help you find tree-climbing programs.

Learn More:

- Tree Climbing USA: TreeClimbingUSA.com
- Leave No Trace

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. If visiting a national park, contact the park in advance. Ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Additional Resources:

Check out Disabled Sports USA to learn about adaptive climbing.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

- **Standard Safety Guidelines.** Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.
- **COVID-19 Guidelines.** Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.
- **Emergency Action Plan (EAP).** Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.
- **Choose a certified instructor.** The facilitator needs to have documented experience in leading and teaching tree climbing.
- **File required permits.**
- **Inspect equipment.** The instructor will inspect all equipment before each use. Equipment will be well-maintained. A use log will track wear, stress, and deterioration of gear. Outside professionals should periodically inspect all trees and equipment. A written process for equipment monitoring and retirement needs to be followed.
- **Ensure the instructor climbs all routes** before participants begin.

- **Ensure only instructors clip participants** in and out of the tie-in system.
- **Ensure a process for managing safety and performing rescues** is in place.
- **Ensure helmet-only areas are clearly designated** to protect participants and passersby from falling debris.
- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check a reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. Be prepared to alter the activity plan if weather conditions change. Participants must not climb when trees or gear are wet. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from all trees and other tall objects. 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.
- **Participants should receive instruction.** Instructors must describe the climb's objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants. Climbers learn:
  - Readiness and action commands
  - Muscle warmup and stretching techniques.
  - Safety procedures and site-specific hazards

Safety Gear

- Climbing equipment—such as ropes, webbing, harnesses, hardware, and helmets—designed for this purpose and appropriate for the size of the user.
- Climbing helmets worn by all participants who will be more than 6 feet off the ground or on belay; helmets must be approved by the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA)
- Sturdy shoes

Zip Lining

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: *D *B J C S A

Canopy Zip Line Tours are Not Permitted for: D B

***Daisies can *only* participate in Playground Zip Lines

About Zip Lining

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 zip lines include:

- **Playground zip lines:** 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.

- **Zip lines:** 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. Daisies are not permitted to participate in zip lines except for playground zip lines. In addition, check with the venue before arrival to determine their rules on age, height, and weight restrictions.
- **Canopy zip line tours:** These are guided aerial explorations or transits of the forest canopy, commonly done by a series of zip lines or aerial walkways with platforms. Canopy tours are not permitted for Daisies and Brownies. In addition, check with the venue before arrival as many have minimum age requirements as well as height and weight restrictions.

Site Selection. 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 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 zip lines as amusement rides.

Learn More:

- Association for Challenge Course Technology
- Professional Ropes Course Association
- Specifications Amusement Ride Safety Act

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 Physical Activity and Disability provides to people with disabilities. Some facilities may have specialized harnesses and a ramp (instead of stairs, a tower, or a wall) for people who use wheelchairs. Ensure that a member of the facility's staff has training and experience helping people with disabilities participate in zip lining. Note that some venues will not allow participation if a person has recent or recurring injuries, or muscular or skeletal disorders.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Arrange for transportation and adult supervision. Follow adult-to-girl ratios in the Safety Standards and Guidelines at the beginning of Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. An instructor with Association of Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) certification, or similar documented experience, is expected to have knowledge and experience setting stop ropes, tying required knots, assisting guests in proper harness and helmet fitting, demonstrating proper zipping techniques, operating the zip line 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. In addition, note that there is a regular process of review and update for all instructors.

Dress appropriately for the activity. Wear long pants or biker-type shorts, sturdy closed-toe athletic-type shoes, a helmet and a close-fitting top with sleeves. Do not wear dress shoes, sandals, water shoes, flip-flops, skirts, regular shorts, ponchos, or dangling jewelry of any kind.

All participants may be weighed and have their height measured before being issued zip lining equipment.

Girls learn about and prepare for zip lining. Instructors need to teach a set of readiness and action commands to all participants before beginning an activity. They must describe the objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants before beginning.

Prepare for landing. Zip-line participants should be provided with a hands-on walk-through 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 zip line course techniques. Zip-line participants should be provided with an explanation of what each piece of gear is used for. Harnesses are designed to support the human body from the hips, and hanging upside down is not permitted.

Safety Gear

- Helmet (must be supplied by the venue, girls do not zip line without helmets)
- Harness (will be supplied by the venue)

Community Clean Ups

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: See *Project Specific Guidelines below

About Community Clean-Ups

Community Cleanups can include Adopt-A-Highway programs, beach or river cleanups, park or natural area cleanups. They may be organized by the troop or be part of a community-wide service project. While doing this type of community service, you must be aware of the hazards and educate the girls and adults involved.

Note: Cleanups that are part of a larger sustainable project may qualify as a take-action project for the girls to complete a Journey.

Community Clean-ups: General Guidelines

- Always check: Permission may be required from the property owner or government agency.
- Hard sole, closed toe, and closed heel shoes are required.
- If cleanup is done in an area of vegetation higher than your shoes, long pants and long-sleeved shirts are required to protect against insects, hazardous plants, vegetation, etc.
- Adult watchers should have a communication plan using two-way radios or cell phones.
- All adult watchers must carry an emergency warning device, air horn, or whistle.
- An emergency action plan should be created for the event to include communication plans, and all participants should practice the plan before the cleanup.
- Clean-ups are planned during daylight hours, never at night. Light reflective gear is helpful even during daylight hours particularly on overcast days.
- Permission Forms: Cleanup projects require additional information included on permission forms. Parents must give expressed permission for the event ~~including~~ after having received specific instructions on the location and environmental conditions.
    - In the case of roadway clean-ups, the permission slip must also include how close to the roadway the girls will be working (for example, girls will work no closer than within 10 feet of the roadway's shoulder) as well as the time duration.

*Project Specific Guidelines

Beach cleanup (Daisies and above)

- Do not enter the water deeper than 6 inches without an adult trained in Basic Water Rescue or lifeguard present.
- Hard sole, closed toe and heel water shoe may be used in place of a regular shoe.

River or Water-Way clean-up (Brownies and above)

- Do not enter the water on rivers or waterways due to potential unstable bank conditions without a waterfront trained lifeguard present.
- Stay away from swift moving water.

Public Parks, Community Cleanups (Daisies and above)

- Call ahead to determine if any permissions or specific permits are necessary.
- Ensure the safety of the grounds and security of the area by choosing a location that is in a public space with human traffic activity (not remote).
- Do not enter any bodies of water such as lakes or large ponds without a waterfront trained lifeguard present.

Highway/Road - (Cadettes and above) Speed limits cannot exceed 40 mph. Participants cannot work in or around high-risk areas such as bridges, overpasses, medians, roundabouts, steep slopes.

- Contact the owner or government agency (such as the State Department of Transportation) for permission. Many states and local governments have specific guidelines and safety rules to follow. Some states have safety videos for highway cleanups.
- All participants should work facing traffic.
- All participants wear bright clothing or light reflective gear, especially on overcast days.
- Stay away from rural and winding two lane roads and highways.
- Adult watchers are safety observers at the event. They do not participate in cleaning the area; they observe the roadway and participants to identify hazards and activate emergency warnings to avoid danger.
- An adult watcher should stand ahead of the group facing traffic to flag cars to slow down. At least one adult watcher should be at the front and one at the back of the group. If the two adult watchers cannot keep each other in sight, additional adult watchers are required. Use of air horns should be considered to activate an emergency response.
- Adult watchers must carry an air horn as an emergency warning device.
- Use cones or large bright sign to indicate clean-up in progress.

Learn More:

Adopt-A-Highway: Contact your state Department of Transportation. Many have safety tips, rules and regulations or videos. If your state does not have specific laws concerning adopt-a-highway and community clean-ups, reference another state. For example, in Wisconsin:

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Adopt a Highway Safety
Wisconsin Department of Highway Safety Education

Understand that waste products on the side of the road and in parks have the potential to be hazardous or poisonous. Research what those may be. The below video is provided by the Colorado Department of Transportation.

Meth Lab Waste Recognition' Playing time: 7:52 video courtesy of Colorado Department of Transportation

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers about special needs and accommodations. Ensure state laws that are specific to children with special needs are adhered to. For example, the visual or hearing impaired may require very specific laws or guidelines. You may find more information here: Inclusion of persons with Disabilities in Service Days and Events

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

The emergency action plan should include:

- Communication plans.
- Adult/girl ratios apply for the number of girls participating.
- Required adult watchers are not included in the adult/girl ratio.
- Air Horns are required for use as an emergency warning device on roadways.

- Whistles or air horns may be used as emergency warning devices on beaches, parks, waterways, and other areas, not including roadways.
- Review of current COVID guidelines
- All girls and adults should know how to respond to an emergency warning device.

Girls should plan the activity. Encourage girls to plan where they want to go, their desired outcome, safety precautions, and how to deal with problems that may arise during the cleanup.

- Traffic
- Public interference
- Heat/cold stress
- UV radiation
- Severe weather
- Dangerous animals (snakes, foxes, alligators, jellyfish, etc.) dependent on the area you will be working in
- Stinging/biting insects
- Poisonous/toxic plants- poison ivy, poison oak, poison sumac, wild parsnip
- Where collected trash will be disposed, arrangements or permissions may be required.

Be sure girls and adults have a good understanding of potential hazardous waste they should not touch or pick up. Discuss this with them. Explain that if they see something, they should say something – to an adult. The below checklist provides examples of hazardous or dangerous materials:

- Abandoned barrels.
- Antifreeze
- Any container with a RADIOACTIVE label
- Any container with liquid including soda bottles.
- Broken automotive batteries.
- Bulging or dented containers
- Chemical containers
- Containers leaking an unknown substance.
- Containers of unidentifiable materials
- Dead animals, sea creatures
- Gas cans
- Hypodermic needles
- Unidentified liquids, powders, chemicals
- Narcotics
- Paint cans
- Pesticide/herbicide containers
- Sharp objects
- Unidentifiable containers
- Used oil.
- Weapons

Prompt girls to share resources. Encourage girls to distribute a list of safety gear and supplies, and to determine which resources can be shared.

Choose an appropriate area. Consider terrain, girl safety, public access, when choosing a location to cleanup. Work with local community groups that may offer clean up days as part of a larger community beautification project. Locations are restricted to a reasonable length as determined by age, nature of the terrain, physical condition of the girls, disabilities, weather conditions, and time of day. The location should always accommodate all girls.

Assess safety of the clean-up area. Safety of the girls is of outmost concern during a cleanup. Be aware of the public that girls may encounter when cleaning up, traffic and the potential hazards listed above. Consider extra safety precautions for areas where driver vision is restricted, such as curves in roads. Avoid areas with steep drop offs. Do not work or stand within 10 feet of the shoulder of the road. Follow all state Adopt A Highway safety rules when working along any roadsides. Ensure that the DOT (Department of Transportation), a land-management or similar agency is contacted during the planning stage to determine any restricted areas or if any permits are needed. First aider is required. 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.

Ensure that adults have a comprehensive understanding of the trip. Group members are trained to be observant of the area, surroundings, and fatigue of individuals. Instruction is given on the safety rules, 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 the safety precautions.

Permission Slips: Cleanup projects require additional information included on permission slips. Parents must give expressed permission for the event including specific instructions on the location and environmental conditions. In the case of roadway clean-ups, the permission slip must also include how close to the roadway the girls will be working (for example, girls will work no closer than within 10 feet of the roadway's shoulder).

Safety Gear

The gear you will need will depend on the clean-up project, location, and weather.

- A water bottle or hydration pack with enough water for each girl for the length of the clean up
- Face mask
- Sturdy footwear
- Sturdy gloves
- Safety vests
- Bright clothing
- Garbage bags
- Tongs (pick up tool)
- A working cell phone held by designated adult in case of emergencies.
- First Aid kit

Additional Safety roads and highways

- Safety cones or triangles to warn drivers of workers along the road or highway.
- Red Flags for adult watchers at front and back of the group
- Airhorn for each adult watcher

Computer and Internet Use

Council Approval: Not Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Computer and Internet Use

Girl Scouts use the internet for a variety of reasons such as:

- **Earn a technology award or other such award online.**
- **Research topics.** Girls can search for other Girl Scout council or group websites, or research a badge or community resource.
- **Visit Girl Scouting sites**. Girls can visit the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) online or member countries' websites. They can also use Girl Scout vendor websites to learn more about product activities.
- **Build a website.** Girls could create a static webpage on the internet (one that looks the same each time users view it, with no commenting or posting capabilities) or set up a secure, password-protected website with a calendar and information for girls and families.
- **Blog about Girl Scouting.** Groups that are planning a Take-Action project, road trip, or camping adventure can consider documenting their plans and experiences on a council or national blog, and divvy up the documentation duties (photography, writing, editing, and so on) among the group.
- **Sales.** Participate in online Scout product sales programs.

Adults should monitor websites that girls view, ensuring that they are safe and actively controlled. No girl or adult acting on behalf of girl members can conduct money-earning activities online with one exception: The GSUSA approved product sales programs. For more information, please see the safety activity checkpoints for Cookie and Product Sales.

Most girls will go online from their home computers, and older girls may access the internet on their mobile phones. For girls who cannot go online from home, check with your Girl Scout council for suggestions on sites where computers are available for use.

When planning a group learning session, identify locations—such a library, a Girl Scout program center, a school or college computer lab, a computer rental store with training facility, or a museum—that provides group members with opportunities to use computers and to access the internet.

Learn More:

- Girl Scouts of the USA
- Go Girls Only (for girls in grades 1–6)
- Stop, Think, Connect

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Copy and distribute the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge. This is available at the end of this chapter. All girls, as well as their parents/guardians, must read, agree to, and abide by the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge when going online.

Ensure girls' safety in website design. Girls must understand that the internet is an open means of communication that anyone can access. As such, websites 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 website. The following measures help to ensure girls' safety while online:

- Use only first names, and never last names.
- Never post addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses of girls.
- Always have a parent or guardian's permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is important for all girls, and special regulations apply for children younger than 13 years of age.
- Do not post addresses of group meeting places or dates and times of meetings, events, or trips. Instead, an adult who wishes to communicate about upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an email to the families.
- Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a website. All postings on sites such as message boards or guest books should have adult oversight and be screened prior to posting live.
- Ensure that websites do not show personal email addresses of girls but use a troop or group email or an adult's email address.

Be aware of shared content. When linking to other websites from your site, make sure site contents 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. Instead, seek out sites that support girls' participation in Girl Scouting. These sites should be tasteful and program-level appropriate. They should show diversity; be beneficial to girls, adults, and families; and be consistent with the mission of Girl Scouting. As a courtesy, consider emailing the site's webmaster for permission to link to the site.

Use similar criteria to determine which sites you support linking to your group's website.

Respect copyrighted material. The basic principle is, if it is not yours, don't use it. A group's website may not use copyrighted designs, text, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder.

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 Cadette, 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 and Ambassador interest project awards, names, and symbols; and all Girl Scout Journey insignia. Information on the use of GSUSA trademarks can be found on the national website under Girl Scout Central: Graphics Gallery, and under Terms and Conditions on the footer of each page of the national site.

Keep in mind that 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 website. Check with your council's website for complete graphic guidelines and approval information.

Note, too, that some names (such as commercial products and cartoon characters) are trademarked and cannot be incorporated on most websites. Permission is also required from the author or publisher for the use of videos and music on websites—so don't post words from 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.

A troop/group social networking site may be set up by groups whose girls are at least 13 years old and who have obtained parental permission to do so. In addition, all social networking sites (such as Facebook and Twitter) 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 appearance in a Girl Scout–related online video or picture requires 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.

Girls may only post about their participation in Girl Scout programs on social media sites that allow them to restrict access to friends and family, such as Facebook, and not to social media sites open to anyone, such as Craigslist or eBay.

Girls should only share links to their Girl Scout program sites with family, friends, and others they know firsthand.

As part of Girl Scout programs, girls may create their own unique websites to market and sell Girl Scout products. For example, with the Digital Cookie platform girls can take and track orders, set sales goals, and show how they will use the proceeds from cookie sales to support Girl Scout activities. Girls upload videos to their websites to help market the Girl Scout Cookie sale. To keep girls safe when they use their own websites, keep 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 website and be responsible for all content, communication, and information posted.
- Parents/guardians must review and approve any pictures and videos before they are posted to a girl's Digital Cookie website. If the girl is under 13 years old, a parent or guardian must personally post the pictures and videos to the girl's website themselves—girls under 13 are not permitted to do this.

Computer Internet Safety Pledge

Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge for All Girl Scouts

On my honor I pledge that,

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 other than what is specifically permitted and outlined in the safety guidelines related to Girl Scout product sales.

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

I will not spam or hack others.

I will not bully nor will I tolerate bullying (and I will always tell a trusted adult if this is a problem).

I will not use bad language.

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

The GSUSA Online Safety Pledge is based on the Online Safety Pledge developed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Virtual Troop Meetings

Council Approval: May Be Required

Activity Permitted for: D, B, J, C, S, A

Includes:
- About Virtual Troop Meetings
- Tips for a successful Troop Meeting
- Privacy and Safety

About Virtual Troop Meetings

Holding virtual troop meetings creates an array of new challenges and exciting opportunities to deliver a powerful Girl Scout experience into the lives of girls. As with all the special experiences that Girl Scouts offers, meeting virtually creates not only the ability for girls to get comfortable and tech savvy but to gain character, confidence, and courage by expressing themselves and learning leaderships skills to take them into the virtual world.

There are so many ways to encourage girls to learn and grow and experience life virtually. For every adventure that can be done in-person, there is another that can be shared and taught and experienced virtually. Adult volunteers will find it exciting and challenging to bring new experiences to girls through video troop meetings. Whether it be community service projects, outdoor adventures, cookie sales, badge work or STEM – there is a way for Girl Scouts to meet girls where they are and keep them connected.

Tips for a Successful Troop Meeting

You may have girls in your troop or group who are facing unique issues due to living in remote areas without internet access, or with limited access to technology, or other economic circumstances. Make certain to accommodate and include all girls, regardless of their issues, before moving forward with plans to go virtual.

Ensure that your troop utilizes a video conferencing service that is accessible on all types of devices. For example, you may need to stay away from Face Time because not everyone has an Apple brand phone (Face Time is only available on IOS). Also, the video program should work the same on a cell phone as it does on a laptop or tablet considering that girls may or may not have the same devices.

You may wish to prepare some fun and respectful protocols for girls to agree upon for their virtual meeting, and this is encouraged. For example, to speak in turn and not speak over each other. Think through your meeting and make some notes for the agenda with what you aim to accomplish during the time, a virtual meeting may flow differently than an in-person meeting.

Consider if your girls would like to dress a certain way to encourage and strengthen their sense of belonging. Some troops wear uniforms to their meetings and others may not. You may want to suggest having girls wear their vests for the virtual meeting to reinforce their camaraderie or have the girls vote on how they would like to show their Girl scout pride when meeting online.

Consider the grade level and age groups of the girls when planning virtual meetings. Be mindful of the meeting time(s) that are set or any other factors that may differentiate the context of a virtual meeting between younger and older girls.

Privacy and Safety

As with all aspects of technology, it is important to keep in mind that virtual troop meetings can be the target of unwanted intruders. This can mean either directly by interrupting or lurking in a live virtual meeting or, more covertly, using data behind the scenes in a manner that has not been authorized or made transparent. Do all that is possible to learn about the platforms being used to host virtual troop meetings. Choose platforms that are publicly recognized, reported about by others as favorable or transparent about the issues they may have experienced and the steps a company may be taking to protect users. Become knowledgeable about the terms of use and do not choose a company that you are unsure about, for any reason, without consulting your council for advice.

It is imperative to personally protect both adult volunteers and girls while holding virtual meetings and communications online. This can mean keeping personal background space invisible or obscured, keeping photos and images of girls secured from public viewing, keeping meeting lines set to private and making sure to protect personal email addresses or passwords and other situations that could compromise girl privacy or safety. Operate in a manner and with the knowledge that anything recorded or photographed or "saved" to a particular site may be misused in the future and stay away from that sort of situation by making educated choices. There is more on specific safety steps to follow below under Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Learn More:
There are many choices when it comes to free video conferencing services and countless skills one can learn online ranging from protecting your troop meeting to creating fun ways to interact with girls. Explore blogs and news articles to stay current and to enable you to make the best and safest selections for your virtual troop meetings. If you are unsure about something, always consult your council. Some examples are below:

- Protect Your Zoom Meeting from Hackers
- 10 Best Video Conferencing Tools to Choose From
- Tips for Chatting with Young Children Online

Include Girls with Disabilities

Hosting or leading virtual meetings provides a unique opportunity to increase inclusion in new ways. Communicate with girls with disabilities and their caregivers on how to best manage their participation in virtual meetings. Once underway, virtual meetings can provide a new way for all girls to have a voice and input in the meeting, potentially drawing in those girls who are shy or hesitant or less apt to either attend in person or speak up in a face-to-face meeting. Some girls may enjoy the chat feature, for example, where they can become more comfortable expressing themselves.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Have girls to take the Internet Safety Pledge to teach, encourage and support web safety and respectful "net-iquette" while on line. Review the Computer and Internet Use safety activity checkpoints Computer and Internet Use with girls.

Make sure that the adult volunteer troop leader(s) are still co-leading the virtual meeting and are the person(s) initiating and doing the inviting to the virtual troop meeting. This is especially important for girls under the age of 13 however should be practiced always, with all girls in Girl Scouts.

Be sure to research the video conference service prior to selecting and implementing an appropriate video conference service provider as a virtual troop meeting host. Be sure use to read and understand the terms of use of the selected platform. Also learn about the privacy guidelines and precautions that are available concerning the platform prior to implementing your virtual troop meeting.

Make sure the virtual lines are set to private so that only invitees can attend (not a public meeting space). Do not share signup links so that anyone can join. Instead, invite people individually.

Make sure that there is nothing on the virtual stream that identifies a girl or volunteer personally or reveals a personal address, home address, or a person's physical location. To further protect privacy of personal space, there is typically an option to obscure the background in the room, if that is helpful. Girls can also pick fun nicknames to identify themselves on the meeting attendee list or use their first name only. Let girls know about these options so that they can learn about them.

Continue to adhere to the two unrelated adult volunteer rule when gathering with girls virtually, whenever possible. It is important that girls understand they are in the same safe Girl Scout space as they are with in-person meetings. They are cared for and they still have two dedicated unrelated adults who they can count on.

Maintain control of images shared. Set meeting controls so that you can mute or disable screen sharing by any participant. Make sure your co-leader knows how to do the same. If an unauthorized person enters your meeting space, take action to remove them immediately.

Do not record troop meetings and ask that girls do not record troop meetings. Some virtual meeting platforms offer a consent option for all participating members prior to activating the recording feature; however, most girls will be minors and are not of the age to legally consent, so recording of regular recurring troop meetings is not permitted. If girls want to prepare a special recording session, make sure to obtain permission slips from each girl's legal guardian, as with any special activity, as well as council staff approval to record the session. Also please be aware that some virtual meeting platforms have the capability to save, store, and can potentially re-use, recordings on their technology.

Make sure that girls know that screen shots taken of the group, particularly when all the girls involved are not aware that it is happening, are strongly discouraged. Girls love to take pictures and share them on social media. When done in the right manner, this is a fun and safe thing to do. However, parents, guardians and caregivers have their own feelings and personal rules in their homes about photographs and social media, particularly with younger girls, so it is very important to be respectful of that. Also, as with recording meetings, note that some virtual meeting applications will save, and can potentially re-use, photographs taken on their technology.

When sharing any material developed by a third party, be mindful that third party products and services may have their own terms of use and privacy policy. The user should always read through, understand abide by third party terms of use.

Be sure that any girl emails are not available to anyone but the Troop leader. It is important to protect against unauthorized, uncleared individuals having access to a girl's email or be able to contact her outside of the meeting in any manner.

Keep up with developments on online meeting safety.

Cookie and Product Sales

Council Approval: Not Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Cookie Sales

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led business in the United States. 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, 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.

Learn More:

- About Girl Scout Cookies: Girl Scouts of the USA
  - Select companies are licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce official Girl Scout products for girls to sell. These companies are selected by councils and contracted for one to three years. They include: Little Brownie Bakers and ABC Bakers, for cookies and Ashdon Farms and Trophy Nut for Fall Product
  - Companies that offer magazine subscription programs approved by GSUSA: QSP/GAO, M2 Media Group (each provides online tools and activities for download; magazine selection and sales may take place online—check with your council for more details)

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the “Standard Safety Guidelines” section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the “Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts” section under the “Standard Safety Guidelines” (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council’s specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Sell in a designated area. Girl Scouts should observe council jurisdiction (by zip code) when marketing and selling products in person or at a cookie booth. With the Digital Cookie® platform, 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 GSUSA's council finder. Girl Scouts should observe council jurisdictions when selling cookies at 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 regarding setting up, manning, and taking down a booth must be followed. See below for additional information.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness. **Arrange for adult supervision.** Adults should provide supervision and guidance for all program levels, and must accompany Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors when they are selling, taking orders, and delivering products. Adults oversee 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 need to be present at booth activities with girls at any program level.

Girls learn and practice personal protection skills such as:

- Advising an adult of each step and involving an adult in the process by exchanging telephone numbers and/or copying the adult on emails for product orders, returns, disputes, or complaints.
- Never giving out their phone numbers or personal email addresses
- Ensuring a first aid kit is available at a booth sale or product sale "walk-about".
- Ensuring immediate telephone access to an adult and/or 911 as part of the emergency plan for Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

Prepare for cookie and product sales with Daisies. Daisies participate in product sales but always under the direct supervision of an adult. Materials provided by GSUSA for Daisies focus on engaging girls in selling to their circle of friends—only people they know, including neighbors, social groups, and family.

Respect Girl Scout trademarks. As noted previously, "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 these terms must be addressed to the Girl Scout council or trademarks@girlscouts.org.

Remember, the Girl Scout name and other terms trademarked by GSUSA, 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 program (e.g., product program). These rights are not transferable to customers or businesses purchasing cookies for use with gifting or promotional activities.

Know what's in the cookie. Read nutritional and health information on product description sheets provided by the vendors annually or check their websites. Girls should be able to discuss

serving size, nutritional makeup, and allergen information. Read additional nutrition information at Girl Scout Cookies. Additionally, recycling information is provided on product containers.

On the Day of a Sale:

- 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 during daylight hours only.
- When Girl Scouts operate a booth in a store, mall, or other public place, adults must be present 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-through 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.

With booth sales, ensure:

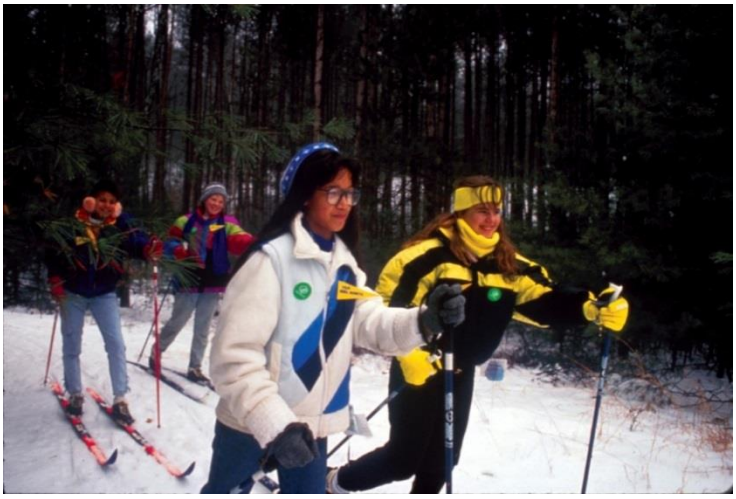
- You have adequate space at the booth for tables, products, and girls that allows for safe passage by pedestrians, bikes, and cars.
- Girls are a safe distance from cars. If possible, set up a safety barrier between cars and the booth—perhaps a few volunteers could park their cars in spaces near the booth location.
- The booth is not blocking a store entrance or exit.
- When girls receive cash from buyers and go to make change, they 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.
    - Depositing cash as soon as possible to prevent potential thefts or break-ins of vehicles.

Safe Online Marketing. Girls participating in traditional cookie sales may call and send email messages to alert friends and family to product sales and accept customer commitments via email or telephone. Girls who are 13 or older may use social networking sites to market products but must follow council and GSUSA guidelines. Girls sending out product emails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name, and their council's name. Personal emails 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 that provided by our product sales partners, where girls' names and personal email addresses are not revealed to customers.
- A group account monitored by an adult.

- An adult email account supervised by an adult.

Digital Cookie® Platform. Read, understand, and comply with the “Computer and Internet Use” safety activity checkpoints.



Cross Country Skiing

Council Approval: May Be Required

**Activity Permitted for: ***D B J C S A

Activity Not Recommended For:
***Daisies**

About Cross-Country Skiing

Also referred to as Nordic, and XC skiing, cross-country is a form of skiing where skiers rely on their own locomotion to move across snow covered terrain, rather than using ski lifts or other forms of assistance. Unlike downhill skiing, in which the entire boot is attached to the ski, only the toe of the cross-country boot is attached to the ski. *Cross-country skiing is not recommended for Daisies due to the more complex nature of the cross-country ski and the fact that young girls will typically not learn with ski poles - which means it may be far more difficult for an adult volunteer to coral and manage a group of Daisies for this activity. Daisies may find it too labor intensive and not enjoyable which is why it is not recommended. However, while cross country skiing is not recommended for Daisies it is permitted, so councils located in regions where cross-country skiing with young children is common and typical, it is permitted.

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 provides information about cross-country skiing trails.

Learn More:

- Cross Country Ski Areas Association
- National Ski Patrol
- XC Ski World

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the ski instructor in advance. Ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Instruction is given by an adult with experience teaching and/or supervising cross-country skiing for the ages involved, or has documented experience, according to your council's guidelines.

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 should be known to all group members. When a latrine is not available, individual cat holes located at least 200 feet away from water sources should be used to dispose of human waste.

Map the course. The route should be marked on a map.

Designate a meeting spot. Before skiing, designate a meeting place where girls can contact a supervising adult.

Recover from a fall. The act of hoisting back up while wearing skis can be a cumbersome process. Have girls learn how to get back up on their skis.

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 should be 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 must be 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.

Follow cross-country ski-safety standards. Ski area rules are explained and observed:

- Girls should ski under control to avoid other skiers and objects.
- Girls must yield the right-of-way to those already on the trail. They step to the side to let the faster skier pass. A descending skier has the right of way.
- A faster skier should indicate her desire to pass by calling “track, please.”
- Girls do not ski close to the edge of an embankment or a cliff.
- Girls must not walk on ski trails.

Safety and Required Gear

- Skis
- Ski poles
- Boots
- Water-resistant gloves or mittens
- Heavy insulating socks
- A winter hat.
- Thermal underwear or long johns (as necessary)
- Sunglasses or ski goggles to protect eyes from glare.
- A water bottle.
- High-energy food (such as fruits and nuts)
- A daypack to carry personal belongings.

Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

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 describes various ski levels, which range from first-time beginner to expert.

With the appropriate instructors, equipment, and hills/levels, Daisies are permitted to participate in skiing and snowboarding.

Note: Even experienced girls are not permitted to do aerial tricks on skis or snowboards.

Learn More:

- Professional Ski Instructors of America and American Association of Snowboard Instructors: The Snow Pros
- National Ski Patrol
- U.S. Ski and Snowboard
- Locate ski resorts by region: ABC of Snowboarding

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about specific needs and accommodations. Call ahead to the ski and snowboard resort about accommodating people with disabilities—most are extremely accommodating and offer specialized instructors and trails. You can even ask to speak to an instructor ahead of time.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific

COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Be in shape. Participants get in condition by stretching and exercising before the skiing or snowboarding trip. Skiing takes endurance and balance, so be in shape!

Learn how to ride ski lifts. This includes line courtesy, loading and unloading, and emergency procedures.

Observe the basics. Ski and snowboard under control. Participants should ski responsibly, and not beyond their ability level. All rules of the ski area must be explained, learned, and followed.

Stay on trails. Do not ski off-trail or in an unmarked or closed area.

Be aware of terrain. Avoid objects and obstacles, such as trees, rocks, growth coming up under thin snow coverage, and melted puddles, which can occur in spring or during fluctuating weather.

Understand right-of-way protocol. Make others aware before you turn. Yield the right-of-way to those already on the slope. Do not cross the path of skiers.

Prepare for falls. Move quickly to the side of the trail or slope after falling, unless injured.

Summon the ski patrol if a skier is injured. They are usually dressed in red.

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. Review the trail maps before hitting the slopes.

Know where the Medical Clinic at the mountain is located.

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 ages involved.

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. Plan for a nutritious, high-energy snack, and provide beverages 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.

Ensure emergency transportation. Make sure 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 winter wilderness first-aid experience.

Safety and 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 glare.
- Insulated water-resistant gloves or mittens.
- Insulating socks and thermal underwear
- Sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 and lip balm for snow glare protection
- Windproof and waterproof ski jacket and pants

Fencing

Council Approval: May Be Required

Activity Permitted For: B J C S A

About Fencing

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 objective 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, 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. Daisies can learn about fencing games and the rules of fencing but should use only foam (mock) swords, as the balance and hand-eye co-ordination needed to fence are not sufficiently well developed at this age.

Learn More:

- U.S. Fencing Association: USA Fencing
- U.S. Fencing Coaches Association: USFCA
- International Fencing Federation: International Fencing Federation
- Fencing 101: USA Fencing

Include Girls with Disabilities

Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Research relevant resources provided for people with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult needs to be a certified fencing instructor or have equivalent certification, or documented experience, in accordance with your council's guidelines. Ensure that there is a ratio of one instructor for every ten girls. Fencing is always well supervised and appropriate to age, skill level, and endurance.

Note: The instructor-to-participant ratio is not the same as the adult-to-girl ratio in "Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*." Both ratios should be complied with when girls are participating in fencing.

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others. Ensure that swords are appropriate to the age, size, strength, and ability of the girls.

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, look for organized fencing companies or organizations. Call the facility ahead of time to determine accommodations for children, and what ages they have experience with.

Always keep the sword pointed in a safe direction. This is an important rule of fencing. A safe direction means that the sword is pointed away from yourself and other persons, leaning it downward when walking or resting, or anytime when not jousting. Maintain control of the sword, always.

Ensure that equipment to be used is in good condition. Make sure that the equipment is clean and in good working order and that nothing is broken or loose. Check that the épée or foil handles and/or wrist and arm guards are in good repair.

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.

Review rules and expectations. The instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand.

Safety and Required Gear

- Foils, sabers, or epées
- Fencing glove
- 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

Fishing and Ice Fishing

Council Approval: May Be Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Fishing and Ice Fishing

Fishing (also referred to as "angling") is a sport, a leisurely activity, and a major food industry, depending on who you ask. In the United States, freshwater fishing is more popular than

saltwater fishing, and varieties include fly fishing, ice fishing, and match fishing. The best times of day to fish depend on a variety of factors, such as amount of sunlight, temperature, depth of water, and wind. In general, however, the best times are early in the morning or in the mid-evening.

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 the 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. Overall, lakes and ponds tend to be best. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Consult state ice angler associations for information about ice fishing events and resources.

Fishing teaches respect for fish and wildlife. Whenever possible, use barbless hooks, and return live fish to water.

Learn More:

- All things fishing: Take Me Fishing
- American Sportfishing Association
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- International Game Fish Association
- U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division
- Leave No Trace
- Video about ice fishing: YouTube
- Minimizing fishing's impact on the environment: Seafood Watch

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 Fishing Has No Boundaries.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout

gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Make sure you've got the right life jackets. 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.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Ensure that the adult or 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 1:10. Consider additional adult watchers for groups that are more scattered and/or not clearly visible at all times.

See the "Offshore Water Vessel" safety activity checkpoints for deep sea fishing trips or any chartered boat fishing trip.

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.

Verify safety of ice-fishing location. Ensure that ice is solid and thick enough to support the ice fishers' weight. Opinions vary about the appropriate thickness of ice for fishing. Generally, the thickness should be between 4 and 6 inches. Your local department of natural resources can provide help. The Department of Natural Resources of the State of Minnesota also provides guidelines for ice thickness. Once arriving at a 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 2 feet thick in one place and 1 inch thick a few yards away. Assess the ice depth at least every 150 feet. Read more on ice-fishing safety.

Know where to find first aid. 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 should be practiced. Appropriate rescue equipment needs to be on hand (for example: ring buoy, rope, throw bag, pole, ladder, and—where necessary—boat).

Safety requirements vary:

- **From a dock:** Fishing from a dock requires the presence of a first aider with American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue certification. The ratio of adult watchers to participants is one to ten, except for Daisies where the ratio is one to six. Additional adult watchers are necessary for groups that are spread out or out of direct sight.
- **Wading above the knee:** Fishing while wading, above knee-deep requires the presence of a first aider with American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue certification. Ensure that all girls and adults wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III). The ratio of adult watchers to participants is one to ten, except for Daisies where the ratio is one to six. Additional adult watchers are necessary for groups that are spread out or out of direct sight.
- **Wading below the knee:** When fishing from a shoreline or while wading (up to knee-deep), the presence of a first aider with American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue is recommended, but not required. However, Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices or other water rescue equipment must be provided. The ratio of adult watchers to participants is one to ten, except for Daisies where the ratio is one to six. 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 one to ten, except for Daisies, where the ratio is one to six. Additional adult watchers are necessary for groups that are spread out or out of direct sight.

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.

Remove fishing gear, bait, and any dead fish at the end of the fishing activity.

Safety Gear for General Fishing

- 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.
- If girls are wading in water more than knee-deep or fishing from a boat, ensure that each girl and adult wears a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III)
- Tools for removing hooks and cutting lines.
- Layered, non-cotton clothing that is easily changeable depending on temperatures (waterproof jacket recommended)
- Boat shoes, closed toe and non-slip hiking/sport sandals with heel strap, water socks, or shoes (no flip-flops)
- 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 Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water.
- Fishing net

Safety Gear for Ice Fishing

- 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); read about augers and other equipment
- 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) immediately available for each group on the water
- Flashlight and lantern
- Cooler for storing fish (if intended for consumption)
- Shanty (optional)
- Ice sled for pulling equipment (optional)
- First Aid Kit

Ice Safety Quiz

Please read information from both the Minnesota and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website on ice safety. Then take the quiz below and submit to your council.

Ice Safety - MN Department of Natural Resources

Ice Safety - WS Department of Natural Resources

True or False:

1. _____ Booming and Cracking ice is very dangerous.
2. _____ Ice freezes uniformly. If the ice is 12 inches thick in one area of the lake, then it is 12 inches thick everywhere else.
3. _____ New clear ice is safest, strongest ice.
4. _____ If you fall through, you should remove your winter clothes immediately in the water to help keep you afloat.
5. _____ Ice, six inches thick, can support a pick-up truck.

6. _____ A ladder can be used to assist someone who has fallen through.
7. _____ Ice claws are simple to make at home and a very convenient tool to help yourself get out of the water.
8. _____ If you were to fall through, you should swim away from where you came from, since that ice must be very thin.
9. _____ It is recommended to wear a life jacket underneath a winter coat while on the ice.
10. _____ Cold blood can linger in your arms and legs and suddenly rush to your heart and cause cardiac distress.

Short Answer:

1. Where can you find information about lake conditions?
2. What are some ways to measure the thickness of the ice?
3. What are some items that you should always bring with you out onto the ice?
4. What 5 ways can you assist someone exiting the lake after breaking through?
5. After someone falls through and they successfully exit the water, how would you treat them for hypothermia?

Geocaching

Council Approval: Not Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

Note: Daisies are permitted when working with older girls and adults as part of another outdoor activity.

About Geocaching

Geocaching is a recreational outdoor activity that centers on the use of a global positioning system (GPS) device and maps. Geocachers seek out caches (waterproof containers containing logbooks, and/or trinkets) 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 to select cache locations and communicate with other geocachers.

Connect with your Girl Scout council to see if there are caches on council sites. When on private or government property, follow all posted rules, guidelines, and etiquette. Geocaching routes should outline locations that are prohibited for placing a cache, so check for those.

“Cache in, trash out” is the motto when practicing Leave No Trace—geocachers are encouraged to leave caching sites cleaner than they found them and pick up garbage left by others. Geocachers are invited to participate in International Cache In Trash Out events, which are worldwide cleanup efforts.

Finding a benchmark is key to geocaching. Using a GPS device or directions provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Geodetic Survey (NGS), you can seek out NGS survey markers and other items that have been marked in the United States. Learn more.

Girls develop skills about GPS use, latitude, longitude, and reading maps based on grade level. Ideally, each girl uses her own GPS device, or two to three girls can share one. When more than three participants share a GPS device, it becomes more difficult for girls to actively participate in the geocaching activity. 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.

Learn More:

- Official global GPS cache site
- Navicache
- Terracaching

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations.

Additional Resources:

See HandiCaching.com to find out about geocaching for people of all abilities.

Equity

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Safety Activity Checkpoints

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a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Girls should learn and understand terrain difficulty ratings. As appropriate for their grade level, girls can plan or have input about where to cache and which caches to locate by reading descriptions of the caches as well as ratings about difficulty and terrain. Explain about the terrain of a geocaching site by learning about the Difficulty/Terrain (D/T) Rating ahead of time.

The ratings, which range from 1/1 to 5/5, measure the level of difficulty for finding a cache and for navigating the terrain to the cache. A terrain rating of one typically means the cache is accessible for people with disabilities.

Dress appropriately for the activity. Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in underbrush in wilderness areas. Make sure footwear is appropriate to the location(s) in which you will be geocaching.

Be on lookout for sharp edges, branches, cliffs, animals, or insects or anything that may pose a safety hazard or detour for the group. Be sure to practice Leave No Trace while geocaching so as not to disturb wildlife, trample vegetation, or cross onto private property. Carry out all garbage and discard, as appropriate.

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.

Safety Gear

The gear you will need depends on the length of your trip, the location, and weather.

- GPS device
- Compass (for emergencies if going to an unknown or wilderness area)
- Map (for emergencies if going to an unknown or wilderness area)
- Cache coordinates/details uploaded to the GPS device or written out
- First-aid kit
- A working cell phone for emergencies (carried by an adult) or a specific backup plan
- Whistle for wilderness areas
- Clothing appropriate for the activity and weather
- Reusable water bottle

- Swag (or “stuff we all get”), which are 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 if going to an unknown area.
- Daypack to carry personal belongings.
- Hiking boots for wilderness areas or comfortable and sturdy walking shoes for urban environments

Go-Karting

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: J C S A

Note: Go-karts that are privately owned or used for racing are not permitted.

About Go-Karting

This checkpoint applies to “concession” go-karts, which are those found at amusement parks or other public facilities with one driver and no more than one passenger. Girl Scouts may participate in go-kart activities that are on a rail system (such as those that are an amusement park ride). They must follow the weight and height restrictions set by the facility. Go-karts that are privately owned or used for racing are not permitted.

Currently 44 out of 50 states regulate amusement parks. The six without state oversight are Alabama, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, Wyoming, and Utah. These states contain few, if any, amusement parks. (Wyoming, for example, has no parks.)

Safety Activity Checkpoints

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Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Choose locations deemed legal and safe by state and local authorities and that meet council approval.

Verify that all the facility's karts with two seats have them arranged side-by-side with separate safety belts for each seat and that all karts are built and maintained to manufacturer's specifications.

All karts must be governed to a predetermined speed (not to exceed 25 miles per hour) per ASTM standards.

All karts must have:

- Passenger padding in place, with everything in good condition (seat bottom, seatback, steering wheel, headrest, steering column)
- Rollover protection
- Chain and/or belt guards
- Properly guarded/shielded hot and or moving parts.
- Gas caps and all components in place and in proper working condition
- Fuel tanks properly secured with no leaks.
- No fiberglass laceration hazards.

Safety, warning, and instructional signage must be highly visible, in good repair, and appropriately placed, and must note exposure risk. In addition, a maintenance program should be in effect for the go-karts, a minimum of two attendants should be on the track during operations, and no bumping or reckless driving shall be permitted.

The track must have:

- A continuous containment system around the entire track except for the pit entrance, and exit
- Minimum of a 10-pound BC-rated fire extinguisher, properly mounted, marked, charged, and easily accessible to the pit attendants.
- Within 70 feet of any point on the track, a minimum of a 10-pound BC-rated fire extinguisher must be properly mounted, marked, charged, and accessible.
- Entire perimeter restricts unauthorized access to track area.
- Brake and gas controls return automatically and are properly labeled or color coded.

Safety 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
- Any loose articles of clothing secured.
- Long hair tied back or secured.

On the Day of Go-Karting:

Dress appropriately. Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment.

Practice safe go-kart procedures. Girls should not ram or bump into other go-karts.

Hayrides

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Hayrides

A hayride, also known as a hayrack ride, is a traditional American and Canadian activity consisting of a recreational ride in a wagon or cart pulled by a tractor, horses, or a truck, which has been loaded with hay or straw for comfortable seating. Hayrides originated with farm workers, including children, who rode loaded hay wagons back to barns for unloading. It was one of the few times during the frenetic days of the haying season that workers could stop to rest.

Hayrides are a fun and enjoyable activity for girls of all ages who are visiting a farm and the rides are often part of other autumn festivities such as apple or pumpkin picking. Hayrides on Halloween are often dubbed “haunted hayrides.” These hayrides sometimes incorporate special effects and actors portraying ghosts, monsters, and other spooky creatures to attract thrill seekers and capitalize on the Halloween season.

Although the fact that hayrides are typically regarded as a safe and lighthearted activity, there have been incidents where hayrides have flipped or veered off the road, resulting in terrible consequences. Therefore, it is very important to follow the safety precautions and learn as much as you can about hayride safety ahead of time.

Learn More:

- On farm and dairy hayride safety: Safe Agritourism
- Hayride safety checklist: Safe Agritourism

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about any special needs and accommodations. See what potential accommodations can be made to include all girls.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl’s ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Assess the safety of the hayride, the vehicle, and the cab. See hayride safety links provided above.

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COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Consider the location. The hayride must take place on sectioned off property (such as fields) intended for hayride use at a maximum speed of 10 miles per hour. Public roads and highways are not used.

Girls do not ride on tractors. The tractor or vehicle pulling the hay wagon must weigh more than the gross weight of the heaviest wagon in tow, which is necessary for adequate traction and braking.

Evaluate the wagon. Ensure that the wagon has sturdy steps and handrails for easy loading and unloading of passengers. The wagon should have railings and seating. The cab walls should be 3 to 4 feet high.

Evaluate the driver. A qualified driver who is licensed to drive a vehicle in the jurisdiction and is an adult at least 21 years of age. Legally adult age is 18, however based on the experience and maturity level needed for this activity, 21 years of age is required to provide enough years of experience controlling the vehicle while hauling a trailer with child passengers.

The hauled vehicle is in good working order. It must meet 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.

Assess the safety of the hayride site. 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.

Girls learn about and practice safe hayrides. Girls do not ride in the hauling vehicle. The hauled vehicle meets all state and local safety requirements and displays proper identification showing these conditions have been met. 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 with no leaning over the edges, and legs and arms do not hang over the trailer. Girls are to remain securely seated.

Adults accompany girls on the hayride meet the grade level–specific adult-to-girl ratios.

Make sure the farm has adequate commercial insurance that covers the hayrides for hire in the amount of no less than one million dollars Auto Liability insurance.

Hiking

Council Approval: Not Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Hiking

Unlike short walks, hiking may involve lengthy, back-country walking trips and often requires sturdy boots to provide traction on rocks and uneven trail beds. When practicing Leave No Trace skills while hiking, 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.

Hiking is the ideal opportunity for girls to learn and practice map and compass skills. 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. You can always check with your local, state, or national park for interesting and exciting trail ideas.

Note: For overnight hiking experiences, follow the guidance in the "Backpacking" or "Travel and Camping" safety activity checkpoints.

Learn More:

- Make an emergency survival kit: REI
- Locate hiking areas near U.S. metropolitan areas: All Trails
- American Hiking Society
- Leave No Trace

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. If visiting a national park, contact the park in advance to ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

See Disabled Sports USA to find out about hiking for people of all abilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

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Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Girls should plan the activity. Encourage girls to plan routes, activities, and guidelines for dealing with problems that may arise with other groups of hikers.

Prompt girls to share resources. Encourage girls to distribute a list of hiking gear and supplies, and to determine which resources can be shared. Be sure girls and adults have a good understanding of how to practice the Leave No Trace principles on the hike.

Choose an appropriate hiking route. Terrain, mileage, and hiking time should be 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 must always accommodate the slowest hiker.

Assess safety of hiking routes. The route needs to be 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, recommended group size, water quantity and quality, and which permits are 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, practicing Leave No Trace, 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.

Respect the environment and keep trails clean. Use the principles of Leave No Trace. Carry out food and all trash. Hike on established trails. 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 should be given on the safety rules for hiking, which include forbidding hiking off the trail and after dusk. Girls should stay on the pathway to avoid trampling trailside plants and causing erosion. In addition, be sure to take adequate rest periods with time to replenish fluids and eat high-energy food (such as fruits and nuts). Girls must take proper precautions in areas where poisonous plants, snakes, or ticks are prevalent.

Safety Gear

The gear you will need will depend on the length of your trip, the location, and weather.

- A water bottle or hydration pack with enough water for each girl for the length of the hike
- Sturdy footwear based on the type of trails and length of the hike.
- Map and compass or GPS device
- Flashlight, whistle, pocket-knife.
- A working cell phone held by designated adult for emergencies.
- An emergency survival kit

Horseback Riding

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: *D B J C S A

*Daisies are only permitted for pony rides and hand-led horseback walks.

About Horseback Riding

Horseback riding teaches girls responsibility, patience, discipline, understanding, empathy, compassion, problem solving, and self-control. It allows girls to see the world from a different perspective (on top of a horse!) and can build their confidence and self-esteem. One of the most important aspects of horseback riding is showing respect for horses.

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.

Learn More:

- American Camp Association
- Certified Horsemanship Association
- United States Pony Clubs
- Horse Channel
- Think Like a Horse

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. See Disabled Sports USA to learn more about equipment, adaptations, and finding a program near you.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

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Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

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, 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 experience successfully instructing in a general horseback riding program.

Riders are supervised by instructors or assistant instructors 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 ten 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 more instructors may be needed.

Connect with your Girl Scout council for approved sites or site suggestions. The stable operator should be able to confirm one million dollars General Liability insurance and instructor certifications upon request. It is recommended that you request a certificate of insurance to document evidence of the insurance coverage, most facilities will accommodate this request if they are able to administratively.

Assess participants' maturity level. Girls must possess sufficient physical coordination and balance to participate in riding. They need to be 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. Check with council staff to see if an approved vendor list is offered. If the council does not have an approved vendor list, call the facility to determine the following safety information in order to select a safe site.

Check the 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, etc.) is clean and in good condition.

Talk to the staff. 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, or in sandals. They should wear boots or closed-toe shoes with a smooth sole and at least a half-inch heel to prevent feet from sliding through stirrups. Riders should not wear backpacks, day packs, or fanny packs.

Ensure girls learn about safe horseback riding. A pre-ride demonstration should be 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 should attend an introductory safety lesson, including information on horse psychology and behavior and approaching, handling, and leading a horse. Before trail riding, all riders should warm up in a ring or corral to ensure that they are well suited to their horses and can control the gait and function required during the trail ride. Ensure that riders feel confident and demonstrate basic skills in controlling the horse (stop, start, steer) and maintaining proper distance.

Follow basic horseback safety standards. To ensure gear fits properly and/or is properly adjusted, an instructor should make a safety check of each rider's clothing, footwear, helmet, and saddle. He or she needs to check stirrup length to ensure that riders can 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 should also check the safety of the riding area before each session. Only one rider is allowed on a horse at any time, and there should be no eating or drinking while riding. Riders should dismount before going through small gates.

Respect ring- or corral-riding standards. Each horse and rider should be continuously watched by the trainer, always. The riding ring has good footing for the horses and is free of dangerous obstructions. The fencing must be at least 42 inches high, visible, and well maintained. Gates to the ring should remain shut.

Inspect and do not 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, have an adult calmly attempt to retrieve the horse.

Respect trail-riding standards. The length of the trail ride and the gait of the horses should be geared to the ability of the least experienced rider. Riding trails should have good footing and be free of dangerous obstructions, such as low hanging branches. Trails are marked, mapped, regularly inspected, and maintained. The participants should ride single file, one full-horse length apart, with an instructor at the head and at the rear of the group. Riders must have control of horses, maintain the spacing between horses, and increase distances between horses when the horses' speed increases. Horses are to be walked (not ridden) up and down hills and should be walked for the final ten minutes of any riding period to cool down.

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

Safety Gear

- Protective headgear with a 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 that is not too loose to prevent tangling with the 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).
- A saddle (sized appropriately for each rider), which the facility will provide.
- Extra halter/lead ropes carried by instructor, which the facility will provide.
- Cell phone or walkie-talkies to communicate need for emergency services.
- 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.
- Well-fitting gloves to protect hands from blisters, rope burns, and cuts.

- Saddlebag for lengthy trail rides, to carry items such as a water bottle, clothing layers, and lunch

Ice Skating and Roller Skating

Council approval:
Not Required - for indoor / rink skating
May Be Required - for skating on frozen lakes.

Activity Permitted for: D, B, J, C, S, A

About Skating

Roller and ice skating are much-loved Girl Scout activities. They are also a very common activity for injuries and insurance claims, so always plan ahead and stress safety. Indoor skating, whether ice skating or roller skating will most likely not required a helmet. If the facility offers safety gear, including helmets or wrist guards, always opt to take the safety gear for girls. Always check with your council for prior approval for outdoor ice skating and roller skating - especially when planning to ice skate on frozen lakes.

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. Girls skate at night only in well-lit areas. For skating on frozen lakes, always select a site designated for skating and confirm temperature and ice conditions are safe for skating. Prior approval from your councils is required for skating on frozen lakes.

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.

Equity. In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety 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)

Recommended Gear

- Wrist guards that fit like gloves
- Clothing that allows freedom of movement
- Long-sleeve shirt to help prevent scrapes.
- Snug-fitting elbow pads and kneepads

Safety Activity Checkpoints

- **Standard Safety Guidelines.** Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

- **COVID-19 Guidelines.** Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

- **Emergency Action Plan (EAP).** Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.
- **Select a safe 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.
- **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.
- **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.

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.
- Skaters do not wear headphones while skating.
- Loose or sharp articles, such as handbags, combs, and keys are not carried onto the rink.
- Roller Skating Association International: Roller Skating Association
- 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 Skating Techniques Moves include the wall stop, the brake-pad and the snowplow.
- For frozen lake skating, take the Ice Safety Quiz (also used for Ice Fishing) below:

Ice Safety Quiz

Please read information from both the Minnesota and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website on ice safety. Then take the quiz below and submit to your council.

Ice Safety - MN Department of Natural Resources

Ice Safety - WS Department of Natural Resources

True or False:

1. _____ Booming and Cracking ice is very dangerous.
2. _____ Ice freezes uniformly. If the ice is 12 inches thick in one area of the lake, then it is 12 inches thick everywhere else.
3. _____ New clear ice is safest, strongest ice.
4. _____ If you fall through, you should remove your winter clothes immediately in the water to help keep you afloat.
5. _____ Ice, six inches thick, can support a pick-up truck.
6. _____ A ladder can be used to assist someone who has fallen through.
7. _____ Ice claws are simple to make at home and a very convenient tool to help yourself get out of the water.
8. _____ If you were to fall through, you should swim away from where you came from, since that ice must be very thin.
9. _____ It is recommended to wear a life jacket underneath a winter coat while on the ice.
10. _____ Cold blood can linger in your arms and legs and suddenly rush to your heart and cause cardiac distress.

Short Answer:

1. Where can you find information about lake conditions?
2. What are some ways to measure the thickness of the ice?
3. What are some items that you should always bring with you out onto the ice?
4. What 5 ways can you assist someone exiting the lake after breaking through?
5. After someone falls through and they successfully exit the water, how would you treat them for hypothermia?

Indoor Skydiving

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: J C S A

About Indoor Skydiving

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." Each participant "flies" within a column of wind created by the wind tunnel—and the skydiver floats 3 to 6 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.

With this activity, girls get to simulate actual (outdoor) skydiving, including learning about and wearing skydiving gear such as a jumpsuit, goggles, a helmet, eye protection, and earplugs (for the noise).

Indoor skydiving is not approved for Daisies or Brownies.

Learn More:

- Explanation of indoor skydiving: iFLY
- Difference between skydiving and indoor skydiving: Indoor Skydiving Source

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the location, vendor, or facility in advance to ensure they can accommodate those with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

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COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Learn ahead of time. Ensure that 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.

Practice before flying. With guidance from your instructor, practice body positions ahead of time.

Fall with style. There are several maneuver 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. This depends on skill level, the instructor, and council guidelines.

Size up gear. Ensure the appropriate sizes of helmets, flight suits, and goggles 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. Do not 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 options.

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.

Ensure girls stay with an adult. Confirm that the instructor will lead girls to the flight chamber, be with them during the flight experience, and spot them the entire time. The instructor should also lead girls out of the flight chamber.

Physical Restrictions

- This activity is not recommended for those with a history of heart trouble.
- Because the body must be in an arched position with hips forward, people with back issues that prevent this body position should avoid flying.
- It is recommended that people with prior shoulder dislocations do not fly, due to a significant amount of wind on shoulders.
- Those who are pregnant should not fly.
- Participants must weigh less than 300 pounds.
- Verify height and weight restrictions at each location.
- Any other serious health issues should be cleared by a physician prior to flying. Check with specific locations for their restrictions before booking a flight.

Safety Gear

These items are provided by the facility:

- Helmet (full face or open face)
- Goggles
- Flight suit

Indoor Trampoline

Council Approval: May Be Required

Activity Permitted For: B J C S A

Activity Not Permitted: Daisies

About Indoor Trampolines

Indoor trampolines make for a fun and exciting activity. Indoor trampolines are typically offered in an enclosed gymnasium-like space with several different trampolines of varying sizes and shapes. Sometimes a facility is equipped to connect trampolines and turn an entire room into one massive trampoline. Indoor trampoline courts are contained, low-impact, and adjustable to the size and skill level of participants.

Indoor trampoline parks have padded walls and soft (sometimes foam) pits and landing areas and feature huge trampolines divided into sections for individual bouncers. Most offer other activities, such as pits filled with foam cubes to jump into, and trampoline basketball courts.

There should always be a trained staff member around to monitor the group size and ages to make sure proper grade levels are kept where they belong. Trained staff members will also monitor the safe behavior and overall well-being of participants. If possible, check ahead of time to determine that the facility maintains clean and sanitary equipment, particularly equipment used regularly and often by young children.

The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons specifically states that trampoline jumping is unsafe for the skeletal frame of children six years old and younger. For this reason, Daisies are not permitted to participate in indoor trampoline activities. Also, there are a high number of incidents and significant injuries associated with outdoor or make-shift trampolines that are set up on temporary stilts or a metal frame. For this reason, both outdoor trampolines and personally owned trampolines are not permitted.

Learn More:

- International Association of Trampoline Parks

Include Girls with Disabilities

Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Contact the location in advance to ensure they are able to accommodate those with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

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COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

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.

Ensure girls learn how to trampoline safely. All participants will be given instruction in safety and jumping rules. All legitimate centers provide instruction; it is up to the adult organizing the activity to ensure it takes place. The operator must ensure that each participant receives instruction (in-person or video training) about potential risks and safety guidelines. Participants/guardians will sign a waiver that they have received the training.

Obey rules. There should be clearly posted rules that prohibit roughhousing, double bouncing (when two jumpers land close to each other at the same time), and clothing that could be dangerous, such as belt buckles and studs, and loose objects like key chains.

Check equipment. Padding should completely cover all trampoline springs. There should be a system of nets below the trampolines. If the park has a foam pit, it should have a trampoline bed underneath it.

Learn and follow common safety rules for indoor trampoline:

- Nothing (including gum or candy) should be in mouths while on the trampoline court.
- Pockets should be emptied entirely.
- Girls should not sit or lie on the court. To rest, exit the court.
- No pushing, running, racing, or horseplay of any kind.
- No touching or hanging on the top pads on the court.
- Be in control of your body, always.
- Jumpers should be separated by size to the greatest degree possible.
- Be aware of those around you and jump with people of similar size.

Inflatables

Includes:

- Aquatic inflatables
- Bounce houses and land inflatables
- Bubble soccer
- Log rolling (with synthetic logs)
- Amusement/theme parks with inflatables

Council Approval: May Be Required

Activity Permitted For: *D *B J C S A

About Inflatables

Most inflatables can be found in public facilities, parks, events, etc. but some commercial ones may be able to be rented. Verify with your council on specific information needed for renting commercial inflatables. Verify with your council if any additional approvals need to be made in addition to checking with local governing agencies to ensure all safety guidelines are being followed.

Aquatic climbing walls, slides, bounce platforms, obstacle courses are made from a variety of materials and placed in the deep end of the pool, or lake. *Daisies cannot participate in aquatic bounce houses. *Aquatic climbing walls are not permitted for Daisies and Brownies.

Bounce houses (closed inflatable trampolines, bouncy houses, bouncy castles, moon bounces, moonwalks, jumpers, etc.) and other land inflatables are temporary inflatable structures and buildings used for recreational purposes, particularly for children. *Daisies may only participate in bounce houses that are specific for their age, height, and/or weight.

Bubble soccer is an exciting twist on the traditional game of soccer. Girls are wrapped in a giant, soft inflatable bubble ball with shoulder harnesses and handles inside. *Bubble soccer is not permitted for Daisies and Brownies.

Log rolling with synthetic logs can be done in a pool or lake and for girls of all ages.

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the location in advance to ensure they can accommodate those with disabilities.

Information on accommodations for inflatable parks are similar to amusement parks.

Learn More:

- International Association of Amusement Parks and Attraction

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Connect with your Girl Scout council for approved sites or site suggestions to confirm the location is vetted. Allow enough time to have the location approved.

Select a safe site. Ensure that sites or rented inflatables follow safety precautions:

- Aquatic climbing walls, slides, bounce platforms, obstacle courses are placed in the deep end of the pool, or lake. Participants need to be strong swimmers who can swim in water deeper than 5 feet. Non-strong swimmers need to wear a life vest, properly fitted and appropriate to their weight.

- Bounce houses and other land inflatables are properly secured to the ground, especially in windy weather. Ensure the number of participants in a bounce house at a time does not exceed manufacturer recommendations for safety. On inflatable slides, obstacle courses, etc. girls take turns and wait for the person before them to exit before going.

- Bubble soccer should be played on a flat area that is free of obstacles, pillars, trees, stumps, rocks, and roots. Only one person in a ball at a time. No rolling down hills while wearing a ball. Bubble should be fully covering at least 8 inches above their head, to allow for roll overs and head protection. Players should not run full speed and should only bump into players with light to moderate speed. Players should not bend down when bumping another player, instead using the sides of the bubble for impact with other players, not the top. Players should not lift the bubbleball via the handles except to get up.

- Log rolling with synthetic logs needs to be done in water that is at least 2 feet deep. Log needs to be at least 10 feet from any obstructions- walls, rocks, trees, beach, etc. Log should be aligned perpendicular (as a T) to dock, pool edge, hard objects, etc. Beginners should have someone holding log as they get on. Non-strong swimmers should wear a life vest, properly fitted and appropriate to their weight if the water is above their knees. Beginners should use “trainers” to slow the log down.

Inquire about adequate insurance. The park you attend may or may not be able or willing to provide a certificate of insurance as evidence of one million dollars General Liability insurance and instructor certifications upon request, depending on the size of the group. It’s best to inquire and have the conversation in order to verify credibility of the park’s management.

Ensure safety of theme park rides. Obtain full information about the rides and other activities and evaluate them for safety, especially concerning the age, height, and weight levels of girls.

For water parks, follow the “Swimming” safety activity checkpoints. Pay particular attention to water park safety rules. Ensure there are certified lifeguards at each activity. Girls will need to take a swim test prior to the trip to ensure they can swim. It is recommended that swimmers that are not proficient wear a life vest.

Know where girls are at all times. 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.

Review plans upon arrival. Adults should 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.

Have a predetermined meeting spot. Adults should discuss plans for the visit with girls and set a place to meet in case the group gets separated.

Know where the first aid station is located. 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.

Miscellaneous Activities

Includes:

- STEM, Arts, Crafts
- Land sports
- Skateboarding
- Laser tag
- Segway

Council Approval: May Be Required

Activities Permitted for: See “Activities at a Glance” chart for grade level permissions.

About the Miscellaneous Activities

STEM, Arts, Crafts. From crafting and the arts to STEM projects, girls create, develop, and engage in a variety of projects. The activities are broad and varied and can include painting, pottery, beading, sewing, astronomy exploration, and engineering design and investigation, to name just a few.

Land Sports. Depending on location, these sports can be played year-round or during a specific time of year, indoors or outdoors. The category is intended to include all land sports, including soccer, basketball, flag football, softball, hockey, basketball, tennis, and more.

Laser Tag. This popular activity usually takes place at an indoor venue but can be done outdoors as well. This tag game is played by using laser guns with infrared beams. Laser tag vests or other types of specific clothing may be used and, if so, are available at the facility. This is a fun and exciting way to learn teamwork and good sportsmanship as well as healthy camaraderie!

Segway. A Segway is a personal transportation device that has become very popular in tourist areas. It’s an automated standing cart-like machine with two wheels and a steering bar. Not quite driving, but close to it. Helmets are worn for Segway and this activity is recommended only for Seniors and Ambassadors.

Skateboards. Skateboarding is a land activity in which a person can ride in a standing or crouching position using a variety of boards and wheels and propelling themselves by occasionally pushing one foot against the ground. Helmets and wrist guards are required.

Offshore Water Vessels

Large Passenger Vessels

Includes:

- Ferries / Cruise ships
- Chartered fishing boats
- Air Boats
- Pontoons
- Whale watching / Tour boats

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

Council Approval: Required.
Council prior approval is *not required* for commercial transportation such as ferries.

About Water Vessels

Large passenger water vessels include ferries, cruise ships, tour boats, sport-fishing boats, airboats, whale-watching boats, air boats, pontoons and privately owned boats and yachts. They can be either commercial or recreational vessels.

Amphibious boats known as duck boats are not recommended due to the hybrid (land to sea) nature of these vehicles, the notable lack of regulation around safety and evacuation protocols and the severity of loss with recent duck boat accidents.

Know where to go on a voyage. Look for ports with access to oceans, lakes, rivers, and coastal waterways.

Note: Small craft, such as canoes, kayaks, rowboats, small sailboats, waterski or wakeboard boats are not considered offshore / large passenger water vessels. If you plan to use these types of small craft, see specific chapters about them in *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*.

Learn More:

- Find life jackets to borrow in all 50 states: Boat U.S. Foundation
- Resources, regulations, and statistics: U.S. Coast Guard*
- Federal requirements for recreational boats: U.S. Coast Guard Boater's Guide
- Free basic boating safety courses for each state: Boat U.S. Foundation

*The United States Coast Guard app (IOS and Android) provides state boating information, a checklist of required safety equipment, and a way to report hazards, pollution, or suspicious situations.

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Connect with the ship or boat operator to determine any access or safety steps that need to be arranged in advance. Additionally, the United States Access Board has relevant resources and information for people with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Gear

The gear you'll need will depend on the type of vessel, length of your trip, location, and weather.

Choose life jackets or Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (PFDs) carefully. Must be Coast Guard–approved. Find approval on the label located on the inside back of the jacket.

Ensure life jackets fit snugly. Check the "user weight" on the label to make sure a jacket is the right size for a child. If the label is not readable, do not use the jacket—and do not use inflatable life jackets for youth or adults. Once you have found the right fit, fasten all clips, zippers, and straps, then pull up on the shoulder straps. The jacket should be snug enough that the chin and earlobes cannot slip through. Continuously tighten the harness straps if they become loose, they should fit snug.

Be vigilant. Check to see that all life jackets are in serviceable condition: no broken clips, straps, or zippers. Make sure the life jackets are not waterlogged or torn.

Ensure each child and adult wears a life jacket, always, while on a recreational vessel. They must also wear one whenever a commercial vessel operator instructs them to do so, even on the dock.

Follow your state's laws about the use of life jackets. Laws may differ depending on a child's age, the type of boat, and the type of boating operation.

Use safety gear as required by the U.S. Coast Guard or by your state's boating and waterways regulations. Reputable ship operators will comply with these laws. Specific gear varies by ship size and use. Ask for an orientation on how to use safety gear, if appropriate. Take care when engaging ship operators outside the United States.

Additional gear/supplies:

- Layered clothing to protect from wind, sea spray, and other weather.
- Non-slip, closed-toed shoes.
- Seasickness remedies (see below), if needed
- Bottled water and healthy snacks
- Binoculars
- Hat or visor

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Teach girls these general safety rules:

- Do not run at any time while on the vessel, dock, or near the water.
- Listen to the orientation and follow the rules noted.
- Use the buddy system.
- Follow instructions in an emergency.
- Find out what to do if someone falls overboard or if other accidents occur.

Select a qualified operator. Commercial vessel operators are licensed through the U.S. Coast Guard. In foreign waters, the "flag of the ship" (the country under which it is registered) dictates the training and licensing required. These standards can vary widely. In the United States, passenger vessels (ferries, cruise ships, and whale-watching boats) that carry more than six passengers are licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard examines operator training and certification, vessel condition, and safety equipment. Federal laws and regulations are supplemented by state laws and international navigation standards.

All Vessels: Carbon Monoxide Warning
Never allow "teak surfing," swim platform dragging, or bodysurfing behind any vessel. Do not operate a motor or generator while anyone is on or holding onto a swim platform, swim deck, swim step, or swim ladder, except for a very brief amount of time when docking, or

entering/exiting the vessel. Carbon monoxide emitted at the stern (back) of the boat can cause death in these situations.

Passenger Vessel with a Commercial License

In the United States, you can expect a passenger vessel with a commercial license to:

- Give a basic safety orientation, possibly through a loudspeaker. The orientation should cover the location of life jackets and other critical information. On cruise ships, an evacuation drill will be held.
- Have a professional, licensed crew that has training and experience in handling emergency situations.
- Possess current liability insurance.
- Be a well-maintained vessel being used as it was designed to be used.
- Know about state and federal regulations for life jackets. If you are instructed to use a life jacket, you must do so.

Privately-Owned Recreational Vessels

In the United States, privately-owned recreational vessels (yachts) are governed by Coast Guide requirements and by state training and licensing requirements, which vary by state. When in doubt, follow the guidelines that are most strict. Check with the owner about these items:

- The operator must have sufficient training and be licensed to operate that type of vessel. Contact your council or the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary for guidance. Training includes safe operation, weather conditions, emergency response, navigation, and rules of the waterway. The operator understands the responsibility for the well-being of the Girl Scouts and volunteers and agrees to follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- The vessel is currently registered by the state or is “documented” (a federal registration type) by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- The vessel meets Coast Guard and/or local jurisdiction requirements.
- Maintains insurance as required by law in their jurisdiction.
- Life jackets or Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices are available for the number and size of all passengers on board. Passengers must wear a life jacket while the vessel is moving, unless in an enclosed cabin.
- The vessel is well-maintained and has all safety equipment required for its type and purpose.
- A throwable floating device (i.e., a Type IV cushion, horseshoe buoy, or life ring) is available and placed where it is easily and quickly accessible. Ask about the procedures for if someone falls overboard.
- A float plan is filed to communicate your route.

If over 30 feet, the vessel should also:

- Have had a U.S. Coast Guard safety check within the last year.
- Adequate Marine or Boat Liability insurance (one million dollars or more) is in effect.

Chartered or Rented Vessels

A chartered vessel is rented by the group for a specific length of time. Charters may or may not include a captain and/or crew.

If a boat is chartered with a crew, use the guidelines (above) for privately-owned recreational vessels.

If a vessel is chartered without crew, you'll need to provide your own captain and crew. All must meet training and licensing standards designated by the U.S. Coast Guard. The standards that apply will depend on the size and type of the vessel. Review this article and contact your council for additional guidance and approval.

Cruise Ships

Before you book, check the Vessel Sanitation Program ratings of the Centers for Disease Control, which routinely inspects ships for cleanliness, repair, food preparation, and storage.

Book cabins in a block either across the hall from or next to one another so that your group stays together. Teach and use the buddy system and have a plan for communicating if members of the group get separated. Be aware that cell phones may not work on board.

Also, be sure to secure valuables in the ship's safe.

Follow Girl Scout standards and the guidelines in *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020* for use of swimming pools, climbing walls, snorkeling, and other higher-risk activities. Choose shore excursions carefully, keeping in mind that cruise ships and related vendors are not aware of Girl Scout standards. Be thorough in asking questions about safety.

Know, too, that often other countries do not maintain the same strict boating laws as the United States does. Research the standards of the country you are planning to visit; if standards seem poor, find out how to best ensure safety, or avoid unsafe situations completely. Contact your council for guidance.

Additionally, suggest that girls and adults who get motion sickness consider taking a remedy. Dramamine, Bonine, or a homeopathic remedy are all options. Let troop families decide whether to use these, and if they do, let them know that the remedies are more effective when taken in advance. Other tips:

- Bring mint, ginger candies, gingersnaps, or plain crackers to settle queasy stomachs.
- Have seasick persons stay on deck in the fresh air, if possible. Have them keep their eyes on the horizon. Going below deck can worsen symptoms. The stern (back) of most boats is usually calmer. But avoid this area if exhaust fumes are a problem.
- Respect the environment. Choose responsible operators who follow local environmental laws. Whale-watching boats should respect wildlife and should not aggressively chase or harass the whales.
- Check weather with ship operator. If lightning or high winds are expected, consider rescheduling.

Orienteering

Council Approval: Not Required

Activity Permitted For: J C S A

Not Recommended For: Daisies and Brownies

About Orienteering

Orienteering is an activity that involves using a map, compass, and navigational skills to find your way around or across an unfamiliar area. The activity may also incorporate camping, backpacking, boating, hiking, cross-country skiing, or horseback-riding skills.

Orienteering often takes place on wilderness trails, although events can take place in just about any terrain such as a beach, urban area, or park. Orienteering meets use control markers to flag various land features found on the map, serving as checkpoints along a course.

Be certain to practice Leave No Trace while orienteering. Girls should always stay on trails.

Orienteering is not recommended for Daisies and Brownies, but they may be ready to learn pre-orienteering activities such as map reading, navigation, and map drawing. Brownies may also enjoy geocaching (see “Geocaching” safety activity checkpoints).

Learn More:

- Orienteering USA
- Orienteering Course Safety
- Ethics and generally accepted rules of orienteering: Orienteering Association of British Columbia

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the location in advance to ensure they can accommodate those with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl’s ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully

participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints for Trail Orienteering

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

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.

Select a safe orienteering site. The site selected is a park, camp, or other area with a good trail network; proper landowner permission is secured to use the site.

Always avoid orienteering during hunting season.

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 training.

Follow basic orienteering safety standards. Girls take part as a group or with buddies. Each participant is given an allotted time to complete the course and must check in at the finish area, whether she completed the course or not. Beginning and finishing course times of each participant are carefully noted to ensure that all participants have returned.

Take proper precautions in areas where poisonous plants, snakes, or ticks are prevalent.

Map your course. Get to know map symbols and how things like elevation and relief are communicated on maps.

Learn about orienteering techniques. Before participating in orienteering, learn about strategies such as pacing, thumbing, and handrails.

Plan the right activity for the age group. Juniors should do orienteering in small groups and be accompanied on a course by an adult with basic instruction in orienteering. 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 Juniors. However, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors whose skills match or exceed the demands of the course may participate in such competitions.

Plan ahead. When participating in a meet, 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.

Practice Leave No Trace skills before participating in orienteering. Pick up garbage you find along the way, be sure not to trample vegetation, and be aware of wildlife.

Safety Gear

- Orienteering map
- Compass and watch
- Emergency signaling whistle
- Long pants, hiking boots, sneakers
- Daypack to carry personal belongings

Outdoor Cooking

Council Approval: Not Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

Required: At least one adult is trained for outdoor cooking by your council

About Outdoor Cooking

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 the environment and surrounding vegetation. Instead, use an established fire pit to ignite a small fire or use alternative cooking methods, such as a portable fuel-based cook stove or a solar or box oven.

Extensive outdoor cooking is not recommended for Daisies, but a less extensive activity, such as roasting marshmallows or cooking a one-pot meal, is appropriate. Look for campsites and parks with designated fire pit areas.

As girls progress, they can learn to use a variety of cooking methods, including wood fire, propane, gas stoves, charcoal, canned heat (great for grilled cheese sandwiches!), and even solar energy.

As older girls become accomplished outdoor chefs, they can expand their skills with new types and techniques of cooking. Learn how to start a fire without matches, try solar cooking, or test taste new campfire cuisine. Plan outdoor recipes. Vote for your favorite meals and plan how to cook them outdoors.

Learn More:

- Leave No Trace
- Outdoor recipe ideas: Discover the Outdoors, Outdoor Cook

Include Girls with Disabilities

Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs, special food requirements, and other accommodations.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

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Verify leader/instructor knowledge and experience. Ensure at least one adult is trained or possesses knowledge, skills, and experience in the following areas:

- Outdoor cooking activities and leadership, including dishwashing, food storage, sanitation, menu planning, and level-appropriate cooking methods.
- Outdoor skills necessary to lead the group.
- Safety management
- Judgment and maturity
- Group dynamics and management
- Supervision of girls and adults

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Connect with your Girl Scout council regarding permits with the local fire district, land management agency, and/or conservation office. The adult volunteer also checks the fire index with local authorities and ensures local air pollution regulations are followed.

Encourage girls to share resources. Support girls in creating a checklist of group and personal equipment and distribute to group members. Repackage all food to minimize waste and the amount of garbage that needs to be removed from the campsite.

Never cook inside a tent!

Be prepared for primitive campsites. If cooking in primitive areas with little to no modern conveniences, observe these standards:

- Use existing fire rings if a fire is necessary.
- Make sure the campsite is located at least 200 feet from all water sources.
- Avoid fragile mountain meadows and areas of wet soil.
- Avoid camping under dead tree limbs.
- Do dishwashing and personal bathing at least 200 feet away from water sources.
- Make certain to have a fire bucket or other fire extinguishing method close at hand.

Store food well away from tents and out of reach of animals. Check local regulations to find out if a bear-proof canister is required. If the site is in bear country, check with local authorities on precautions to take. Ensure that garbage, 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, and 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 training. If feasible, a vehicle is available to transport an injured or sick person.

On the Day of Outdoor Cooking:

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 food, trash, grease, and fuel canisters. Do not remove natural materials, such as leaves or branches.

Prepare for safe use 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.

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.

Be aware of stability. 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.

Consider fire safety. 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. Ensure adequate cooking time for your area.

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.
- Use existing fire rings if a fire is necessary.
- Make certain to have a fire bucket or other fire extinguishing method close at hand.
- Tie long hair back on girls and adults or cover hair with bandanas.
- No plastic garments, such as ponchos, are to be worn around open flames.
- 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. Do not douse the fire with water, as it will create steam which can cause severe burns.
- Hold hands over coals, ashes, partially burned wood, or charcoal for one minute to verify coolness.
- 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 should be started with fuels explicitly labeled “charcoal starters.” Never use gasoline as a fire starter. Never add charcoal lighter fluid to a fire once it has started.

Tips for Safe 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 should be prepared with consideration of food allergies, religious beliefs, and dietary restrictions (such as vegetarianism and veganism). 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 should 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, or cooking utensils near an open flame.

Avoid spreading germs. Each person has an individual drinking cup. Wash hands before food preparation and eating. No person with a skin infection, a cold, or a communicable disease participates in food preparation.

Be certain all cooks and fire tenders roll up long sleeves and tie back long hair.

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) should be suspected in all surface water supplies.

Use one of the three water-purification methods:

Strain water through a clean cloth into a clean container to remove sediment, then…

- boil water rapidly for a full minute and let cool (if over 6,500 feet in elevation, boil for three minutes)
- *disinfect water with water-purification tablets, following the manufacturer's instructions (check product shelf life to make sure it has not expired) or
- process water through a water purifier or specially designed water-filtration device that removes Giardia lamblia (method will also remove many other contaminants; follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully).

*Using water-purification tablets may not remove Giardia lamblia from water, so it is best to either boil water or use a filtration system.

Wash dishes in a prescribed area according to this procedure:

- Remove food particles from utensils and dishes and dispose of properly in waste bags.
- 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 particle-free wastewater on the ground at least 200 feet beyond any water source or trail.

Safety Gear

- Potable water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning
- Source of refrigeration to keep perishable foods cold such as an insulated cooler, along with ice.
- Fuel source (as necessary for the type of cooking you are doing)
- Insulated fire-retardant gloves.
- Firefighting equipment, such as fire extinguisher, bucket of water, loose soil or sand, and a shovel and rake
- Hand sanitizer or soap and paper towels
- Knives and cutting boards.
- Rubber bands, barrettes, or bandanas to tie back hair.
- Three dish pans for dishwashing, along with biodegradable dishwashing soap
- Pot scrubber
- Mess kit with non-breakable plates, bowls, mugs, and cutlery in dunk bag
- Rope for dunk-bag line
- 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

Parades and Other Large Gatherings

Council Approval Required: Not Required

Activity Permitted for: D, B, J, C, S, A

About Parades

Whether you are 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.

Equity. In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Gear for Parades and Other Large Group Gatherings

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

Recommended Gear

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

Safety Activity Checkpoints

- **Standard Safety Guidelines.** Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

- **COVID-19 Guidelines.** Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

- **Emergency Action Plan (EAP).** Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

- **Consider the following:**
    - Need, interest 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.

- Adults and girls pick a place to meet in case of separation from the supervising adult or the group.
- No leaning over the edges and legs and arms do not hang outside of the float. When sitting on a moving float, girls are to remain securely seated with no legs dangling over the side.
- Riders on floats have secure seating, or a secure handhold or safety harness is used 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 and plan for emergency medical routes, consider heavily trafficked routes depending on the day and time.
- **Take safety precautions**. Instruction is given on safe pedestrian practices, when applicable. Adults must know where girls are, always. Advance arrangements are made for picking up the girls after the event and parents and girls understand the arrangements.

Paddling and Rowing Sports—Master Progression Chart

Type of Craft and Water	Grade Level/ Minimum Age	Participant-to-Instructor Ratio	Instructor/Expert Certification *(with multiple choices, only one is required)*
Rowboats			
Rowboat Flat, no current	D, B, J, C, S, A Daisies only with adult in boat	12:1 plus 1 watcher/helper	Current American Red Cross (ARC) Small Craft Safety Certification-Rowing; or ARC Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module, or equivalent
Scull or shell Flat, no current	C, S, A who are strong swimmers	Varies; consult instructor or coach	U.S. Rowing Coach, Level 1 or higher; or equivalent
Corcl Boat			
Flat, no current	B, J, C, S, A	12:1 plus 1 watcher/helper	American Red Cross (ARC) Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module; or equivalent
Canoeing			
Flat, near shore, no current	D, B, J, C, S, A *Daisies permitted only with an adult in their canoe, unless with an ACA accredited camp in compliance with ACA standards*	6:1, or 12:1 with qualified assistant *(ACA accredited camps adhere to all ACA standards for Daisies in canoes)*	American Canoe Association (ACA) Canoe Level 1 Instructor or higher; or ACA Paddle Sports Safety Facilitator in canoeing; Small Craft Safety Certification-Canoeing; or ARC Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module; or an instructor with the demonstrated equivalent experience in line with these credentials.
Class I	J, C, S, A	6:1, or 12:1 with qualified assistant	ACA River Canoeing Level 2 Instructor or higher; or equivalent
Class II	C, S, A	6:1, or 12:1 with qualified assistant	ACA River Canoeing Level 3 Instructor or higher; or equivalent
Class III	C, S, A	6:1, or 12:1 with qualified assistant	ACA Whitewater Canoeing Instructor, Level 4 or higher; or equivalent
Trips on Class II–III	C, S, A	Varies; ask outfitter	Licensed professional guide or instructor who is provided by an outfitter
Kayaking			
Flat, near shore, lakes, no current	B, J, C, S, A Daisies not permitted	5:1, or 10:1 with qualified assistant	ACA Kayaking Level 1 Instructor or higher; or ACA Paddle Sports Safety Facilitator-Kayaking, Small Craft Safety Certification-Kayaking; or completion of boat-education paddle sports course for your state; or ARC Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module; or equivalent
River, Class I	J, C, S, A	5:1, or 10:1 with qualified assistant	ACA River Kayaking Level 2 Instructor or higher; or equivalent. Use helmets when they are recommended or provided.
River, Class II	C, S, A	5:1, or 10:1 with qualified assistant	ACA River Kayaking Level 3 Instructor or higher; or equivalent. Use helmets when they are recommended or provided.

Type of Craft and Water	Grade Level/ Minimum Age	Participant-to-Instructor Ratio	Instructor/Expert Certification *(with multiple choices, only one is required)*
River, Class III	C, S, A	5:1, or 10:1 with qualified assistant	ACA River Kayaking Instructor Level 4 or higher; or equivalent. Use helmets when they are recommended or provided.
Sea/surf	C, S, A	5:1, or 10:1 with qualified assistant	ACA Coastal Surf or Coastal Kayaking Level 2 Instructor or higher; or equivalent
Standup Paddle Boarding			
Flat, near shore, no current	J, C, S, A	5:1, or 10:1 with qualified assistant	American Canoe Association (ACA) SUP Instructor Level 1 or higher, ACA Paddle Sports Safety Facilitator-SUP, or completed boat-education paddle sports course for your state, American Red Cross Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module, or equivalent. ACA SUP Yoga endorsement or equivalent for yoga on flat water.
Coastal	C, S, A	5:1, or 10:1 with qualified assistant	ACA Coastal SUP Instructor Level 3, or equivalent
Ocean surf	C, S, A	5:1, or 10:1 with qualified assistant	ACA Ocean Surf SUP Instructor Level 3 or higher, or equivalent
Class I–II	C, S, A	5:1, or 10:1 with qualified assistant	ACA River SUP Instructor 3 or higher, or equivalent
Trips	C, S, A	Varies; ask outfitter	Licensed professional guide or instructor, provided by an outfitter
Class III–V	Not permitted	N/A	N/A
Whitewater Rafting			
Whitewater rafting day trips Class I–II	B, J, C, S, A	6:1, or 12:1 with qualified assistant	American Canoe Association (ACA) Rafting Level 4 Instructor or higher; or International Rafting Federation (IRF) Guide Certification; or equivalent
Whitewater rafting day trips Class I–III	J, C, S, A	Varies; ask outfitter	Licensed professional river guide provided by an outfitter
Whitewater rafting day trips Class I–IV	C, S, A	Varies; ask outfitter	Licensed professional river guide provided by an outfitter. NOTE: Girls always wear helmets for Class IV
Whitewater trips Class I–IV	C, S, A	Varies; ask outfitter	Licensed professional river guide provided by an outfitter. NOTE: Girls always wear helmets for Class IV.

Canoeing

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: *D B J C S A

Not Recommended For: *Daisies, except with an experienced adult in each canoe and on flat water.

*Camps with current ACA accreditation are expected to adhere to the current ACA standards for canoeing with all Girl Scouts including Daisies.

About Canoeing

Canoeing is a great team-building exercise and a fun way to enjoy the outdoors. Whether you're playing games on a pond or taking a whitewater trip on a river, there's a canoeing option for everyone. Canoeists sit on a seat or kneel in the canoe and use a paddle to propel their boat. Most canoes are for two people, but some canoes can hold up to 12. Canoes that are 15 feet or shorter should hold no more than two paddlers with no passengers.

Currents, waves, rapids, and wind affect conditions. Those conditions and type of canoe will determine what is appropriate for your troop. See the Paddling and Rowing Sports—Master Progression Chart for details. Be sure all participants have the training and experience to participate in the level expected. Class III rapids require prior council approval. Participants may be Cadettes and older who have demonstrated and documented prior experience of progression.

Whitewater canoeing can only be done on water that has been run and rated, and only up to Class III difficulty, as defined by the American version of the International Scale of River Difficulty.

Learn More:

- American Canoe Association
- *Canoe and Kayak* magazine
- Interactive maps of places to go: Paddling.com and American Whitewater
- Instructional videos about canoeing strokes: Paddling.com

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the canoeing instructor or boating facility in advance to ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an

activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Additional Resources:

- See Disabled Sports USA to find out about inclusion in canoeing.
- Check out Paralympic.org for inspiring stories of paddlers with disabilities.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a canoer, a canoe capsizing, or sudden illness.

Confirm participants are proven swimmers. Success on the water depends on comfort and ability in the water. Conduct a swimming test in advance. See "Swimming" safety activity checkpoints for samples or ask your instructor for guidelines. If a swimming test is not possible, presume all participants are non-swimmers. Only strong swimmers are approved for whitewater canoeing.

All participants must wear a 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.

Practice recovery procedures. The instructor demonstrates self-recovery and righting techniques. Girls learn and practice these skills. This will help prevent being disoriented or frightened if they end up in the water and provides important skills.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. The skill level of the adults must be higher than the difficulty of the intended canoeing type.

At least one adult instructor or guide should be American Canoe Association (ACA) Canoe Level 1 Instructor or higher; or ACA Paddle Sports Safety Facilitator in canoeing; or Small Craft Safety Certified-Canoeing; or ARC Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module; – or have the *demonstrated equivalent experience* of such credentials.

The instructor or guide must be able to effectively communicate commands and instructions.

Ensure that the instructor or guide reviews site-specific emergency techniques. For example, whitewater canoeists are instructed in how to float through rapids, how to breathe while swimming in rapids, and how to swim to shore. The lead instructor or guide must have firsthand knowledge of the hazards and conditions of the location being used.

Check lifeguard qualifications. If using lifeguards to oversee canoeing, confirm that they have the proper training, experience, and rescue equipment for the body of water and the specific watercraft involved.

Be aware of the lifeguard's position. A stationary lifeguard can only be used when canoeing is taking place on flat water close to shore. For large bodies of water or rivers, the lifeguard must be in a canoe and positioned with the group.

Arrange for watchers/helpers. An adult watcher or skilled helper is required for certain size groups. See the chart below. This person should have basic skills in the activity and supports the group by reinforcing instructions. They also watch for possible emergencies and help the instructor with rescues if needed. Basic water rescue, small craft safety, or similar training is the preferred preparation. Consult the instructor for specific watcher/helper qualifications.

Select a safe site. Don't paddle in unknown areas. Know the locations of all shipping channels. Do not canoe more than one mile from the nearest shore. Make sure of the following:

Avoid busy channels when possible. If you must cross them, do so at a 90-degree angle to the channel traffic. Also avoid surf zones and areas with standing waves unless they are part of planned whitewater canoeing.

On long passages, boats should stay close enough together that a group decision can be made if wind and water conditions change.

Be aware of possible changes in water level, due to tides or dam releases, and how these affect water conditions.

Avoid hazards such as strainers, sieves, hydraulics, waterfalls, bridges, dams, fences, and low power lines. Rapids must be avoided unless part of a planned whitewater route.

Research water conditions and select the right boats for participant skill level. Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment to be carried. Make sure:

- The craft weight and capacity are not exceeded. Many boats have a plate near the stern (back), showing these maximums.
- Canoes that are 15 feet or shorter hold no more than two people.
- You are aware of the type of canoe needed for the water to be used.
- Canoes are not overloaded with gear, and gear is distributed evenly among paddlers.

Know universal signals. Whistle and visual signals are used to pass messages or call for help. Learn them at Paddle Education.

File a float plan. If participating in a long-distance trip, file a float plan with a reliable person who will notify authorities should your group not return on time.

Get a weather and wind report. Check Weather.com or other reliable weather sources, including the "boat and beach" forecast, which covers wind speed, water temperature, and wave height. Be prepared with a backup plan or postpone the activity if weather prevents the outing.

Review what to do in a storm. If thunder is heard or lightning seen, get everyone off the water immediately. Do not return until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last evidence of the storm. If you cannot get to shore, 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. If possible, do not touch metal or water, when lightning is possible.

Use the buddy system. Instruct girls to keep their boat within sight of at least one other boat. Use the buddy system on the water with boats the same as you would on land.

Transport boats safely. Use car-top racks or trailers specifically designed for canoes. Secure boats with two lines across the top (one at each end), and with lines at the bow and the stern. Drivers must have prior experience hauling trailers.

Report accidents. Notify marine law enforcement or your council as appropriate.

Privately-owned Canoes.

Ensure that the owner/operator:

- Is a knowledgeable adult with the understanding and ability to take the responsibility of Girl Scouts' safety and well-being.
- Agrees to follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints relevant to the activity.
- Maintains the vessel in accordance with the Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Has the required safety gear as required in their jurisdiction or listed in Safety Activity Checkpoints and coordinates with the activity leader to confirm the proper safety gear is present and being used.
- Meets Coast Guard and/or local jurisdiction requirements.
- Maintains insurance and registration as required by law in their jurisdiction.

Safety Gear

- Canoes suitable for the type of water, with proper flotation, and air bag, if used, checked before use
- Paddles appropriate size and style for the canoeist and the type of canoeing
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, compressed air horn, or VHF radio on navigable waters
- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket for each paddler. Type III life jackets are recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications.
- Rescue gear appropriate for boat type and conditions (ask your instructor), such as:
  - Throw bag or throw line.
  - Waist-mounted tow system (lightweight rope which attaches to towing person and to towed boat)
  - Rescue sling to get participants back into a boat.
  - Designated rescue craft, such as a paddleboard or chase boat
  - Any other items required by the boating jurisdiction in which girls will paddle.
- Emergency gear appropriate for the canoeing type and distance from shore, such as:

    - Emergency repair kit: duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers
    - Spare paddle, waterproof first aid kit, repair kit, and standard safety equipment, including signaling equipment.
- Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, pocket-knife, 10-foot by 10-foot tarp, rope, food, and appropriate liquids. Food and water bottles should be secured in the boat.
- A safety helmet with a strong, flexible plastic shell and chin strap, as well as openings for drainage, worn when paddling in waters that are Class II or III
- Bailer (a scoop for removing water from a boat)
- A waterproof flashlight
- A painter (a strong line at the bow used for securing the canoe that is at least half the length of the boat
- At least one graspable and throwable Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water.
- Compass, waterproof chart, VHF marine radio, and other essentials for extended trips
- Locking blade knife carried by instructor/guide/qualified adult in their life jacket or other readily accessible place, and a line for towing or rescue.

Note that canoeing at night may require additional gear; consult your instructor.

Corcl Boats

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: B J C S A

Not Appropriate For: Daisies

About Corcl Boats

The Corcl boat is designed specifically for 8- to 15-year-olds to enjoy in flat water: spinning, racing, and having fun at the shore. Corcls offer a great first experience for girls who will progress to other paddle sports. Paddlers can move easily and quickly through the water. The boats feature a 225-pound capacity, an innovative double-hull that is designed for many ways to paddle, and ergonomic handles for easy carrying and transport.

Corcls flip over easily, so paddlers need to be comfortable in the water. Corcls are not to be towed behind a motorized craft and are for use in flat, calm waters only.

Learn More:

- Instructions, tips, and games to use with girls: Corcl.com

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about special needs and accommodations.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Additional Resources:

See Abilities.com and Dream Adaptive for information about inclusion and adaptive equipment for paddlers.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, bad weather, or sudden water emergency.

Ensure participants are able to swim and are comfortable in the water. Success on the water depends on comfort and ability in the water. Conduct a swimming test in advance. See the swim test in the Swimming chapter or ask your instructor for guidelines.

Ensure all paddlers are wearing a 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.

Start in shallow water where girls can learn how to navigate paddling, board their boat, balance using their arms and paddles, and stay centered.

Verify lifeguard qualifications and experience. Ensure lifeguards have current certification in American Red Cross (ARC) Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module, or the equivalent.

The instructor or lifeguard must be able to effectively communicate commands and instructions and reviews them with girls before the activity begins.

Ensure the instructor or lifeguard reviews site-specific emergency plans.

Note that a stationary lifeguard can only be used when canoeing is taking place on flat water close to a dock or shore. For large bodies of flat water, the lifeguard must be in a boat and positioned with the group.

Arrange for watchers/helpers. One adult watcher or skilled helper is required for every 12 girls, plus one additional adult. See the Paddling and Rowing Sports—Master Progression Chart in *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*. Watchers should have basic skills in the activity and support the group by reinforcing instructions, watching for possible emergencies, and helping with rescues if needed. Basic water rescue, small craft safety, or similar training is the preferred preparation.

Remind girls to stay clear of paddles. Because Corcls are small and boats can float close to one another, paddlers can inadvertently hit other paddlers and boats.

Practice recovery procedures. When girls step on the edge of a boat, the Corcl will flip. Demonstrate self-recovery and righting techniques, and have girls learn and practice these skills. This will help prevent this situation from disorientating or frightening them if their Corcl flips and they end up in the water.

Select a safe site. Corcl boats are only approved for flat water. Do not paddle in unknown areas. Paddling is only permitted near shore.

Learn lifeguard signals. Whistle and visual signals may be used to pass messages, call girls in, or call for help. Cover these before beginning the activity.

Prepare for emergencies. Pack a waterproof first aid kit. Follow other guidelines in "Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*."

Safety Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket for every paddler
- Kayak paddle for each boat (smaller girls may go two girls to a Corcl, but only one paddle is used per boat)
- Rescue gear such as throw bag or throw line.
- Tether or painter attached to each boat.
- Cell phone or walkie-talkies to communicate need for emergency services.

Kayaking

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: B J C S A

Not Recommended For: Daisies

About Kayaking

Virtually any body of water is suitable for certain types of kayaking. Start with flat water with little or no current, and progress to more advanced conditions. Kayaks come in a variety of shapes

and sizes, designed for different types of water and paddler skill levels. “Sit on top” kayaks are simple, stable boats that are great for beginners. “Decked” or “sit inside” kayaks are covered by a deck and spray skirt; the paddler sits inside with legs extended. All involve moving a kayak across water using a double-bladed paddle, and combine exercise, transportation, and fun!

Your troop can kayak on bays, rivers, lakes, and oceans. Currents, waves, rapids, and wind affect conditions. Those conditions and type of boat will determine what is appropriate for your troop. Be sure all participants have the training and experience to participate in the level expected.

Learn More:

- Interactive maps of places to go: Paddling.com and American Whitewater
- International Scale of River Difficulty
- Basic interpretation of rapids and river difficulty: ThoughtCo.com
- About canoeing, kayaking, and standup paddle boarding: American Canoe Association
- Info on gear selection and how-to: Paddling.com

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the kayaking instructor in advance to ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl’s ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Additional Resources:

See Disabled Sports USA to find out about inclusion in kayaking.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the “Standard Safety Guidelines” section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the “Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts” section under the “Standard Safety Guidelines” (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council’s specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Ensure participants are strong swimmers. Success on the water depends on comfort and ability in the water. Conduct a swimming test in advance. See the "Swimming" safety activity checkpoints for samples or ask your instructor for guidelines. If a swimming test is not possible, presume all participants are non-swimmers.

Ensure all paddlers wear a 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.

Practice recovery procedures. The instructor should demonstrate self-recovery and righting techniques, and girls should learn and practice these skills. This will help prevent their becoming disoriented or frightened if they end up in the water.

Paddlers must be trained on how to perform wet exits and must be able to execute one successfully before being allowed to use a decked kayak. If spray skirts are used, wet exits must be performed before the outing can begin.

Practices appropriate self-rescue and reentry techniques. If kayaking in cold water, paddlers should learn cold water survival techniques and treatment for hypothermia.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. The skill level of the adults must be higher than the difficulty of the intended kayaking type.

Ensure the instructor/guide will review site-specific emergency techniques for the type of craft used. For example, whitewater kayakers are instructed in how to float through rapids, how to breathe while swimming in rapids, and how to swim to shore.

Ensure the lead instructor/guide has firsthand knowledge of the hazards and conditions of the location and type of boat being used.

You'll want to verify that at least one adult instructor/guide is certified by the American Canoe Association, or other sponsoring organization approved by your council. Certifications must be appropriate for the activity.

Verify lifeguard qualifications and experience. Ensure lifeguards have current certification in American Red Cross (ARC) Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module, or its equivalent.

Arrange for watchers/helpers. An adult watcher or skilled helper is required for certain size groups. See the chart below. This person should have basic canoeing skills. They support the group by reinforcing instructions. They also watch for possible emergencies and help the instructor with rescues if needed. Basic water rescue, small craft safety or similar training is the preferred preparation. Consult the instructor for specific watcher/helper qualifications.

Keep weight evenly distributed. Keeping gear and fellow paddlers evenly distributed makes the boat safer and easier to paddle.

Select a safe site. Do not paddle in unknown areas. Know the locations of all shipping channels. Do not kayak farther than one mile from the nearest shore.

Avoid busy channels when possible. If you must cross them, do so at a 90-degree angle to the channel traffic.

Avoid surf zones and areas with standing waves unless they're part of planned whitewater kayaking.

Stay together. On long passages, boats should stay close enough together that a group decision can be made if wind and water conditions change.

Only perform this activity on water that has been run and rated and up to Class III difficulty, as defined by the American version of the International Scale of River Difficulty.

Be aware of possible changes in water level, due to tides or dam releases, and how these affect water conditions.

Avoid hazards such as strainers, sieves, hydraulics, waterfalls, bridges, dams, fences and low power lines. Rapids must be avoided unless part of a planned whitewater route.

Research water conditions and select the right boats for participant skill level. Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment to be carried. Make sure that:

Watch that kayak weight and capacity are not exceeded. Many boats have a plate near the stern (back), showing these maximums.

Use the type of kayak needed for the water conditions present, and ensure the kayak is sized for the person(s) using it.

Ensure kayaks are not overloaded with gear. Gear should be distributed evenly with paddlers.

Know universal signals. Whistle and visual signals are used to pass messages or call for help. Learn them at Paddle Education.

File a float plan. If participating in a long-distance trip, file a float plan with a reliable person will notify authorities should your group not return on time.

On the Day of Paddling or Rowing:

Get a weather and wind report. Check Weather.com or other reliable weather sources, including the "boat and beach" forecast, which covers wind speed, water temperature, and wave height. Be prepared with a backup plan or postpone the activity if weather prevents the outing.

Review what to do in a storm. If thunder is heard, or lightning seen, get everyone off the water immediately. Do not return until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last evidence of the storm. If you cannot get to shore, 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. If possible, do not touch metal or water, when lightning is possible.

Review self-rescue techniques. See above.

Use the buddy system. Instruct girls to keep sight of at least one other boat at all times.

Transport boats safely. Use car-top racks or trailers specifically designed for kayaks. Secure boats with two lines across the top (one at each end), and with lines at the bow and the stern. Drivers must have prior experience hauling trailers.

Report accidents. Notify marine law enforcement or your council, if appropriate.

Safety Gear

Some gear will depend on the type of kayaking, or on water conditions. Check with your instructor.

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III life jackets recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications)
- Kayak sized appropriately for the participants and suitable for the type of water.
- Kayaks with proper flotation and any air bags checked before use (if float bags are used, make sure they are secured to kayak)
- Double-bladed paddle in the appropriate size and style for the activity and person using them (ask instructor about proper fit)
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, compressed air horn, or VHF radio
- Rescue gear appropriate for kayak type and conditions (ask your instructor), such as:
  - At least one graspable and throw able Coast Guard approved Coast Guard approved personal flotation device, throw bag, or throw line.
  - Waist-mounted tow system (lightweight rope which attaches to towing person and to towed boat); should be one tow system for every three to four kayaks.
- Emergency gear appropriate for the kayaking type and distance from shore, such as:
  - Emergency repair kit: duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers, spare plugs
  - Spare paddle, first aid kit, repair kit, and standard safety equipment, like signaling equipment.
  - Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, pocket-knife, 10-foot by 10-foot tarp, rope, food, and appropriate liquids (food and water bottles should be secured in the boat)
- A safety helmet with strong, flexible plastic shell and chin strap, as well as openings for drainage should be worn when:
  - Paddling in waters that are Class II or III
  - Paddling in or near sea caves
- Bailer (a scoop or sponge for removing water from a boat) secured to the kayak.

Row Boating

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: *D B J C S A

Not Recommended For: Daisies, except with an experienced adult in each rowboat.

About Row Boating

Rowing uses oars to propel a boat across the water and is one of the earliest forms of transportation. It's a great way to build teamwork and skill. Beginners can start rowing in a stable boat on flat water. Most Daisies do not have the reach needed to row a standard rowboat. Daisies may use basic row boats only if they have an adult in the boat with them. Interested rowers can progress to competitive "crew" racing, or specialized rowing, like Venetian gondolas. Currents, waves, rapids, and wind affect conditions. Those conditions and type of boat will determine what is appropriate for your troop. See the Paddling and Rowing Sports—Master Progression Chart in *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*.

Most rowing is done on flat water with little or no current, like a lake, calm river, or pond. Oceans and rivers can be suitable if rowers have advanced instruction and skills. Consult local experts or your council for suggestions.

You can learn a lot about rowing online. You should learn basic skills from an expert, but it's fun to discover gear options, places to go, and cool tips. Check out the basics at U.S. Rowing.

Also find out about collegiate and Olympic rowing. Some colleges and universities have women's crew teams, which race streamlined boats called "sculls" and "shells" in races called "regattas."

Learn More:

- Rowing vocabulary
- U.S. Rowing Association
- General boating safety: Boat Safe, Boat-Ed , U.S. Coast Guard

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the rowing instructor in advance to ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Additional Resources:

Check out inspiring stories of rowers with disabilities at Paralympic.org.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, capsizing, or sudden illness.

Ensure participants are wearing PFDs. (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.

Exception for competitive racing sculls and shells: because they can get caught on oars in fast-paced team rowing, it is acceptable to carry life jackets in a chase boat. All competitive rowers must be strong swimmers.

Check swimming ability. Only strong swimmers may row in sculls and shells.

Practice recovery procedures. The instructor should demonstrate self-recovery and righting techniques for the type of boat being used. Girls can then learn and practice these skills, as appropriate for the trip. This will help prevent them from becoming disoriented or frightened if they end up in the water.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. The skill level of the adults must be higher than the difficulty of the intended activity.

Ensure the instructor will review site-specific emergency techniques for the type of craft used.

Ensure the lead instructor has firsthand knowledge of the hazards and conditions of the location and type of boat being used.

Ensure adult certifications are appropriate for the activity.

Check lifeguard qualifications. Ensure lifeguards overseeing rowing have the proper training, experience, and rescue equipment for the body of water and the specific watercraft involved.

Arrange for watchers/helpers. An adult watcher or skilled helper is required to assist the instructor. This person should have basic skills in rowing and supports the group by reinforcing instructions and watching for possible emergencies. Basic water rescue, small craft safety, or similar training is the preferred preparation. Consult the instructor for specific watcher/helper qualifications.

Select a safe site. Don't row in unknown areas; know the locations of all shipping channels. Rowing is not permitted farther than one mile from the nearest shore. Make sure of the following:

- Busy channels are avoided when possible and crossed carefully when necessary, at a 90-degree angle to the channel traffic,
- Surf zones and areas with standing waves are avoided,
- On long passages, boats are close enough together so that a group decision can be made if wind and water conditions change,
- You are aware of possible changes in water level, due to tides or dam releases, and how these affect water conditions.

Avoid hazards. These include strainers, sieves, hydraulics, waterfalls, bridges, dams, fences, and low power lines. Rapids must be avoided.

Do not exceed boat weight and capacity. Many boats have a plate near the stern (back) showing these maximums.

Ensure boats are not overloaded with gear. Gear should be distributed evenly among rowers.

Know universal signals. Whistle and visual signals should be used to pass messages or call for help. Learn them at Paddle Education.

Prepare for emergencies. Pack a waterproof first aid kit if taking a rowing trip and follow other guidelines in "Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020.*"

File a float plan. If participating in a long-distance trip, file a float plan with a reliable person who will notify authorities should your group not return on time.

On the Day of Paddling or Rowing:

Get a weather and wind report. Check Weather.com or other reliable weather sources, including the "boat and beach" forecast, which covers wind speed, water temperature, and wave height. Be prepared with a backup plan or postpone the activity if weather prevents the outing.

Review what to do in a storm. If thunder is heard or lightning seen, get everyone off the water immediately. Do not return until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last evidence of the storm. If you cannot get to shore, 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. If possible, do not touch metal or water when lightning is possible.

Report accidents. Notify marine law enforcement or your council as appropriate.

Safety and Required Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III life jackets recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications)
- Rowboat, scull, or shell sized appropriately for the participants and suitable for the type of water.
- Oars that are the right size and style for the boat type and person using them

- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, compressed air horn, or VHF radio on navigable waters
- At least one graspable and throwable Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water (for boats 16 feet or longer)
- Rescue gear appropriate for boat type and conditions
- Emergency gear appropriate for the activity type and distance from shore, such as:
  - Bailer (a scoop for removing water from a boat) or foot pump.
  - Emergency repair kit: duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers, spare plugs
  - A spare oar or paddle, first aid kit, repair kit, and standard safety equipment, including signaling equipment.
  - Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, pocket-knife, 10-foot by 10-foot tarp, rope, food, and appropriate liquids (food and water bottles should be secured in the boat)
- All other items required by the boating jurisdiction in which girls will row.

Standup Paddle Boarding

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: J C S A

Not Recommended For: Daisies and Brownies

About Standup Paddle Boarding

While standing, paddlers propel standup paddleboards (SUPs) across the water with long-handled paddles. Paddling is a full-body sport which uses core muscles and develops excellent balance and coordination. With instruction, beginners can quickly learn to paddle on flat water lakes and bays. Experienced paddlers can tackle ocean surf or rivers with a certified instructor's guidance.

With the right instruction, equipment, and preparation, almost any body of water is suitable for SUP. Start with flat water with little or no current, and progress to more advanced conditions like rivers or oceans.

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

Learn More:

- Interactive maps of places to go: Paddling.com and American Whitewater

- For river paddling: International Scale of River Difficulty
- About canoeing, kayaking, and SUP: American Canoe Association
- *Stand Up Paddle World* magazine

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the SUP instructor in advance to ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Additional Resources:

- See Abilities.com and Dream Adaptive to find out about inclusion and adaptive equipment for paddlers.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Ensure participants are able to swim. Success on the water depends on comfort and ability in the water. Conduct a swimming test in advance. See "Swimming" safety activity checkpoints for samples or ask your instructor for guidelines. SUP paddlers must be strong swimmers.

Ensure all paddlers wear a 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.

Practice recovery procedures. The instructor demonstrates self-recovery and righting techniques. Girls learn and practice these skills. This will help prevent them from becoming disoriented or frightened if they end up in the water (likely with SUP).

Verifying instructor knowledge and experience:

- The skill level of the adults must be higher than the difficulty of the intended activity.
- The instructor or guide must be able to effectively communicate commands and instructions.
- The instructor or guide needs to review site-specific emergency techniques. For example, when paddling in shallow water, the instructor should remind girls how to fall from their boards.
- The lead instructor or guide needs to have firsthand knowledge of the hazards and conditions of the location being used.
- At least one adult instructor or guide should be currently certified by the American Canoe Association, the American Red Cross, or other sponsoring organization approved by your council. Certifications must be appropriate for the activity.

Check lifeguard qualifications. For lifeguards overseeing SUP, ensure they have the proper training, experience, and rescue equipment for the body of water being used.

Arrange for watchers/helpers. An adult watcher or skilled helper is required for some group sizes. See the Paddling and Rowing Sports—Master Progression Chart. This person should have basic skills in the activity, and support the group by reinforcing instructions, watching for possible emergencies, and helping with rescues if needed. Basic water rescue, small craft safety, or similar training is the preferred preparation. Consult the instructor for specific watcher/helper qualifications.

Select a safe site. Do not paddle in unknown areas; know the locations of all shipping channels. Paddling is not permitted farther than one mile from the nearest shore. Make sure of the following:

- The launching area is free of glass and debris and has a gentle slope and good footing. Rocks should be avoided.
- Busy channels are avoided when possible and crossed carefully, when necessary, at a 90-degree angle to the channel traffic.
- Surf zones and areas with standing waves are avoided, except as part of planned ocean/surf or whitewater paddling.
- On long passages, boards are close enough together so that a group decision can be made if wind and water conditions change.
- You’re aware of possible changes in water level, due to tides or dam releases, and how these affect water conditions.
- Avoid hazards such as strainers, sieves, hydraulics, waterfalls, bridges, dams, fences, and low power lines. Rapids must be avoided unless part of a planned whitewater route.

Research water conditions. Select the right boards for participant skill level and conditions.

Know universal signals. Whistle and visual signals are used to pass messages or call for help. Learn them at Paddle Education.

Prepare for emergencies. Pack a waterproof first aid kit if you will be away from shore. Follow other guidelines in "Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*."

File a float plan. If participating in a long-distance trip, file a float plan with a reliable person who will notify authorities should your group not return on time.

Get a weather and wind report. Check Weather.com or other reliable weather sources, including the "boat and beach" forecast, which covers wind speed, water temperature, and wave height. Be prepared with a backup plan or postpone the activity if weather prevents the outing.

Review what to do in a storm. If thunder is heard, or lightning seen, get everyone off the water immediately. Do not return until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last evidence of the storm. If you cannot get to shore, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, head into the wind at a 45-degree angle, and stay low.

Review self-rescue techniques. Ensure each person can get back on their board. When paddling in cold water, also review cold-water survival techniques and treatment for hypothermia.

Use the buddy system. Instruct girls to stay within sight of at least one other board.

Transport boats safely. Use car-top racks or trailers specifically designed for paddle boards. Secure them with two lines across the top (one at each end), and with lines at the bow and the stern. Drivers must have prior experience hauling trailers.

Report accidents. Notify marine law enforcement or your council as appropriate.

Safety Gear

Some of the gear you will need depends on the type of paddling or on the water conditions. Check with your instructor.

- A U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket is worn, always, while paddling (Type III life jackets recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications)
- Paddle board sized appropriately for the participants and suitable for the type of water.
- Paddles the appropriate size and style for the activity and person using them (a good rule of thumb is 10 inches higher than the paddler's height; keep extras on hand)
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle
- Rescue gear appropriate for conditions, such as throw bag or throw line or waist-mounted tow system.
- Leash to keep board close in case paddler falls off (no leashes in rivers, to avoid entrapment)
- Helmet, chest protector, arm protection, and leg protection for whitewater standup paddle boarding (inflatable board recommended)
- Any other items required by the boating jurisdiction in which girls will paddle.

Whitewater Rafting

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: B (Class I–II rapids), J (Class I–III rapids), C S A (Class I–IV rapids)

About Whitewater Rafting

Whitewater rafting is a thrilling experience for challenge-seeking Girl Scouts, as well as those who just love the outdoors. Rafts come in a variety of styles and lengths, usually 11 to 20 feet long, seating four to twelve rafters. You will need to find a reputable outfitter to arrange the trip. Ask your council about places and outfitters in your area. A river guide will come with you and provide instruction, steering, and coaching. They will know the river well and be able to perform rescues, if needed.

Rafting should only be done on rivers that have been run and rated, and only up to Class IV. It is important to understand the International Scale of River Difficulty or Whitewater Classification System. Be sure all participants have the training and experience to participate in the level expected. Be sure your guide has run the leg of the river before. See the Progression of Rafting Types with Guide Ratios chart for the types of whitewater Girl Scouts may run, by program level.

The Whitewater Classification System:

Class I (Easy): Moving water with small disturbances on the surface and a few small waves; poses little to no danger to swimmers.

Class II (Novice/Beginner): Faster-moving water with easily avoided rocks, holes, and waves; danger to swimmers is still slight but care must be taken.

Class III (Intermediate): Fast-moving water containing various rocks, holes, currents, and waves that require skillful maneuvering to avoid; swimmers could be at risk and may require help.

Class IV (Advanced): Strong rapids, large waves, big holes, unpredictable currents, and dangerous obstructions requiring multiple maneuvers to get through or around; swimmers at risk and will require help to be rescued.

Class V (Expert): All characteristics of Class IV with the added danger of being longer and containing more continuous features that may not be avoided; serious risk to swimmers, others may be of no help.

Class VI (non-runnable): Only a team of experts who carefully plan every aspect of this expedition would have hope of surviving these rivers and rapids.

Learn More:

- Interactive map of places to go and a list of rivers: American Whitewater
- Tips for a first whitewater rafting trip: The Clymb
- Whitewater rafting terms: Pinnacle Travel

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers, and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the outfitter in advance to ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Disabled Sports USA lists programs available nationwide, plus general information about adaptive rafting. And the blog of the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability Endless CapABILITIES offers encouragement for paddlers with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, girl or adult falling overboard, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Ensure participants are strong swimmers. Success on the water depends on comfort and ability in the water. Conduct a swimming test in advance. See "Swimming" safety activity checkpoints for samples or ask your outfitter for guidelines.

All rafters must wear a 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.

All whitewater rafters must wear a helmet.

Ensure the skill level of the adults is higher than the difficulty of the intended activity.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Make sure the instructor or guide has certification from a formal training program, such as the American Canoe Association's rafting program or the International Rafting Federation. The guide needs to be able to effectively communicate commands and instructions. Also, important:

- An instructor can demonstrate self-recovery and righting techniques for the type of trip. (Girls should learn and practice these skills when possible.)
- A guide should review site-specific emergency techniques and help rafters learn how to float through rapids, how to breathe while swimming in rapids, and how to swim to shore.
- The lead instructor or guide has firsthand knowledge of the hazards and conditions of the location and type of boat being used.
- At least one guide has documented training and experience guiding in the type of river being run and has run the river in advance.
- The guide subscribes to the American Whitewater Safety Code.

Select durable rafts. Make sure the outfitter uses rafts that:

- Are of heavy-duty construction,
- Have at least four air compartments,
- Have an adequate number of large D-rings securely attached to the sides,
- Have snug hand lines along the sides,
- Are not loaded beyond capacity of participants or gear.

Select a safe site:

- Do not paddle in unknown areas.
- Only raft on water that has been run and rated and up to Class IV difficulty, as defined by the American version of the International Scale of River Difficulty.
- Be aware of possible changes in water level due to tides or dam releases and how these affect water conditions.
- Avoid hazards such as strainers, sieves, hydraulics, waterfalls, bridges, dams, fences, and low power lines.

Know universal signals. Whistle and visual signals are used to pass messages or call for help. Learn them at Paddle Education.

File a float plan. If participating in a long-distance trip, file a float plan with a reliable person who will notify authorities should your group not return on time.

On the Day of Rafting:

Get a weather and wind report. Check with your outfitter about expected weather and river flow. Be prepared with a backup plan or postpone the activity if weather prevents the outing.

Review what to do in a storm. If thunder is heard, or lightning seen, get everyone off the water immediately. Do not return until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last evidence of the storm.

Transport boats safely. Use car-top racks or trailers specifically designed for the type of craft. Secure boats with two lines across the top (one at each end), and with lines at the bow and the stern. Drivers must have prior experience hauling trailers.

Report accidents. Notify marine law enforcement or your council as appropriate.

Safety Gear

The gear you will need depends on the type of trip, water conditions, and weather expected. Check with your outfitter.

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket for each person (Type III life jackets recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications)
- Raft sized appropriately for the participants and suitable for the type of rapids.
- Paddles of the style and size required for the activity and person using them.
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, compressed air horn, or VHF radio on navigable waters
- At least one graspable and throwable Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water (boats 16 feet or longer)

Rescue and emergency gear appropriate for boat type and conditions, such as:

- A throw bag or throw line.
- Raft repair kit
- Spare paddle, first aid kit, and standard safety equipment, including signaling equipment.
- Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, pocket-knife, 10-foot by 10-foot tarp, rope, food, and appropriate liquids (food and water bottles should be secured in the boat)
- A safety helmet for each person with a strong, flexible plastic shell and chin strap, as well as openings for when rafting in waters that are Class II or higher
- Protective clothing (wet suit or dry suit) worn when rafting in water below 70 degrees Fahrenheit (when water is warmer, wear layered, non-cotton clothing; store any extra clothing in a waterproof bag)
- Bailer (a scoop for removing water from a boat) or foot pump if the boat is not self-bailing.
- Secure, closed-toe hiking/sport sandals or water shoes, or other non-slip footwear (old sneakers are fine); no flip flops or loose slip-on water moccasins)
- Eyeglass keepers or goggles for those who need them.

- Dry bags and/or waterproof containers to keep gear dry on extended trips; encourage girls to pack wisely (do not overload rafts)
- Compass, waterproof chart, and other essentials for extended trips
- Locking blade knife carried by river guide in their life jacket or other readily accessible place.
- Any other items required by the boating jurisdiction in which girls will raft.

Pocket Knife and Jackknife Safety

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: B J C S A

Not Permitted For: *Daisy Girl Scouts

**Daisies can learn basic knife safety with cardboard/wood examples.*

About Pocket Knives/Jackknives

An important and versatile tool for camping, the pocket/jackknife is safe when handled carefully. It may have more than one blade or tool. It may include an awl for drilling holes, a can opener, or a combination screwdriver and bottle cap opener. Always inform parents prior to teaching girls about this skill. All Girl Scouts should receive proper training and sign off on Girl Scout Pocket knife/Jackknife Safety Pledge.

Learn More:

- https://knife-depot.com/pages/teaching-kids-about-knife-safety
- https://gearjunkie.com/teaching-kids-knife-safety-outdoors

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs, interest, and special accommodations. Check with facilities ahead of time to determine what accommodations can be made.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others.

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. Always have on Closed Toed Shoes.

Safety Activity Checkpoints - They should focus on the following areas:

- How to open and close safely
- How and when to use it
- How to properly store it when not in use
- How to sharpen the blade
- How to clean the blade/knife
- Learn how to pass and acknowledge when you receive it by saying Thank You.
- Learn about the circle of safety.
- Always keep the knife pointed in safe direction.
- Learn about additional emergency and safety procedures.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult needs to be trained in pocket-knife/jackknife safety (depending on which you are doing). These checkpoints should be reviewed with the facilitator and the Girl Scout Pocket knife/Jackknife Safety Pledge should be signed off.

Pocket Knife/Jackknife Safety Pledge

Girl Scout Pocket Knife/Jackknife Safety Pledge

Carrying a pocket-knife/jackknife is an honor and a responsibility. I have participated in a specific training/workshop on pocket-knife/jackknife handling and safety. I agree to the following guidelines, for the safety of myself and those around me, always:

1. I will respect my pocket-knife/jackknife, always, and use it as a designated tool.
2. I will always keep my pocket-knife/jackknife closed and stored when not in use.
3. I will not use my pocket-knife/jackknife when there is a chance that someone could be hurt.
4. I promise to never throw or toss my pocket-knife/jackknife.
5. I will always use my pocket-knife/jackknife safely and in the manner I was instructed.

_____ _____

Girl Scout Signature - Date Responsible Adult Signature – Date

(image Girl Scouts in Tucson, OH)

Rocketry / Model Rocketry

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted for: J, C, S, A

Not Permitted for: *D, B

About Rocketry

Launching model rockets is a relatively safe and inexpensive way to learn about the principals of engineering, design, physics, and in some cases chemistry. Model rockets are constructed of paper, wood, plastic, and other lightweight materials and use an electrical launch system. Sport rocketry clubs can be found in communities across the United States.

*Daisies and Brownies are not quite ready to participate in model rocketry (as defined above), but they can participate in simple science experiments like air powered drinking straw rockets, balloon rockets, stomp rockets or water powered bicycle pump rockets.

*Daisies and Brownies may observe model rocket launches at a safe distance.

Volunteers should use basic safety principles, including eye safety and safe distances when setting up simple rocketry experiments. For guidance, see the Miscellaneous Activities section of Safety Activity Checkpoints and always consult the safety standards at the beginning of Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Note: Rockets over 1,500 grams are considered “High Powered Rockets” and require certification from the National Association of Rocketry. Please contact your council for information and approval for High Powered Rocketry. Radio Controlled Rocket Gliders are not approved.

Learn More:

National Association of Rocketry

NASA Beginners Guide to Model Rockets

ESTES Model Rockets Education

National Fire Protection Association

Include Girls with Disabilities. Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Connect with facilitators ahead of time to determine any access or safety steps that need to be arranged in advance.

Equity. In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Make sure that the facilitator has experience with model rocketry and that they understand common safety protocols. Consider partnering with your local rocketry club or science teacher who may have experience with model rockets.

Assess maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others.

Launch Site. Launch rockets outdoors in an open area. Choose a large open area or field that is free of crowds, away from power lines, buildings, tall trees, and low-flying aircraft. The larger the launch area, the better the chance of recovering the rocket. Football fields, parks, and playgrounds often work well. According to the National Association of Rocketry, launch site size depends on the size of the rocket and should be at least as large as the accompanying table below. Set up safety zones for launch and for observation (at least 15 feet away with D motors or smaller and 30 feet away with larger rockets.)

Launch Site Dimensions		
Installed Total Impulse (N-sec)	Equivalent Motor Type	Minimum Site Dimensions (ft.)
0.00 - 1.25	1/4A, 1/2 A	50
1.26 - 2.50	A	100
251 - 5.00	B	200
5.01 - 10.00	C	400
10.01 - 20.00	D	500
20.01 - 40.00	E	1000
40.01 - 80.00	F	1000

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Prepare for emergencies. Follow your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and always have a first aid kit available and know ahead of time where the nearest emergency room is located. For this activity, have a specific preparedness plan in case of grass fires.

Get permission/Check local ordinances. You should always check with your local city government for any special regulations that may apply to your area. Generally, you can fly most model rockets in a clear area the size of a football or soccer field. Follow FAA guidance. For example, if you live near a U.S. border, take care not to cross over into the territory of a foreign country or within the U.S. be careful not to cross into a sovereign nation or territory; and never launch rockets near airports, low-flying aircraft or military bases. Seek permission from the site and consider if permission is needed from any neighboring properties should rockets need to be recovered.

Weather Conditions. Check for safe weather conditions. Be prepared to postpone the launch, if needed. Wind speeds should not be greater than 20 miles per hour. There should be no lightning storms predicted in the area. Ensure that there is no dry grass close to the launch pad and that the launch site does not present risk of grass fires.

Materials. Ensure that equipment and materials are in good working condition. Use materials that are lightweight and non-metal parts for the nose, body, and fins of the rocket. Rockets should not weigh over 1,500 grams - these require a High-Power Rocketry Certification.

Motors. Use only certified commercially made model rocket motors. Do not tamper with the motors or use them for any purposes except those recommended by the manufacturer.

Ignition System. Launch rockets with an electrical launch system and electrical motor igniters. Launch system should have a safety interlock in series with the launch switch. Use a launch switch that returns to the “off” position when the rocket is released. Fuse-lit ignition is prohibited.

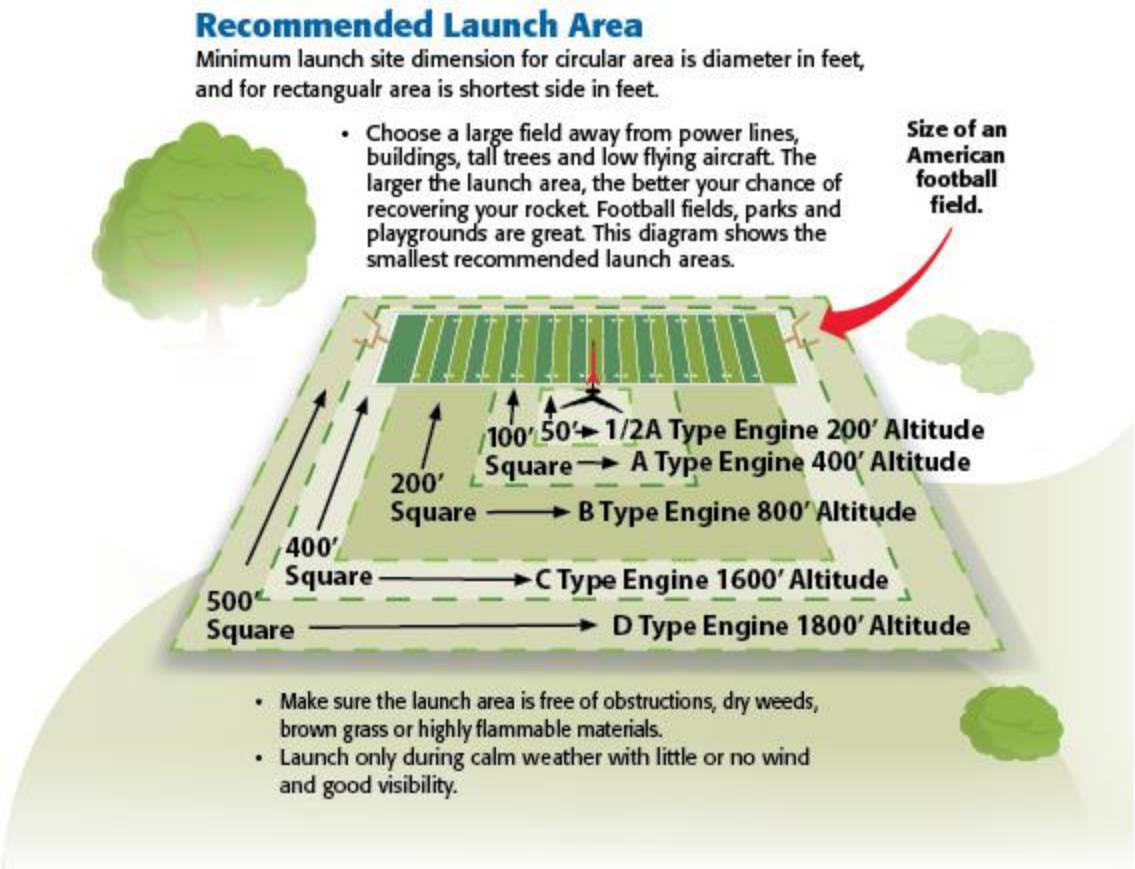
Launch Safety: Use a countdown before launch and ensure that observers are paying attention and at a safe distance. Safety zones may need adjusted based on wind conditions. Use a launch rod, tower, or rail that is pointed to within 30 degrees of the vertical to ensure that the rocket flies nearly straight up. Make sure the rod is above eye-level or capped off when not in use. Use a blast deflector to prevent the motor’s exhaust from hitting the ground. Consult the National Association of Rocketry for guidance on simultaneous launches.

Flight Safety: Do not launch rockets at targets, into clouds or near airplanes. Do no put any flammable or explosive payload on/in the rocket.

Misfires. If the rocket does not launch, have a plan to safely disconnect the battery and wait at least 60 seconds before allowing anyone to approach the rocket.

Recovery. Use a flame-resistant or fireproof recovery system such as a streamer or parachute on the rocket so that it returns safely and undamaged. Rockets may be used again if they aren’t damaged. Do not attempt to recover a rocket from power lines, tall trees, or other dangerous places.

Dress appropriately for the activity. Dress for the weather. Often launch sites lack shade. In hot weather make proper arrangements for shade, ensure that participants have sunscreen, and make water available.



Source: https://estesrockets.com/get-started/

*Based on the Model Rocket Safety Code of the National Association of Rocketry

Sailing

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: *B J C S A

Not permitted for: Daisies

Not Recommended for: *Brownies

About Sailing

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 permitted for Daisies.

*While sailing for Brownies is permitted, carefully evaluate girls' maturity and decision-making skills, based on small craft progression for girls, and consider whether the sailboat type being used is appropriate.

Note: Girls are not allowed to operate motorized boats without council permission and girls are never allowed to parasail. The Instructor-to-Girl ratio recommended is one to four.

Know where to sail. Oceans 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.

Learn More:

- American Sail Training Association
- International Sailing Federation
- U.S. Sailing
- U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations.

Learn about the resources and information that the International Sailing Federation and Disabled Sports USA provide to people with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all

girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checklist

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

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. If this is not possible, presume all participants are non-swimmers. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.

Mandatory Life jacket. Each sailor must have 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.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

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 American Red Cross Small Craft Safety Certification, or possesses equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines.

Compile key contacts. See "Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*."

Select appropriate sailboats for water and passengers. Make sure craft weight and passenger capacities 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.

Transport sailboats safely. Sailboats are transported on car-top racks or trailers designed to haul sailboats. Sailboats should be secured with two lines across the top and a line at the bow and the stern. Drivers must have prior experience hauling trailers.

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. 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 for small boat capsize recovery.

Use the buddy system. See “Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*.”

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.

Privately Owned Sailboats

If using a sailboat that is privately owned, ensure that the owner/operator:

- Is a knowledgeable adult with understanding and ability to assume the responsibility of the safety and well-being of girls and volunteers.
- Agrees to follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints relevant to the activity.
- Maintains the vessel in accordance with the Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Has the required safety gear as required in their jurisdiction, or listed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, or coordinates with the activity leader to have the proper gear.
- Meets Coast Guard and/or local jurisdiction requirements.
- Maintains insurance and registration as required by law in their jurisdiction.

For vessels over 30 feet, also see the Safety Activity Checkpoints for Offshore Water Vessels.

Carbon Monoxide Warning

Never allow "teak surfing," swim platform dragging, or bodysurfing behind any vessel. Do not operate a motor or generator while anyone is on or holding onto a swim platform, swim deck, swim step, or swim ladder, except for a very brief time when docking, or entering/exiting the vessel. Carbon monoxide emitted at the stern (back) of the boat can cause death in these situations.

Safety Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications.
- Boat shoes, closed toe and non-slip hiking/sport sandals with a heel strap, or water socks or shoes (no flip-flops)
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, foghorn, or sounding flares.
- Layered clothing that is easily changeable depending on temperatures (waterproof jacket recommended)
- Sailing gloves (help save tender hands and improve grip)
- A rigging knife
- 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)
- Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, raincoat, pocket-knife, minimum of 10-foot by 10-foot tarp, rope, drinking cup, food and appropriate liquids (food and water bottles should be secured in the sailboat)
- Paddle (as second means of propulsion)
- Bailer (a bucket used to remove water from a boat)
- At least one graspable and throwable Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water.

Scuba

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: C S A

About Scuba

Scuba is an acronym for “self-contained underwater breathing apparatus” and requires specialized equipment. Scuba diving can be done in a variety of locations, including oceans, lakes, and rivers.

Divers can progress from exploratory experiences in pools, to various certification training courses, and finally to recreational dives.

Organizations such as the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), Scuba Schools International (SSI), 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 age and health requirements set by the certifying agency.

Learn More:

- Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI): PADI
- Scuba Schools International (SSI): Dive SSI
- National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI): NAUI
- World Recreational Scuba Training Council: WRSTC
- Project Aware: Project Aware
- Diver’s Alert Network (DAN): Diver's Alert Network
- World’s best dives for kids and teens: Sport Diver
- Family-friendly scuba dives: The Active Times

Pool-Only Scuba Experience Programs

Most dive agencies offer non-certification scuba experience programs for beginner participants of varying ages. This is a great way to explore the sport before "diving in." Follow dive agency standards for age, health, supervision, and maximum depth requirements. Girl Scout adult-to-girl ratios must be maintained.

A Girl Scout swim test is required prior to participating in a scuba experience program. Contact your council for information on if the dive professional teaching the class can administer the test prior to water activities. An example of the swim test can be found here: Swim Test

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the location in advance to ensure they are able to accommodate those with disabilities, and check out the Handicapped SCUBA Association and more information on adaptive scuba programs.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Confirm participants are able to participate in scuba activities. Each person must complete the World Recreational Scuba Training Council (WRSTC) medical form, including a doctor's signature stating the student is fit for diving prior to enrollment.

Confirm participants are strong swimmers. Scuba requires a high degree of ability and comfort in the water, called "watermanship." Dive training organization watermanship evaluations vary, but typically include demonstration of ability to swim a minimum of 200 yards, tread water for 15 minutes, or swim 500 yards with mask, fins, and snorkel--or some combination. Consult the instructor.

Ensure participants also fully understand the body of water they are going to dive in and aware of the type of marine life they may come across.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Ensure that the scuba-diving teacher holds instructional certification from SSI, PADI, NAUI, or other industry-recognized dive training organization. Verify that the certifying agency has guidelines for working with youth.

Maintain appropriate ratios. These ratios must be followed:

Type of training	Instructor to student ratio
Pool training activities	1:8
Confined water training activities	1:6
Open water training dive	1:4; 2 students may be added with additional instructor
Open water certification	1:4 instructor with a certified assistant
These ratios are considered maximum and should be reduced if environmental conditions or other factors are not optimal.	

To maintain general supervision of the girls, non-diving volunteers may be able to supervise pool or confined-water activities by watching from the pool deck or surface. For open water training dives, non-divers may supervise from land or boat. Among the student divers, instructors, and watchers, there must always be two unrelated adults, one of whom is female, who are approved by your council.

Select a safe diving site. Make sure your instructor is familiar with the scuba site. Scuba trips to unknown or non-designated areas are not allowed.

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.* See gear lists below.

Use the buddy system. All divers must use the buddy system above and under the water*. Solo diving is prohibited within Girl Scout programs.*

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.

Get a weather and wind report. Never scuba dive on a stormy or extremely windy day. Check weather.com or other reliable weather source to determine if conditions are appropriate. Know how to respond if weather conditions change quickly.

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. If on a boat, follow the instructions of the boat captain.

Recreational Diving. After becoming certified divers, Girl Scouts may continue with recreational (non-training) dives, based on certification levels. A dive professional is required to provide expert supervision.

- Follow dive agency standards which will give guidelines on what progressive experiences are possible. Most agencies have Junior Diver standards; adhere to requirements to dive with an adult, parent, or professional.
- Pre-entry level certification/supervised diver courses (such as PADI Scuba Diver) requirements for maximum depth and supervision must be met. Verify that all participants are certified by a reputable dive agency. All divers (Girl Scouts and adults) must provide proof of diving experience within 6 months of the dive or take remedial instruction.
- The ratio for recreational diving is 1:8 professional-to-diver.
- Solo diving in Girl Scouts is prohibited; all divers must dive with a buddy.
- Full penetration diving of wrecks and overhead environments are prohibited by recreational divers in a Girl Scout program.
- Rebreathers or any gases/blends except air and up to 36% enriched air are prohibited. Only those certified to use enriched air blends may do so.

Diving from Boats.

If using a dive boat that is privately owned, ensure that the owner/operator:

- Is a knowledgeable adult with understanding and ability to assume the responsibility of the safety and well-being of girls and volunteers.
- Agrees to follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints relevant to the activity.
- Maintains the vessel in accordance with the Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Has the required safety gear as required in their jurisdiction, or listed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, or coordinates with the activity leader to have the proper gear.
- Meets Coast Guard and/or local jurisdiction requirements.
- Maintains insurance and registration as required by law in their jurisdiction.

For vessels over 30 feet, also see the Safety Activity Checkpoints for Offshore Water Vessels.

Carbon Monoxide Warning

Never allow "teak surfing," swim platform dragging, or bodysurfing behind any vessel. Do not operate a motor or generator while anyone is on or holding onto a swim platform, swim deck, swim step, or swim ladder, except for a very brief time when docking, or entering / exiting the

vessel. Carbon monoxide emitted at the stern (back) of the boat can cause death in these situations.

Scuba-Diving Gear

Required Gear for all Diving Activities

- Fins, mask, snorkel, and boots (if conditions warrant)
- Compressed gas cylinder and valve
- Bouyancy control device (BCD) with tank mount or separate backpack, and low-pressure inflator
- Primary regulator and alternate air source
- Breathing gas monitoring device/Submersible Pressure Gauge (SPG)
- Depth monitoring device
- Time monitoring device
- Quick-release weight system and weights (if necessary, for neutral buoyancy)
- Adequate exposure protection for local dive conditions
- Emergency oxygen kit and waterproof first aid kit (1 per group)

Additional Required Gear for Open Water Dives

- When divers are riding or waiting on boat, each wears 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.
- At least one graspable and Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) should be immediately available for each group on the water.
- Compass.
- Dive tables or dive computer.
- Audible emergency surface signaling device.
- Personal surface marker buoy.
- Floating dive flag (1 per group or as dictated by local regulations).
- Dive tool/knife (certified divers) unless prohibited by local regulations.
- Lights, slate and pencil, drift buoy, or other gear, as conditions require.

Recommended Gear

- Mask defogger solution
- Swimsuit with rash guard and swim tights, or dive skin
- Waterproof, coral-safe sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm

Sledding and Tobogganing

Council Approval: May Be Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

Includes: Snow tubing

About Sledding and Tobogganing

The history of sledding is quite interesting: Traditionally sleds were used to transport goods and people in places where wheels could not operate. Toboggans made of poles tied together with leather were used by Native Americans to carry food, clothing, and other items through snow. Today, people of all ages enjoy sledding, tobogganing, and tubing as an enjoyable outdoor winter activity and sport. Today, tobogganing is even a formal sport in the winter Olympics.

Sleds and toboggans will 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 with dimpled centers.

Girls must stick to designated sledding, tobogganing, and snow-tubing hills away from roads or heavily wooded areas to enjoy sledding safely. They should also receive basic instruction in sledding safety and conduct rules and learn to perform basic steering skills, including how to slow down and stop. Girls may never be towed behind a vehicle or snow mobile.

You can always connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. In addition, some ski resorts will offer snow-tubing and tobogganing classes within specially designated areas, so check with your local ski resorts if you have any nearby.

Learn More:

- Competitive and Olympic sledding: Team USA
- More on sledding: Sled Riding

Include Girls with Disabilities

Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about resources and information for people with disabilities at Disabled Sports USA.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully

participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

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, poles, benches, trees, or signposts. The nature of the terrain, potential hazards (such as an avalanche or frozen lake), mileage, and approximate activity time should be known to all group members in advance. Avoid sledding near streets or highways.

Make smart decisions. Girls should slide downhill feet first (like Olympians) to reduce the potential for head injuries from collisions. Use of helmets is strongly recommended.

Do not permit towing. Girl Scouts are not permitted to be towed on sleds, toboggans, or tubes behind a motor vehicle of any kind including snow mobiles. Never use a motorized vehicle to pull a sled or tube.

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 weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.

Practice safe sledding, tobogganing, and snow tubing. Conditions should be monitored, and breaks taken to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Girls and adults must agree on the portion of slope to be used for sledding and the portion to be used for walking uphill.

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, 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.

Safety and Recommended Gear

- Hat, mittens, or warm gloves
- Waterproof winter boots
- Bicycle or ski helmets (may be required by some organized sledding facilities)
- Heavy, wool insulating socks (avoid cotton socks)
- Layered clothing
- Thermal underwear or long johns
- Snow pants, snowsuit, or waterproof pants over warm layers

Snorkeling

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: J C S A

About Snorkeling

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 properly using snorkels 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.

It is important to know where it is safe to snorkel. Snorkeling is mostly recommended in warm ocean water with minimal waves or current.

Learn More:

- National Association of Underwater Instructors
- Professional Association of Diving Instructors
- Snorkeling info

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 that the National Instructors Association for Divers with Disabilities provides people with.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

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Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

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

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Ensure the snorkeling instructor holds instructional certification from Scuba Schools International (SSI) or the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) or has equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines.

Verify certified lifeguard is present. If the scuba instructor is not also a certified lifeguard, you will need a lifeguard present. Lifeguards need current ARC Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module or YMCA Waterfront Lifeguarding Certification, or the equivalent. You need one certified lifeguard for every 25 swimmers. The primary guard must be an adult (age 18). Secondary guards can be 16 years old.

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 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. Do not 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. An adult with rescue experience and/or certification must be present. If snorkeling from a boat, at least one adult should have 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.

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 alternative activity.

Use the buddy system. See "Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*."

Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning. Exit water immediately, and head to shore. 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.

Safety and Required Gear

- **Wearable flotation device:** Consult with your instructor to evaluate whether participants should wear a floatation 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 fit according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure they are in good condition with no tears.
- **Snorkel**
- **Mask**
- **Emergency flotation device:** At least one graspable and throwable Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) needs to be immediately available.

Snowshoeing

Council Approval: Not Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Snowshoeing

Snow shoeing has been around for thousands of years and is a great way for girls of all ages to get outdoors in the winter. Snowshoeing extends the hiking season into winter. It lets girls enjoy favorite trails and parks in a new way. Best of all, all ages and ability levels can enjoy the sport together.

As the saying goes, "If you can walk, you can snowshoe." The learning curve is much shorter than it is for skiing or snowboarding. Snowshoeing outings can be a good winter adventure for younger girls before advancing to skiing or snowboarding.

There are a few techniques, however, that are worth practicing: widening your stance (to avoid stepping on snowshoe frames), going up and down hills, traversing slopes, and pole usage.

No lift ticket is required. In ski areas you can often rent snowshoes, and your council may have youth snowshoes available.

Learn More:

- For those who are new to the activity: *Snowshoe* Magazine

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the ski instructor in advance to ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

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COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Instruction needs to be given by an adult with experience teaching and/or supervising snowshoeing or has documented experience according to your council's guidelines.

Know girls' limits, especially for new or inexperienced snowshoers. There is nothing wrong with a half-hour hike—15 minutes out and 15 minutes back. Start slowly, planning short routes and building up the level of adventure once girls gain confidence and ability.

Compile key contacts. See "Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*."

Select a safe snowshoeing trail. 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). Stick to established trails at first. Many ski areas have cross-country ski trails that snowshoers can share. On those, you are never too far from other people, and you're not likely to encounter avalanche hazards.

Be able to recognize trail hazards. Creek crossings, changing weather, avalanche conditions, and tree or rock wells can be difficult or downright dangerous.

Share your plan. Make sure a contact knows where you are snowshoeing and when to expect the group to return home.

Practice recovering from a fall. The act of getting up while wearing snowshoes can be a cumbersome process. It does not happen a lot, but girls can fall when snowshoeing, most often on descents. Have girls practice getting back up from the ground.

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, and sprains. 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.

Dress for the conditions: Be sure girls carry extra layers for warmth, particularly extra base layer tops in case the ones they are wearing get wet from exertion or the weather. Know the signs of hypothermia so you can recognize them in girls.

Follow snowshoeing safety standards:

- When sharing the trail with cross-country skiers, try to make your own trail whenever possible, staying out of the tracks other skiers have worked hard to set.
- Skiers have the right-of-way on trails, since it is easier for a snowshoer to step off the trail safely than it is for a skier to stop or go around. Always be polite to the folks you meet along the trail.
- A skier indicates her desire to pass by calling “track, please.”
- Do not snowshoe close to the edge of an embankment or a cliff.

Safety and Required Gear

- Snowshoes are sized to each person’s height/weight.
- Poles sized to each person’s height.
- Winter boots
- Thick, water-resistant gloves or mittens
- A winter hat.
- Heavy insulating socks
- Thermal underwear or long johns
- A water bottle.
- High-energy food (such as fruits and nuts)
- A daypack to carry personal belongings.
- A windproof, waterproof jacket

Spelunking/Caving

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: J C S A

Not Recommended For: D B

About Spelunking

Spelunking, or caving, is an exciting, hands-on way to learn about speleology, the study of caves, as well as paleontology, which is the study of life from past geologic periods by examining plant and animal fossils. As a sport, caving resembles rock climbing and often involves using ropes to crawl and climb up cavern nooks and through crannies. This type of caving is not permitted for Daisies and Brownies. However, this restriction does not apply to groups taking trips to tourist or commercial caves, which often include safety features such as paths, electric lights, and stairways.

Never go into a cave alone. Never go caving with fewer than four people 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).

Learn More:

- U.S. caving clubs: National Speleological Society
- White-nose syndrome in bat populations: White Nose Syndrome
- National Caves Association
- Guide to responsible caving: American Cave Conservation Association

Include Girls with Disabilities

Communicate with girls of all abilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Check with public, governmental, and tourist caves about their accessibility provisions. Learn about the resources and information that Disabled Sports USA provides people with disabilities.

Equity

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Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. A guide with documented experience in cave exploration should accompany the group into the cave. A guide can also help decide which caves are suitable. Pre-trip instruction should be 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 “Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*” for information.

Educate in advance. Girls should learn about basic caving guidelines before planning a caving trip and they must understand safety procedures and know how to handle equipment. Caves are fragile and sensitive environments, and they need to recognize and use resistant surfaces for travel. If no latrine is available, pack out all human waste, solids, and fluids. The smallest food crumbs can impact cave environments, so choose less crumbly foods such as nuts and chewy energy bars.

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, ensure the presence of a first aider with wilderness first aid.

Get a weather report. See “Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*.” Also, in wet weather, avoid caves with stream passages, as some caves can flood.

Safety Gear

- Properly fitting safety helmet 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. 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.
- 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 shirt with long sleeves
- Extra set of clothes
- Non-perishable, 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 should be electric and mounted on the safety helmet, while the other two light sources may be flashlights.
- Spare bulbs and batteries
- A 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)

Surfing

Council Approval: Required

Activity permitted for: J C S A

Not permitted for: Daisies, Brownies and non-swimmers

About Surfing

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 can stand up on their boards during the initial two- to four-hour session. Brownies can learn with boogie boards (much smaller boards) as opposed to surf boards which is a good progression step to surfing. However, all Girl Scouts participating in surfing of any kind must test as proficient swimmers before they try surfing. See the swim test in the Swimming chapter.

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. Be sure to inform the surf school of girls’ ages, heights, and sizes to reserve appropriate surfboards and wet suits.

During lessons, even before going in the water, girls can learn the basics of surfing, such as:

- Finding the best position for the body on the board; steering out from the shore; keeping the nose of the surfboard pointed toward the surf to cut through the waves; and not getting positioned sideways (to avoid getting caught by a wave and tumbled around)
- Going around the break line (the point at which waves begin to break) when paddling out from the shore and not through it to allow other surfers plenty of space.
- Sharing the waves, staying out of the way of other surfers, and never taking off on a wave in front of another surfer (called “snaking”)
- Keeping the board by always using the ankle leash (it is dangerous to other surfers and swimmers when surfers let go of surfboards)

The ocean is best to surf, but some rivers and regions along the Great Lakes also can be suitable for surfing when the weather is warm.

Learn More:

- Surfline glossary
- Tips for beginners and intermediate surfers, plus overviews on ocean safety and gear: Surfing Handbook
- International Surfing Association

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations with respect to water sports.

When planning to visit a waterfront at a park, contact the park office in advance. Also contact the instructor or facility teaching or hosting the surfing event. Ask about accommodating people with disabilities and make any possible accommodations to include girls with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

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Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Check swimming ability. Participants' swimming abilities should be classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored wristbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, and so on) at council-approved sites, or participants can provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test should be conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.

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 required. The instructor-to-girl ratio should be one to four.

Note: The instructor-to-participant ratio is not the same as the adult-to-girl ratio found in "Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*." Both ratios must be complied with when girls are participating in surfing. For example, if 15 Juniors are participating in surfing, there must be four instructors plus two adult Girl Scout volunteers who are not instructors.

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. A location with a soft, sandy, or muddy bottom is best. Scout out a location that does not have a sharp-edged or rocky bottom, which can be dangerous and can cut feet and limbs. Also, inquire about potential dangerous marine life and rip tides. Keep girls away from these hazards when they become evident.

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.

Get a weather and tide report. Never surf on a stormy day. Following rainy weather, check the water quality before surfing. On the morning of the surf trip, determine whether conditions will be appropriate for surfing by searching for regional surf reports on SurfLine.com, FreeTideTables.com, 17ft.com, and Weather.com. If weather conditions prevent the surf trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative 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.

Required Gear

- Surfboard (soft-deck long boards are generally recommended for beginners)
- Bathing suit
- Rash guard

- Wet suit (recommended for warmth and skin protection, especially when water temperature is below 70 degrees Fahrenheit; most surf schools rent full-body or partial suits, but they may not be “required” depending on the temperatures)
- Rocky bottom surf shoes
- Goggles for girls with glasses

Safety Gear

- At least one graspable and throwable Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water (check with lifeguards at the waterfront)
- Leash, also referred to as a leg rope—cord that attaches the surfboard to the surfer’s ankle, so that she does not have to swim too far to catch up to the board after a wipeout (usually included with a surfboard rental)

Recommended Gear

- Beach towel
- Dry clothing and sunglasses to wear after surfing.

Swimming

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Swimming

Swimming is a Girl Scout tradition that builds fitness, leadership, and team-building skills. Your troop can swim in pools, water parks, or natural bodies of water like oceans, rivers, or lakes. Safety is one of the keys to having fun in the water. Consult a local parks and recreation department, YMCA, or American Red Cross for swimming lessons. There is a swim test form provided below at the end of this Swimming chapter to document a girl’s successful completion of swimming test and to categorize her swimming ability level.

Learn more:

- Learn swimming strokes. What’s the difference between butterfly and breast stroke? How do you do a flip turn? Get some ideas at Enjoy Swimming
- Create swimming games. Marco Polo and Find the Penny are popular swimming games, but you can make up your own, too. Get more ideas at Pool Games.

Also see:

- Swimming World Magazine: Pool Games
- YMCA Safety Around Water: The Y: Safety Around Water
- American Red Cross lifeguard training: Lifeguard and Water Safety Training

- USA Swimming: USA Swimming

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the pool operator in advance. Ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Additional resources:
See Disabled Sports USA to find out about swimming inclusion.
Check out World Para Swimming to learn about inspiring swimmers of all abilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Identify lifeguard(s). When using a staffed public facility, lifeguards will be provided. At beaches or waterfronts, make sure a lifeguard will be on duty. For swimming on your own, you'll need to recruit a lifeguard. Ask your council for suggestions. At least one lifeguard, certified in American Red Cross Lifeguard Training, and one watcher is present, always. When using more than one lifeguard, lifeguards under 18 may be included in the total when there is at least one adult lifeguard also present. Additional lifeguards and watchers may be needed; see the table below.

Exception for lake, rivers, streams: At least one lifeguard, certified in American Red Cross Waterfront Lifeguard course or the equivalent, is present for every 25 swimmers, plus one watcher for every 10 swimmers.

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.

Identify watchers. One adult watcher is needed for every ten swimmers. This person assists the group by watching for possible emergencies. Lifeguards and watchers are stationed at separate posts. They stay out of the water, except in emergencies. American Red Cross (ARC) Basic Water Rescue, YMCA Aquatics Safety Assistant, or similar training is the preferred preparation. Alternately, the lifeguard may be able to give watchers an orientation. Again, check with your council in advance.

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 disabilities, age level and ability to follow instructions, type of swimming activity (instruction, recreation), type of swimming area, weather / water conditions, and rescue equipment available.

Swimming Lifeguards and Watchers Ratios

Number of Swimmers	Lifeguards	Watchers (1:10 ratio)
1–10	1 adult (see exception for pools above)	1*
11–25	1 adult (see exception for pools above)	2-3*
26–35	2 persons, at least 1 is an adult; others may be 16 years of age or older.	3-4*
36–50	2 persons, at least 1 is an adult; others may be 16 years of age or older.	4-5*

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

Clearly identify swimming abilities. These could be indicated, for example, with different colored wristbands to signify beginners, intermediate, and advanced swimmers. Swim tests can be conducted in advance, or on the day of swimming. The pool operator or lifeguard may determine the type of swim test, based on the skills needed. Some examples:

- In pools, the lifeguard can ask each participant to enter the water slowly, stay close to the edge of the pool, swim from one end to the other, and then float for 30 seconds.
- In lakes, the lifeguard can ask each participant to jump into the water, swim for 50 yards, then float or tread water for one minute.
- In surf, the swimming test should be held in advance. The lifeguard asks each participant to jump into water over her head, swim 100 yards using a combination of freestyle and elementary backstroke, and then tread water for two minutes.

Ensure swimming site safety. Check for the following:

- A posting indicates water quality passes health department tests and sanitation standards.
- Shallow areas are marked “No Diving.”
- Diving areas are separate from other swim areas.
- Chlorine levels are tested and maintained. Water should be clear.
- The area around the pool is free of clutter.
- No electrical appliances are anywhere near the pool.
- The swimming area should be free from dangerous marine life and clearly marked.
- No sharp, rocked, or heavily shelled beach waters should be chosen, if possible.
- At water parks, do not dive or run. Most water park injuries are from slips and falls.
- Participants should know their physical limits. Observe a water ride before going on. Use extra care on water slides.
- Monitor time in the water. How long should participants swim? Swimmers’ ability, weather conditions, and water temperature should be considered. Often, 30-minute time periods are plenty.
- Swim only during daylight or in well-lit pools.
- Diving is prohibited in waters of unknown depth or conditions. For all diving, the required water depth extends 10 feet on each side of the board or jumping point. If tides, drought, or other forces affect the water depth, it is checked each time before diving is permitted. Girls do not dive off the side of the board.

Safety Gear.

Ask the pool operator or lifeguard what’s available:

- Reaching pole
- Rescue tube
- Backboard
- Ring buoy
- Throw bag with line (typically 30 feet)

For open water:

- Paddle board
- Rescue can
- Kayak
- Rescue gear

Additional Gear.

- Goggles
- Swim cap
- Nose and ear plugs, for girls who need them.

Swimming Test. The next page provides an example of the documentation which demonstrates that a girl has passed the requirement of swim test. Please note that the level of swimming ability is distinguished. Girls should swim only up to their ability, as certified by an adult lifeguard or swim instructor.

Swimming Test – Documented Verification of Completion

Swim tests are required for each Girl Scout every year if they are participating in any type of aquatic activities including, but not limited to: pool activity, canoes, stand up paddleboards, etc. During resident camp, swim tests are conducted at the beginning of each week to assess a camper's swimming ability even if they have participated in one throughout the year. This test will be used when completing any paperwork asking for a swim level. Please keep in mind girls participating in summer resident camp will still need to complete a swim test upon arrival.

Participants will complete the following requirements to the best of their ability, instructor please circle appropriate level and complete information below:

- Tread water for 2 minutes while keeping their head above water.
- Swim a minimum of 20 yards in one direction without stopping. Using front crawl (freestyle) while keeping their face in the water and without touching the ground or holding onto the wall.

☐ Beginner/Non-Swimmer: This swimmer cannot successfully demonstrate or complete the above requirements. A beginner swimmer is only allowed in shallow water or where they can stand comfortably. Non swimmers must wear a Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD/lifejacket), always.

☐ Intermediate Swimmer: This swimmer can successfully demonstrate the above requirements in shallow or calm deep water but is considered a cautious swimmer or a swimmer who is not very strong. Coast Guard approved flotation devices (PFD/lifejacket) are optional (unless required by activity) but it is not recommended that anyone at this level participate in high risk swimming/aquatic activities.

☐ Proficient Swimmer: This swimmer can successfully demonstrate the above requirements in shallow or deep water, they display strong swimming skills and may participate in most high-risk swimming/aquatic activities. Coast Guard approved flotation devices (PFD/lifejacket) are not required (unless required by activity).

☐ Please note that some activities may require a more advanced test.

The following participant _____ has earned the above checked swim level on the following date: _____. This is valid for one year for the date of the test.

_____ _____ _____

Print Name Signature Instructor Title

Target Sports

Target and Shooting Sports—Master Progression Chart

Shooting Type	Grade Level/ Minimum Age	Participant-to-Instructor Ratio	Instructor/Expert Certification
Slingshot	D B J C S A	D, B - 5:1 J C S A - 10:1	One adult instructor is trained in slingshot safety, form, and technique, range rules, and emergency procedures.
Target Paintball	B J C S A	B - 5:1 J C S A - 10:1	One adult is trained in paintball safety, range rules, and emergency procedures.
Air/BB Guns	B J C S A	B - 5:1 J C S A - 10:1	One adult is a certified National Rifle Association range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Archery	B J C S A	B - 5:1 J C S A - 10:1	One adult is certified by National Field Archery Association, USA Archery, or Easton Foundation.
3-D Archery	B J C S A	10:1	One adult is a certified by National Field Archery Association, USA Archery, or Easton Foundation. Or demonstrated equivalent experience.
Ax/Knife/ Hatchet Throwing	C S A	2:1	Adult instructors are trained and experienced in blade throwing safety specific for the ax, knife, or hatchet being used including proper form and technique, range rules and specifications, and emergency procedures.
Rifle	Age 12 & older	8:1	One adult is a certified NRA range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Shotgun- Trap/ Skeet Shooting	Age 12 & older	8:1	One adult is a certified NRA range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Muzzle Loading	Age 12 & older	2:1	One adult is a certified NRA range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Pistol	Age 14 & older	4:1	One adult is a certified NRA Range Safety Officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.

Target Sports

Shooting Sports / Guns

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: See Target and Shooting Sports—Master Progression Chart

Includes:

- Air guns / Paintball
- Skeet
- BB
- Rifle
- Muzzle
- Pistol
- Paintball (target paintball)

About Shooting Guns

Why teach shooting sports? Handling a gun and good marksmanship develop positive traits such as patience, discipline, determination, focus, attention to detail, and persistence. Since these skills are key elements of leadership and confidence, we encourage girls to take what they learn from any sport or activity and apply it in their lives, communities, and the world.

Learning how to handle guns properly and safely is of paramount importance, as is the healthy respect girls will develop when properly trained in shooting sports. There are a variety of styles and sizes of guns, each appropriate for specific grade levels. The guns girls will be learning on are for the express purpose of safe target shooting. Girls are not permitted to hunt.

Note: Refer to Target and Shooting Sports Master Progression Chart for age and grade level requirements. Written permission must be obtained by your council in advance of the activity. Once approved, you must have written permission from a parent/guardian before a girl is permitted to participate in target shooting.

Learn More:

- Safety re: various shooting sports/events, and youth videos: USA Shooting
- More safety information: National Rifle Association
- Safety at home and on the range: National Shooting Sports Foundation
- Trap and skeet shooting for high school girls: USA High School Clay Target League
- Safe shooting certification: USA Clay Target Safety
- Learn how to shoot: Revolutionary War Veterans

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult needs to be a certified National Rifle Association Range Safety Officer (RSO) or USA Shooting Sports instructor or have equivalent certification or documented experience and skill teaching/supervising firearm safety or shooting sports according to your council's guidelines.

Note: The instructor to participant ratio is not the same as the adult to girl ratio that is found in "Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*." Both the instructor ratio and the adult to girl ratio must be complied with when girls are participating in target sports.

Connect with your Girl Scout council for approved sites. Groups are required to use council approved indoor and outdoor firing ranges. Council must approve all sites in advance.

Keep in mind that safe sites include those where:

- Equipment is stored in a box, closet, or cabinet and locked when not in use.
- Ammunition and firearms are stored in separate locked containers or areas with different locks and combinations.
- Caliber firearms have working trigger locks for storage (exceptions: BB and air guns).
- Equipment, including targets, and checked each time and in good condition.

- Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity are posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping on to the range.
- Backstops or a specific safety zone are set behind the targets.
- Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers are known to the entire facility population.
- The shooting line is clearly defined.

At an indoor range, check that:

- Targets are well-lit.
- Doors or entries to the range are locked or blocked from the inside.
- Fire exits are not blocked.
- Ensure equipment is properly sized for the girls.

At an outdoor range, check that:

- Targets are not placed in front of houses, roads, trails, or tents.
- Areas with pedestrian traffic are avoided.
- Areas are clear of brush. A hillside backstop is recommended.
- The shooting area and the spectator area behind the shooting area are clearly marked.
- In the shooting area, there is a safe distance at least 100 yards behind the targets and 30 yards on each side of the range.
- The range is not used after nightfall.

Girls should learn about shooting. Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, handling the equipment, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices.

Ensure to always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction. This is the primary rule of target shooting sport safety. A safe direction means that the firearm 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 front end of the firearm is pointed, *always.*

On the Day of Shooting:

Dress appropriately. Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Tie back long hair.

Limit shooters' exposure to lead. For firearm sports, be sure that the range safety officer and/or the instructor provide wet wipes for the girls to cleanse 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 pores closed so that less lead is absorbed into the blood stream. Girls should not take casings as souvenirs.

Ensure the instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand. The instructor covers safety procedures, including:

- No dry firing, as it can damage equipment.
- Keep the safety clip on until it is time to shoot.
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, away from self and others

Safety and Required Gear

- Firearm (automatic firearms are not permitted at any time)
- Ammunition
- Targets
- Safety glasses
- Ear protection
- Barrel-blocking device (sleeve) for paintball
- CO2 or compressed air tank for paintball
- Paintball hopper (loader) for paintball

Archery

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: B J C S A

Slingshot Permitted For: D, B, J, C, S, A

3-D Archery Permitted For: C, S, A

About Archery

One of the oldest weapons and hunting methods, archery is still used for its traditional purposes, but is more common today in the United States as a recreational and competitive activity. There are a variety of styles and sizes of bows and arrows, but they are all used for one purpose: to hit a target. Girls will develop skills based on proper procedures and form, handling equipment, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices. Archery is not permitted for Daisies; however, Daisies may participate in using slingshots as a progression to learning rules and range commands for archery. Bows and arrows should be appropriate to the age, size, strength, and ability of the girls. Girls do not aim at people, ever, or targets in the image of human beings.

3-D Archery. Cadettes and older may participate in a 3-D archery course where a girl moves up to the target that could be set up between trees and use a target that is other than a circular shape to enhance accuracy and skill level. Girls do not shoot at targets in the shape of human beings.

Slingshots for Daisies should be simple, fun, and easy to use when the equipment is designed for children of that grade level and body size. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle the equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others.

Learn More:

- Archery tournaments and events: National Field Archery Association
- Archery clubs/events: Team USA Archery
- Videos on archery basics: YouTube

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. See Disabled Sports USA and Team USA for more about equipment, adaptations, and finding a program near you.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Assess participants' maturity level. 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.

A beginner uses arrows that extend one to two inches in front of the bow when the bow is at full draw.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult needs to be a certified USA Archery instructor or have equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines. Ensure that there is a ratio of one instructor for every ten girls. Archery on a 3-D course is well supervised and appropriate to age, skill level, and location of shooting.

Note: The instructor-to-participant ratio is not the same as the adult-to-girl ratio found in "Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*." Both ratios must be complied with when girls are participating in target sports. For example, if there are 15 Girl Scout Cadettes on the shooting line, there must be two instructors plus two adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).

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, look for organized indoor and outdoor archery ranges. Call the facility to determine the following safety information is in order:

- **Equipment is stored in box/closet/cabinet and locked when not in use.**
- **Equipment, including targets, are checked each time and in good condition.**
- **Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity are posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping on to the range.**
- **Backstops or a specific safety zone are set behind the targets.**
- **Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers are known to the entire facility population.**
- **Shooting line is clearly defined.**

At an outdoor range, check that:

- Targets are not placed in front of houses, roads, trails, or tents.
- Areas with pedestrian traffic are avoided.
- Areas are clear of brush. A hillside backstop is recommended.
- The shooting area and the spectator area behind the shooting area are clearly marked.
- In the shooting area, there is a safe distance at least 50 yards behind the targets and 20 yards on each side of the range.
- The range is not used after nightfall.

At an indoor range, make sure:

- Targets are well-lit.
- Doors or entries to the range are locked or blocked from the inside.
- Fire exits are not blocked.
- Ensure equipment is properly sized for the girls.
- Compound bows are offered in both right- and left-handed models, are the proper size, and have the correct draw weight for the girls.
- Only target tip arrows are used, never broadhead/hunting tips.

Girls should learn about archery and shooting. Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, handling the equipment, getting the right stance, sighting, aiming, and observing safety practices.

Always keep the bow pointed in a safe direction. This is the primary rule of target sport safety. A safe direction means that the bow 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 front end of the bow is pointed at all times.

Ensure that equipment to be used is in good condition. Make sure that the equipment is clean, in good working order, and nothing is broken or loose. Targets and backstops for targets need to be in good repair.

On the day of shooting:

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 the instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand. The instructor covers safety procedures, including:

- No “dry” firing, as it can damage equipment.
- Always keeping the bow pointed in a safe direction.

Safety and Required Gear

- Wrist, finger, and arm protection, such as finger tabs and arm guards (right- and left-handed models)
- Bows and arrows.
- Targets
- Quivers

Ax, Knife, and Hatchet Throwing

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: C S A

Note: See Target and Shooting Sports—Master Progression Chart

About Ax, Knife, and Hatchet Throwing

Some of the oldest weapons, tools, and hunting methods include the ax, knife, and hatchet and they are still used for their traditional purposes in some areas today. Learning how to handle them safely by aiming at targets for accuracy is also common today as a recreational and competitive activity. It is an ideal way to learn how to handle these tools safely, tools that can be used in the great outdoors and wilderness excursions.

Good throwing requires learning positive traits such as patience, determination, focus, attention to detail, discipline, and persistence. Since these skills are likewise key elements of leadership and confidence, we encourage our girls to take what disciplines they learn from any sport or activity and apply it to their participation in their communities and the world.

There are a variety of styles and sizes of axes, knives, and hatchets. The ones the girls will be learning about are designed for the express purpose of hitting a target.

Learn More:

- World Ax Throwing League (WATL)
- National Axe Throwing Federation
- American Knife Throwers Alliance

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and special accommodations. Check with facilities ahead of time to determine what accommodations can be made.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

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COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult needs to be trained and experienced in ax, hatchet, or knife throwing safety (depending on which you are doing), form and technique, range rules and specifications, and emergency procedures.

Note: The instructor-to-participant ratio is not the same as the adult-to-girl ratio found in in the Safety Standards and Guidelines. You must follow the Target and Shooting Sports—Master Progression Chart for the proper number of instructors. Additionally, both ratios must be complied with when girls are participating in throwing sports. For example, if 15 Cadettes are on the throwing line, there must be eight instructors plus two adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors) who are present during the activity.

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, look for organized indoor and outdoor throwing ranges. Call the facility to determine the following safety information to select a safe site:

- **Equipment should be stored in a box, closet, or cabinet and locked when not in use.**
- **Equipment, including targets, are checked each time and in good condition.**
- **Range rules and throwing command controls are clearly posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping on to the range.**
- **Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity are posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping on to the range.**
- **Backstops or a specific safety zone is set behind the targets.**
- **Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers are known to the entire facility population.**
- **The shooting line is clearly defined.**

At an indoor range, make sure that:

Indoor Range Specific Guidelines: WATL for Indoor Range Information

Note: For hatchet throwing, indoor ceilings must be a minimum of 12 feet high; metal chain link 15-foot floor-to-ceiling partitions must separate sets of two targets; and within a set of two targets, there must be a 6-foot floor-to-ceiling partition between the targets.

- Each throwing area is designated as a throwing lane.
- A regulation lane for competition must contain 2 targets.
- Fences or walls block this area from the rest of the facility to keep throwers and axes all contained in a safe environment.
- Only the two participating throwers and the axe throwing coach are allowed inside the lane at one time. This includes ensuring the area behind the throwers is clear of any other person up to 5'.
- 10 ft minimum/clear ceiling height (within the throwing lane) is recommended for safety reasons.
- Targets are well lit.
- Doors or entries to the range are locked or blocked from the inside.
- Fire exits are not blocked.

At an outdoor range, check that:

Indoor Range Specific Guidelines: WATL for Outdoor Range Information

- Each throwing area is designated as a throwing lane.
- There needs to be a marker of 12 ft from the targets to designate the safe zone.
- Only the two participating throwers and the supervisor are allowed in inside the lane at one time. This includes ensuring the area behind the throwers is clear of any other person up to 6′.
- There needs to be 8ft tall fencing on the sides around the throwing area. This fencing must cover at least 15 ft to the front of the targets and connect to the fencing behind the targets with the back fencing.
- There needs to be 8ft tall fencing covering behind the target.
- If the targets are not fully enclosed in fencing with a ceiling, then there must be fencing at least 10 ft away behind the targets.
- Under no circumstances can spectators or the public be allowed to walk behind the target, even behind the 8ft tall fencing area.
- If there is any reason to go behind the targets, it will only be by an authorized facilitator. Axes must all be put down any time a facilitator is behind a target.
- Outdoor Range Specific Guidelines: Outdoor Range Information

Ensure equipment is properly sized for the girls and is made for throwing. Knives should be between 9 to 16 inches and not overly sharp. Hatchet heads should weigh between 1.25 and 1.75 pounds, the handle should be wood, length must be at least 13 inches, including the handle in the eye of the blade and the face (blade) of the axe must be no longer than 4 inches and not overly sharp.

Girls should learn about throwing. Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, handling the equipment, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices.

Always keep the knife/hatchet pointed in a safe direction. This is the primary rule of target sport safety. A safe direction means that the knife/hatchet is handled so that even if it were to be dropped or slip out of the throwers grip it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control your actions, *always*.

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.

Verify Instructor Knowledge. Ensure the experienced instructor reviews all rules, range, and operating procedures with girls beforehand.

Safety and Required Gear

- Axes, knives, hatchets
- Targets (positioned at recommended/safe distance)
- Hard shoes (to protect feet from bounce backs)
- Gloves (may be provided)

Slingshot

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

About Slingshots

Slingshots are descendants of the trebuchet and the sling—weapons used for centuries! For Girl Scouts, they serve as a progression step for target range activities like archery by teaching the girls about following range rules and commands as well as helping them to build aim, target skills, and hand-eye coordination.

Learn More: To learn more about Slingshot skills, view these links:

- 5 Proven Ways to Improve Skills
- How to Aim a Slingshot

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls and their caregivers about disabilities. See Disabled Sports USA for more about equipment and adaptations.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific

COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so not to endanger themselves and others.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Because slingshots are intended to serve as a progression step for target sports, one adult needs to be a certified USA Archery instructor or have equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council guidelines. Ensure that there is a ratio of one instructor for every ten girls for Juniors and older. For Daisies and Brownies, please have one instructor for five girls.

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others.

Select a safe site.

- Equipment is stored when not in use and is in good repair.
- Equipment, including targets, are checked each time and in good condition.
- Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity are posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping on to the range.
- Backstops or a specific safety zone are set behind the targets.
- Shooting line is clearly defined.
- Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers are known to the entire facility population.

At an outdoor range, check that:

- Targets are not placed in front of houses, roads, trails, or tents.
- Areas with pedestrian traffic are avoided.
- The shooting area and the spectator area behind the shooting area are clearly marked.
- The range is not used after nightfall.

At an indoor range, make sure:

- Targets are well-lit.
- Doors or entries to the range are locked or blocked from the inside.
- Fire exits are not blocked.
- Ensure equipment is properly sized for the girls.
- "Shot" is appropriate for the range.

Girls should learn about shooting. Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, handling the equipment, getting the correct stance, sighting, aiming, and observing safety practices.

Always keep the slingshot pointed in a safe direction. This is the primary rule of target sport safety. A safe direction means that the slingshot is pointed toward the target or toward the ground, so that even if it were to go off it would not cause injury or damage.

On the day of slingshot shooting:

Dress appropriately for the activity. Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing loose sleeves, dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Also, have girls tie back long hair.

Ensure the instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand. The instructor covers safety procedures, including:

- Always keeping the slingshot pointed in a safe direction.
- Notice form to avoid snapping writs or hand with the band.

Basic Slingshot Range Rules

- This range may be opened only by qualified instructor.
- Listen to and follow all commands on the range.
- Do not pick up, load, or fire your slingshot until given the commands.
- Stand behind the firing line. Do not straddle the firing line.
- Absolutely no running on the range.
- No extra talking on the range.
- Step back from the firing line when you finish firing.

Basic Slingshot Safety Rules

- Hold slingshot pointed in a safe direction, toward the target or the ground.
- Keep the pouch ammunition free until given permission to load and fire.
- Leave the bands at rest until you are ready to shoot.

Safety and Required Gear

- Stable slingshot
- Ammunition appropriate for the targets: dog food kibbles, ping pong balls, marshmallows, ½" paintballs
- Range Rules poster

Tools – Hand and Power

Council Approval: May Be Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

Tools are specific to grade level please review master chart.

About Learning and Using Tools

Tools greatly vary by their power source, battery operated, electric or manual as well as what job they are to be used for. While using tools can achieve great accomplishments, using extreme caution with all tools is extremely important. Adults must supervise girls, always, and girls should never operate tools on their own or be left alone at any time. Adult supervision is mandatory for all projects using tools no matter how big or small.

Learn More

For additional resources, see:

- Safety Tips from OSHA
- Department of Industrial Relations
- OSHA Safety Courses - Protective Equipment

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs, interest, and special accommodations. Check with facilities ahead of time to determine what accommodations can be made.

Equity

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Safety Activity Checkpoints

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a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Assess maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others.

Dress appropriately. 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. Always ensure everyone has on closed toed shoes and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as eye goggles, leather gloves, ear, and head protection etc. (when necessary)

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. At least one adult needs to be trained in proper usage of the tools being used including safety precautions, equipment use, emergency procedures and which grade levels are permitted to use which tools.

General safety tips for hand and power tools:

- Always have an adult that is trained in that piece of equipment or tool teach the participants how to use each item.
- Buy quality tools. Many tools, including cutters and hammers, should be made of steel and should be heat-treated.
- Regularly inspect tools to make sure they are in good shape and fit for use.
- Be sure to maintain your tools by performing regular maintenance, like grinding or sharpening. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use the right tool for the job. In other words, do not try to use a wrench as a hammer.
- Make sure that your feet are planted on a stable surface.
- Be aware of the people around you and make sure they stay clear of the tools you are using.
- Never carry tools up a ladder by hand. Instead, use a bucket or bag to hoist tools from the ground to the worker.
- When working at heights, never leave tools lying out in the areas where they could present a hazard to workers below.
- Never carry pointed tools in your pocket. Carry them in a toolbox or cart instead.
- Inspect your tools on a regular basis, checking for damage. Report damaged tools to your supervisor.
- Make sure to keep extra tools handy in case the tool you had planned to use is damaged.
- Make sure tools are stored in a safe place.

Safety tips for electric power tools:

To prevent hazards associated with the use of power tools, workers should observe the following general precautions:

- Never carry a tool by the cord or hose.
- Never yank the cord or the hose to disconnect it from the receptacle.
- Keep cords and hoses away from heat, oil, and sharp edges.
- Disconnect tools when not using them, before servicing and cleaning them, and when changing accessories such as blades, bits, and cutters.
- Keep all people not involved with the work at a safe distance from the work area.
- Secure work with clamps or a vise, freeing both hands to operate the tool.
- Avoid accidental starting. Do not hold fingers on the switch button while carrying a plugged-in tool.
- Maintain tools with care; keep them sharp and clean for best performance.
- Follow instructions in the user's manual for lubricating and changing accessories.
- Be sure to keep good footing and maintain good balance when operating power tools.
- Wear proper apparel for the task. Loose clothing, ties, or jewelry can become caught in moving parts.
- Remove all damaged portable electric tools from use and tag them: "Do Not Use."
- Keep floors dry and clean to avoid slipping while working with or around dangerous tools.
- Keep cords from presenting a tripping hazard.
- Use tools that are double-insulated or have a three-pronged cord and are plugged into a grounded receptacle.
- Do not use electric tools in wet conditions unless they are approved for that use.
- Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) or an assured grounding program.

Please review - Master Tool Chart for Appropriate Grade Level

Type of Tool	Grade Level Permitted					
	D	**B**	**J**	**C**	**S**	**A**
Band/Scroll Saws				X	X	X
Belt Sander (electric, cordless)				X	X	X
Chain Saws	*Not Permitted*					
Circular, Reciprocating, or Radial Saw	*Not Permitted*					
Commercial Lawn Mower (push, self-propelled, riding)	*Not Permitted*					
Coping Saw				X	X	X
Cordless Drill				X	X	X
Cutting tools (e.g., Dremel®, small)				X	X	X
Edger (electric, gas-powered)						X
Hacksaw				X	X	X
Hand clipper (small)		X	X	X	X	X
Handheld sander (small)				X	X	X
Handsaw		X	X	X	X	X
Hedge trimmer (electric, gas-powered)						X
Hoe	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hose spray washer	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hot Glue			X	X	X	X
Jigsaw					X	X
Leaf/grass blower (electric, gas-powered)						X
Line trimmer (electric, gas-powered)	*Not Permitted*					
Log splitters	*Not Permitted*					
Mattock				X	X	X
Nail hammer	X	X	X	X	X	X
Paint roller with extension pole			X	X	X	X
Paint sprayer (small, less than 50 psi)				X	X	X
Pickaxe				X	X	X
Pocketknife		X	X	X	X	X
Posthole digger				X	X	X
Pressure washer (>50 but <100 PSI)					X	X
Rake	X	X	X	X	X	X
Residential lawn mower (self-propelled, riding)	*Not Permitted*					
Retractable Knives				X	X	X
Router/planer	*Not Permitted*					
Screwdriver (electric)			X	X	X	X

Type of Tool	Grade Level Permitted					
	D	**B**	**J**	**C**	**S**	**A**
Screwdrivers	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shovel	X	X	X	X	X	X
Soldering Iron				X	X	X
Trowel		X	X	X	X	X
Wheel cart (1-, 2-, or 4-wheeled)			X	X	X	X
Wood chippers. Age 18 and older	*Not Permitted*					
Wood chisel			X	X	X	X
Wood sanding block (handheld)	X	X	X	X	X	X

Tethered Hot Air Balloon Rides

Council Approval: Required
Activity Permitted For: J C S A

About Tethered Balloon Rides

Hot air or helium balloons that remain tethered to the earth provide a new perspective and exciting experience. The balloons are attached to ground-level anchors while passengers ride in a basket or gondola under the balloon. Riders must be Juniors and above and must be taller than the basket (a head above the basket, which is typically 3.5 feet high).

Look for well-established amusement parks, zoos, and similar facilities that might offer helium balloon rides. Some hot air balloon operators can set up temporary tethered rides in a suitable place. Contact local vendors.

Note: Untethered hot air balloons, blimps, helicopters, and small private planes, are not permitted.

Learn More:

- Suggestions for riders and more: Balloon Federation of America
- About complying with rules for pilots: The Federal Aviation Administration's *Balloon Flying Handbook*

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Connect with the balloon ride operator to determine any access or safety steps that need to be arranged in advance. The United States Access Board has transportation resources and information to support people with disabilities.

Equity

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Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Select a qualified operator. Ensure operators have liability insurance and are licensed through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Pilots must be currently licensed. Here are some questions to ask of an operator you are considering:

- Do you comply with the Envelope of Safety or FAA Wings programs? These voluntary programs, promoted by the FAA, indicate an operator or pilot is willing to achieve a high level of preparation and training.
- How long have you been flying/operating in this area?
- Do you have a commercial pilot's FAA certificate?
- What is your safety/accident record?
- What insurance coverage does your company carry?
- Will you be flying or piloting our ride, or just booking it for another pilot?
- Do you have a business license for flying in this area?

Choose a balloon that meets Girl Scout standards. The balloon must be certified and registered with the Federal Aviation Administration for passenger use.

Helium balloon rides are likely to be permanently installed and inflated with helium, a gas lighter than air. They can carry many riders in a donut-shaped gondola below the balloon. A single

cable runs from the balloon to the ground through the hole in the gondola. The operator controls the rise and descent of the balloon with the cable.

Tethered hot air balloons use heated air to inflate a large, colorful envelope. Because heated air is less dense than ambient air, the balloon rises. A passenger basket or gondola is suspended below the balloon. To rise and descend, a licensed pilot carefully manages the heated air with fuel—typically propane. The aircraft is tethered by ropes or straps to three heavy or fixed items (anchors) on the ground. The pilot and ground crew monitor wind direction and speed and anchor placement. A crew member manages any riders waiting for a turn.

Know the local laws. Many other countries do not maintain the same strict flight standards as those in the United States. Research the standards and enforcement practices of the country you'll visit. Ride only in countries with firm safety standards. Contact your council for guidance.

On the Day of Riding:

Get a weather report. Be prepared to postpone or cancel rides in case of poor weather. There should be no lightning storms predicted within a 50-mile radius of the site. Strong winds or lightning are especially dangerous, but even winds of over 5 mph can be too much. Contact the balloon operator or pilot for guidance.

Observe general safety rules:

- Follow pilot and crew instructions about getting into and out of the basket or gondola.
- Listen to the orientation and follow the rules mentioned.
- Never lift someone to see over the edge of the basket.
- Use the buddy system and adult supervision, always.
- Follow instructions in an emergency.
- Do not play on or around the ground anchors or tethers.

Address seasickness. Suggest to parents and adults that girls and adults who get motion sickness consider taking a remedy in advance. Other tips:

- Bring mint, ginger candies, gingersnaps, or plain crackers to settle queasy stomachs.
- Have seasick persons stay in the fresh air. Have them keep their eyes on the horizon.

Safety Gear

- Tethers for hot air balloons may be ropes or straps, which must be in good condition. Operators should inspect them before each use and monitor them throughout the ride(s). Hot air balloons should use a three-point tether. Helium balloons may use a single tethering cable.
- Rescue and safety gear, according to industry standards for the aircraft type, including fire extinguishers and weights.
- Layered clothing, according to the weather and no loose or dangling items
- Seasickness remedies (see above) if needed.

Travel / Trips

Council Approval: Required for overnight trips

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

Note*: Approval for international travel must often be obtained a year or more in advance of the trip.*

About Travel/Trips

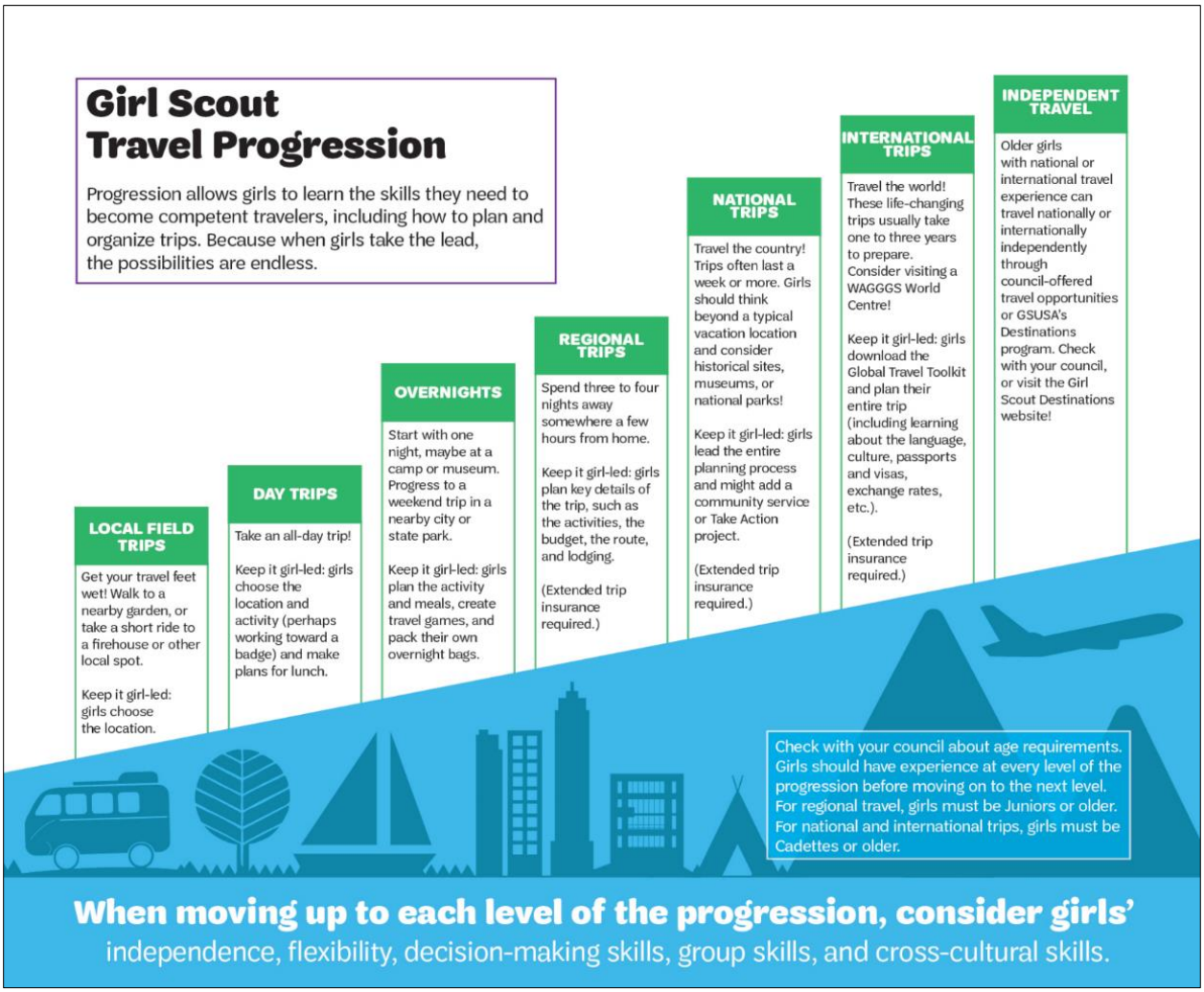
Some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout's life happen while taking trips. Travel offers a wealth of opportunities for girls to develop leadership, confidence, and practical life skills. The following information can help you and girls prepare for local, regional, or international travel.

Girl Scouts is a great place for girls to learn how to plan and take exciting trips, because travel is built on a progression of activities—one activity leads to the next. Daisies can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips—even international ones!

For Daisies, this could mean a day trip to an arboretum as part of the Journey they are working on. For Seniors or Ambassadors, it might mean whitewater rafting in Costa Rica or exploring the Our Chalet World Center in Switzerland. Please see the Girl Scout Guide to U.S. Travel.

Although many troops decide to travel together, Girl Scouts might join a trip with other girls from around their council or form a new troop with other girls who like to travel. Girl Scouts of the USA offers individual Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors the chance to travel independently and meet other Girl Scouts from across the country through the Destinations program.

The recommended progression of trips and travel for Girl Scouts are:



Local Field Trips (Daisies and older): A walk to a nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to a firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies. Keep it girl-led: girls can choose the location!

Day trip (Daisies and older): An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a daylong trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal) allows younger girls to select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home. Keep it girl-led: girls can choose the location and an activity (maybe a badge activity?) and help make plans for lunch.

Note: Full-day trips may be very challenging for Daises, especially for kindergarteners who have not experienced short trips. Make sure girls take some short trips before they progress to a full day trip.

Overnight & Weekend Trips (Daisies and older): A trip of one—or possibly two—nights away could start with one night camping or staying at a Girl Scout property and progress to a visit to a state or national park, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground—or even an overnight at a large museum! These short trips are just long enough to get girls

excited about travel, but not long enough to generate homesickness. Keep it girl-led: girls plan the activity and meals, create travel games, and pack their own bags.

Note: A Daisy troop may participate in an overnight experience if the girls are ready. Brownie troops can participate up to two nights. For camp this differs in the following way: girls who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Girls who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights.

Regional Trips (Juniors and older): Three or four nights camping or staying in a hotel, motel, hostel, or vacation rental within the girls' home region taking girls up to a few hours away from home. Keep it girl-led: girls plan key details of the trip such as activities, the budget, the route, and lodging.

National trips (Cadettes and older): Travel anywhere in the country can last up to a week or more. Try to steer clear of ordinary recreational trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component—such as incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country. Perhaps the girls want to plan a trip to some national parks as part of the Girl Scout Ranger program. Keep it girl-led: girls lead the entire planning process and might plan to add a community service or Take-Action project.

International trips (Cadettes and older): Travel around the world can require one to three years of preparation. Ensure passports, documentation, visas, and customs requirements are in order well in advance of your trip. International trips are available to Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, but only to those who have successfully participated in a progression of overnight and extended trips within Girl Scouting. Keep it girl-led: girls download the Global Travel Toolkit, and plan their entire trip – including learning about language, culture, passports & visas, exchange rates, etc.

Independent Travel (Cadettes and older): Older girls who already have national or international travel experience can travel independently through council-offered travel opportunities or GSUSA's Destinations program. For opportunities, check with your council and visit the Destinations website.

When thinking about progression, consider things like girls':

- Ability to be away from parents and their homes.
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations.
- Ability to make decisions for themselves and the good of the group well and easily.
- Ability to get along with each other and handle challenges.
- Previous cross-cultural experiences, skills, interests, and language skills (where applicable)

Non–Girl Scouts. If you plan to include non–Girl Scouts on your trip, such as siblings, they should also be the same appropriate grade level in progression with travel experience. For example, an eight-year-old sibling of a Senior should not participate in an international trip. And remember, you will have to purchase supplemental insurance for nonmembers.

WAGGGS World Centers or your Girl Scout council may have additional or different guidelines regarding age requirements for international travel.

Learn More:

- WAGGGS World Centers
- Girl Scout Guide to U.S. Travel
- International events through Girl Scouts
- Girl Scouts' Destinations program
- U.S. passports and international travel: U.S. Department of State
- Travelers' health (vaccines, medicine, advice): Centers for Disease Control
- Girl Scout Global Travel Toolkit

Include Girls with Disabilities

Communicate with girls of various abilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. A great reference for learning about travelling with disabilities is the Open Doors organization.

Equity

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Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl or adult, missing girl, sudden illness, or an outbreak of infectious disease.

Plan Transportation in Advance. When planning transportation, keep in mind that large 15-passenger vans manufactured prior to 2013 without driver assistance technology had been flagged as unsafe by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and should therefore be avoided. For more important information on operating15 passenger vans see the Transportation section under the Safety Standards at the beginning of Safety Activity Checkpoints. If the van is being used professionally by a commercial shuttle service, this is acceptable.

For chartered buses or rented vehicles always verify safety credentials and commercial driving licenses, check the availability of seatbelts, and request a certificate of insurance showing a minimum of one million dollars Auto Liability insurance.

Note during COVID-19: chartered vehicles that are exclusively for your group may provide more protection than public transportation. Sitting in a checkerboard (every other seat) configuration allows a bit more distance between participants.

Choose accommodations wisely. Girl Scout groups may stay in a variety of overnight accommodations. Evaluate all options with a view to safety, cost, amenities, distance to planned sights or transportation, privacy, parking, and insurance. Consider:

- Girl Scout camps and facilities, or WAGGGS World Centers.
- National, state, or local campgrounds, many of which offer cabins to rent. Try reserveamerica.com.
- Hostels. HI USA offers Girl Scout-ready hostels in the U.S.
- Hotels. Consider suites and adjoining rooms to enhance supervision.

Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway. These are permitted however because these are privately owned properties, it can be difficult to qualify safety and credibility. For these reasons, additional steps for Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway are required. Confirm the following ahead of time:

- The rental is for exclusive use of the home. No other renters will have access to the home during the rental period.
- The space has smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers (these are noted as amenities on booking sites).
- The home and host have substantial, positive visitor reviews. Do not book places with negative, few or no reviews. Look for super-host status on Airbnb.
- The liability insurance from the host covers premises for commercial use, with a minimum of one million dollars General Liability insurance.
- Check the host's profile or identity verification. You may be asked to do the same, as a renter.
- The local host or manager contact info is available for immediate needs. Share this information with an in-town contact (a person not on the trip).
- Check state laws to see if Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway are mandated to meet hotel laws and standards so that you know there is an extra layer of protection.

Check accommodations on arrival. No matter what housing you book, inspect premises with the group immediately on arrival. Let the front desk or host know if you find any deficiencies. Maintain a budget margin so that you can move to another location if you find a property unsafe. Here are several points to check upon arrival:

- All points of entry are secure and lockable.

- Stairs or fire escapes are identified and shown to girls.
- Evacuation routes are clear and known to all.
- Basic safety systems are in place (as appropriate to the building and jurisdiction such as a fire extinguisher and smoke alarm.
- Location of local emergency services and how to reach them.
- Confirm any communication services (mobile carrier, wifi) are running and reliable.

Sleeping and Bathroom Arrangements.

Follow these points:

- Adults are not required to sleep in the same space (i.e. hotel room) as girls; if they do, there should be at least two unrelated female adults in the room.
- Each participant has her own bed. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed.
- Reduce the likelihood of spreading illness by keeping beds six feet apart, and/or sleeping head-to-toe, when possible.
- Girls and adults do not share a bed; however, some councils make exceptions for mothers and daughters.
- Males should not sleep in the same space as girl members. An exception is made for family members during events such as parent-daughter or family overnights where one family may sleep together in an area specifically designated to accommodate families.
- If possible, men should have their own designated bathroom. If a unisex bathroom is used, the door must have a working lock, or a system for notifying others that the bathroom is in use. This system should be reviewed and understood by all girls and adults.
- When traveling or camping, men should not have to walk through the girls' sleeping area to get to the bathroom. Men must stay in a tent or a cabin that is separate from the girls or women.

For additional information on sleeping accommodations, See Safety Standards and Guidelines at the beginning of Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Additional Considerations

Try to make sure international permission slips are signed by both parents. Discuss with your council about having both parents sign the permission slip and notarizing it. This is recommended by the U.S. Customs & Border Protection and is strongly suggested as a best practice.

Take the insurance. When booking flights, consider cancellation insurance which primarily covers the cost for airfare in the event a trip is cancelled due to illness. Read the fine print carefully, as some situations (such as pandemics) may not be covered. Broad cancellation insurance is called "Cancel for any reason" (CFAR) and must be obtained immediately after the first booking. Discuss this option with your council, if needed, as it could be costly.

For trips longer than two nights, inquire with your council about accident activity insurance. You must enroll and purchase a specific Activity Accident coverage from Mutual of Omaha to cover

trips longer than two nights (three if on a federal holiday); trips longer than two nights are *not covered* on the Basic Plan.

When planning to travel internationally, discuss liability insurance and accident activity insurance for it with your council. You will need to confirm that your council's liability insurance does not have any specific exceptions or exclusion for international travel. For Activity Accident insurance, you must enroll and purchase a specific policy from Mutual of Omaha to cover international trips; international trips are not covered on the Basic Plan.

Plan for contingencies. Occasionally, things will not go as planned. Budget for extra money on hand as a contingency fund for when unexpected changes come up, for example: a cancelled accommodation, a train is missed, or an illness requires quarantine or recuperation.

Verify leader/instructor knowledge, experience, judgment, and maturity. Ensure that at least one adult is trained or possesses knowledge, skills, and experience in the following areas:

- First aid
- Travel progression and readiness, including homesickness.
- Trip planning in a girl-led environment
- Safety management
- Program activities specific to the trip
- Group dynamics and management
- Supervision of girls and adults
- If the trip is international, leader must have international travel experience.

Prepare a pre-trip orientation. Make sure girls have a detailed itinerary, but do not post the itinerary on a publicly accessible website where others may be able to see it. Ensure that girl and adult participants, and girls' parents, receive information about health, first aid and emergency procedures, plans for transportation and any geographic detail such as the terrain or environment. Also share basic operational procedures (i.e. buddy system at all times) and behavior expectations. You may want to work with your girls to create a group behavior contract, and have girls sign it. Another suggestion is to create a personal emergency action plan that each girl can write out herself and keep with her. Make sure to discuss topics like:

- Who her buddy is—and how the buddy system works,
- What to do if she is separated from the group, whether by accident or due to a crime,
- What to do if she loses something significant: money, passport, or luggage,
- What to do if emergency help is needed,
- How to perform basic first aid procedures,
- How to deal with a large crowd, if applicable,
- What positive behaviors are expected of her and the consequences to self or others, by not living up to those behaviors.

International Travel. International travel involves increased travel precautions and requirements compared to domestic travel. The following Safety Checkpoints apply to International Travel:

- Register your trip with the U.S. government's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) so that you will get updates about safety, and that the State Department knows where you are traveling.
- Read on the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention website about health concerns for the country. Make sure girls and parents/guardians review this information. Every participant travelling internationally should visit their doctor to discuss their travel health requirements and any vaccinations or medications necessary.

- Become aware of any quarantine, vaccine, or screening requirements for return to the U.S., as well as what is required for entry into destination countries. This information will help greatly when deciding upon a destination.

- Confirm the travel advisory level for the country via the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs. Note that the State Department now classifies travel advisories with travel alert levels as follows:
  - Level 1 - Exercise Normal Precautions
  - Level 2 - Exercise Increased Precautions
  - Level 3 - Reconsider Travel
  - Level 4 - Do Not Travel
- Confirm that both girls and their parents/guardians have the advisory information and are aware of the travel alert level in the region you plan to visit. This can be reflected on a permission slip if your council choses to handle it that way.
- Read information about safety issues and concerns carefully. Pay attention to the in-country travel alerts for the specific region you are interested in. For example, a certain country may be classified as a Level 2, but a particular state or region within that Level 2 country may be categorized as Level 3.
- Check the travel alert status periodically in the months/weeks/days leading up to your trip for any changes. For situations where there is a travel alert Level 1 or Level 2, take normal safety precautions to safeguard girls.
- Travel Alert 4. When the travel alert Level is 4 ("do not travel"), girls are not to travel to a location under any circumstances.
- Travel Alert 3. For situations where the travel alert is a 3 ("reconsider travel"), there are several steps that should be taken before moving forward:
  - Strongly consider selecting a different location.
  - If interest is high, have a conversation with your local safety or risk representative to fully understand the specific risk factors in play.
  - Contact the host destination facility and ask if they are aware of the travel alert level and what extra security measures are in place, if any.
  - Inform girls and parents/guardians and determine if there is still a compelling interest to travel to this location, considering the travel alert level.
  - Get parents'/guardians' explicit approval to travel to the location, according to specific risks, in writing.
  - Have a conversation with your council and get approval from a legal perspective, from in-house legal or outside legal counsel.
  - Confirm that you have senior management approval within your council prior to moving forward with your plans.

Finally, when travelling, be sure to follow the safety checkpoints for specific activities you plan to do on your trip.

Tubing

Council Approval: Required

Activity permitted for: J C S A

Not Recommended For: Daisies and Brownies.

About Tubing

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. A fun thing to do on a tubing adventure is to create exploration games to see who can locate the most interesting nature gems, such as caves and peculiar plants or birds.

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. Tubing can be done on lakes or rivers. As river tubing is often a one-way trip, be sure to arrange for return transportation from the tubing final destination.

If participating in boat towed tubing, be sure to take safety precautions that comply with small craft safety guidelines.

Learn More:

- American Whitewater
- Tubing sites: River Tubing USA River Tubing
- Whitewater Rescue Institute

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 that the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability provides for people with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an

activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Adult Supervision. In addition to the standard adult to girl ratio under universal safety standards and guidelines, 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.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl or adult, or sudden illness.

Know the river flow. Be careful about where you roll out of a tube. If tubing in fast-moving water, the undersurface 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.

If towing behind a motorboat, the operator must be an adult driver with a valid license to operate the motorboat. There must be a spotter at the stern watching a girl while towing, *always*. Girls are not permitted to be towed by jet skis or wave runners.

Girls are not permitted to drive or operate motorized boats.

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.

Ensure participants are strong swimmers. Participants' swimming abilities should be classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, and so on) 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.

Prior to tubing, girls receive verbal instruction. This should include 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.

Make sure tubing on whitewater or semi-protected waters meets the Safety Code of American Whitewater.

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.

Safeguard valuables. Do not leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place.

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.

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, keep a sharp lookout for boats and other obstructions.

Safety 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.
- Tube
- Closed-toe sport sandals with heel strap, water socks, or shoes (no flip-flops)
- At least one graspable and throwable Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water.

Waterskiing and Wakeboarding

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: J C S A

About Waterskiing and Wakeboarding

As with 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. Skiers either wear one board (called slalom) or two skis (called combo); barefoot waterskiing is an advanced skill.

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. Girls will learn technique and safety to prevent injuries such as water skiers must learn (contrary to instinct) to release the towline as soon as they begin to lose their balance.

Girls can start the learning process on land. Before entering the water, it helpful to simulate the waterskiing process on a sandy beach and learn how to wear the skis and hold onto a water-ski handle properly. They can and should also learn to communicate with the spotter (the person on the back of the boat watching the skier) with specific and agreed-upon hand signals. This way the spotter can then shout out to the driver when necessary.

Another fun technique is to learn by watching others—videotape other Girl Scouts who are learning to waterski and have girls watch it to find out how to improve their performance.

Open bodies of water, such as a lakes and bays, are ideal. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions and search online for lakes nearby.

Learn More:

- USA Water Ski
- U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division

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.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety 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.
- At least one graspable and throwable Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water.
- Life raft and/or towing boat
- Ski lines (tow lines) 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.
- Water skis
- Foot bindings appropriate for skier's weight and skiing speed
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15), applied every two hours, and lip balm.
- Beach towel
- Dry clothing and sunglasses to wear after surfing.
- Wet suit if water temperatures are cold, below 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

No areal or acrobatics or tricks on skis. Girls are not permitted to attempt aerial tricks on water skis or wakeboards.

Protect hands. Water skiers can get blisters from the pressure of holding onto the rope handle; wearing gloves or taping hands can help. Learn how on *Waterski Magazine*.

No ocean skiing. Skiers stay in bays, inlets, lakes, and gulfs and do not ski in the ocean without explicit council approval.

Learn skiing safety. Girls will learn basics like staying behind the boat, as it is dangerous to curve around the boat. Also, skiing outside the wake is an advanced technique for experienced skiers only.

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. Confirm that the boat driver is an adult of at least 21 years of age and has an appropriate license and is skilled in operating the watercraft.

Ensure participants are strong swimmers. Participants' swimming abilities are confirmed and should be clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, and so on) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test should be 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 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.

Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning. Exit the 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, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions.

Keep track of water skiers. Use a list or checkboard system to stay aware of water skiers' whereabouts.

Privately-owned towing boats

If using a boat that is privately owned, ensure that the owner/operator:

- Is a knowledgeable adult with the understanding and ability of their responsibility for Girl Scouts' safety and well-being.
- Agrees to follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints relevant to the activity.
- Maintains the vessel in accordance with the Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Has the required safety gear as required in their jurisdiction, or listed in Safety Activity Checkpoints, or coordinates with the activity leader to have it on hand.
- Meets Coast Guard and/or local jurisdiction requirements.
- Maintains insurance and registration as required by law in their jurisdiction.

For privately-owned vessels over 30 feet, also see the SACPs for Offshore Water Vessels.

Carbon Monoxide Warning

Never allow "teak surfing," swim platform dragging, or bodysurfing behind any vessel. Do not operate a motor or generator while anyone is on or holding onto a swim platform, swim deck, swim step, or swim ladder, except for a very brief time when docking, or entering/exiting the vessel. Carbon monoxide emitted at the stern (back) of the boat can cause death in these situations.

Windsurfing

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: J C S A

Not Recommended For: Daisies and Brownies

About Windsurfing

Windsurfing is an exciting surface water sport that combines the elements of surfing and sailing by using a standing board and sailing rig. It consists of a board usually 8 to 10 feet long, powered by the wind. The rig is connected to the board and consists of a mast, boom, and sail. Learning to windsurf entails learning the concepts of wind and balance. It can be experienced both inland and at the coast, from cruising across flat water in a lake to riding waves at the beach.

To fully enjoy the sport, windsurfers should be comfortable in the water, be strong swimmers and possess a certain measure of strength, balance, coordination, and attention.

It is best for beginners and intermediate-level windsurfers to learn and practice in standing-level water surrounded by land, such as a lake or saltwater bay or alcove. Advanced to expert windsurfers can ride waves in the ocean. Windsurfing instructors usually begin the instructional process on land to guide students through a start-up sequence so girls can orient themselves to the equipment and know what to do when they get in the water.

Learn More:

- Windsurfing information Sailing and Classes Index
- Royal Yachting Association (RYA)

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations with respect to water sports.

If visiting a waterfront such as a lake or beach area, contact the parks office in advance. Also contact the instructor or facility teaching or hosting the windsurfing event. Ask about accommodating people with disabilities and make any possible accommodations to include girls with disabilities.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate such as the proper equipment, prior experiences and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section (p. 4 – 22) at the top of Safety Activity Checkpoints. These standard safety guidelines apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" (p. 4 – 22) section and be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Check swimming ability. Participants' swimming abilities should be confirmed and clearly identified (for instance, with colored wristbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, and so on) at council-approved sites, or participants can provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a swim test should be conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.

All windsurfers must wear a 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.

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. Do not 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. In addition to a lifeguard, at least one adult present should have small craft safety certification or equivalent experience. 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.

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 provides instructions.

Safety Gear

- The facility will provide the windsurfing board, sail, and life jackets.
- Girls bring waterfront/beach essentials, blankets for the sand, towels, and a change of clothes.