



Archery: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

Archery Gear

Required Gear:

- Bows Arrows
- Target

Recommended Gear:

- Sunscreen and (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses

- Quivers
- Wrist, finger, and arm protection, such as finger tabs and arm guards (right- and left-handed models)

Prepare for Archery

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

ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of the Archery Activity

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** On the morning of an outdoor archery activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the archery activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Safeguard valuables.** Archery equipment is stored in its proper storage container and locked when not in use (see also *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*).
- ❑ **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- ❑ **Practice safe archery***. The following are required for all ranges:
 - Archery equipment is stored in box/closet/cabinet and locked when not in use.
 - Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity at the firing line and during the retrieval of arrows
 - Arrow stop and a supplementary back stop or specific safety zone behind the targets
 - Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers, known to the entire facility population
 - Clearly defined shooting line

At an outdoor range:

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

At an indoor range:

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

Archery Links

- National Field Archery Association: www.nfaa-archery.org
- USA Archery: www.usarchery.org
- World Archery Center: www.worldarchery.com

Archery Know-How for Girls

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

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



Bicycling: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

Know where to bike. Learn about American road bike trails at adventurecycling.org. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions when using vendor supplied bicycles.

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

Bicycling Gear

Required:

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

Recommended, depending on conditions:

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

Prepare for Bicycling

- Communicate with council and parents.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Organize cycling groups and arrange for adult supervision.** Except when riding on bicycle paths, participants travel in groups of five or six, allowing at least 150 feet between groups so that vehicles may pass. Participants ride one to a bicycle except when riding tandem. In tandem riding, each girl has her own seat and the number of riders doesn't exceed the intended limits of the bicycle. For every two groups, there is an adult at the head and another at the rear. Ensure

that the length (day or extended) and terrain of the route, as well as the time of day, weather and equipment available are appropriate to the girls' experience and physical condition. Review the route and practice map-reading skills. Make careful plans for the type of road to be traveled. For example, secondary roads are quiet, but may have trees, curves and hills that obstruct visibility. Ride only during daylight hours.

- **Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Select safe cycling site or route.** Observe all state and local regulations, and notify jurisdictional authorities about the group's trip, when necessary. Use designated bicycle trails whenever possible, select bicycle trails with even surfaces, and avoid routes involving heavily trafficked streets and highways. Know in advance the location of emergency and medical services along the route.
- **Ride safely.** Cyclists ride with the flow of traffic and obey applicable traffic regulations, signals, lane markings and local ordinances pertaining to bicycle operation. Girls learn to:
 - Recognize and avoid common roadway hazards, including drainage grates and manhole covers, sand, gravel, glass, wet leaves, litter on road shoulders and other road-surface hazards
 - Communicate and cooperate with other road users
 - Ride defensively.
 - Motor-vehicle traffic presents the greatest danger to cyclists; hazards such as oil, wet leaves, parked cars, parked cars that open their doors in front of a cyclist, and rocks cause the majority of cycling accidents. Girls practice bicycling with a load comparable in weight to the load on the trip and learn to brake before they have to, especially on curves and down hills.
 - Girls are instructed in and practice bicycle-riding skills in traffic including signaling, scanning ahead and behind (especially before moving left), yielding to oncoming traffic and making left turns. Emergency braking techniques are taught. Girls ride single file with traffic, though it is acceptable to ride briefly two abreast when passing a slower bicyclist.
 - Light gear is stored in bicycle panniers (foldable carriers) or packs on the back of the bike. Bicyclists make a full stop and look left, right, and left again, especially at the end of a driveway and before entering a street or roadway. Cyclists walk their bikes across busy intersections. Bicyclists use hand signals to indicate turning or stopping to let other cyclists as well as vehicles know their intent. Girls should also let other cyclist know they are passing prior to passing them Bicyclists keep a safe distance between themselves and the vehicle ahead. Bicycles have lights and reflectors. When bicycles are not on segregated paths, lights are on to increase visibility
 - While an adult is prepared to change a flat tire and make basic repairs on bicycles, girls should also be taught basic repairs based on their age.
- **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Dressing in layers in colder temperatures so that layers can be shed as you get warmer.

- ❑ **Other Bicycle clothing:** avoid cotton and use synthetic fabrics that wick perspiration away from skin more comfortably; reflective or light-colored clothing is recommended when cycling at dusk; wear bright-colored or fluorescent clothing during day; on extended trips in cooler weather, wear layers and carry extra clothing and rain gear
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of soft tissue and bone injuries, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of Bicycling

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

Bicycling Links

Adventure Cycling Association: www.adventurecycling.org

USA Cycling: www.usacycling.org

Tread Lightly: www.treadlightly.org

American Bicyclist site: www.bikeleague.org

Bicycling Magazine: www.bicycling.com

Bicycling Know-How for Girls

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



Challenge Courses: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

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

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

Challenge Courses Gear

Required Gear:

- Sturdy shoes

Required For High Elements:

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

Recommended Gear

- Long pants or bike pants for activities when skin abrasions on legs are possible
- Sunscreen and (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Close-fitting clothing (avoid wearing loose clothing, especially around the head and neck). A chest harness with seat harness or full-body harness for small framed girls when climbingPrepare for Challenge Courses
- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** High ropes courses require a trained and certified instructor by a verified agency. The instructor must demonstrate competence in equipment maintenance, safety and rescue techniques, proper use of the course and hands-on training. Initiative games and low ropes courses require a trained and certified instructor or an instructor with training and documented experience according to your council guidelines and *Volunteer Essentials*. Training includes competence in equipment maintenance, safety techniques, proper use of the course and hands-on training. Ensure that the instructor-to-participant ratio meets or exceeds minimum standards, as identified by the original manufacturer or installer of the challenge course and/or is in compliance with current industry standards. Ensure that the instructor has provided written documentation of the completed training, there is a regular process of review and update for all instructors, and a minimum of two instructors are present. Instructors are skilled in selecting appropriate activities, teaching and supervising spotting and belaying techniques, and modifying tasks to provide an appropriate experience for the ages and skill levels in the group. Before use,

instructors inspect all equipment, course components, and landing areas in the activity area.

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

On the Day of the Challenge Course Activity

- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. Be prepared to alter the activity plan or have an alternate activity prepared if weather conditions change. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Ensure that equipment is well-maintained*.** There is a documented maintenance schedule and periodic inspection by instructors and outside professionals of all artificial structures and equipment used in the activities. A use log is kept on all equipment subject to stress, wear, and deterioration. A written equipment monitoring and retirement process is established and followed.
- **Girls learn about and prepare for challenge courses.** Instructors teach a set of readiness and action commands to all participants for climbing, spotting, and belaying. All participants utilize gentle muscle warm-up and stretching activities before beginning physical activities. Instructors describe the objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants before beginning an activity.
- **Girls practice safe challenge-course techniques.** Spotting techniques are taught, demonstrated, and practiced by participants prior to any challenge-course activity. All activities are appropriately spotted. For activities where partners are needed, instructors match participants according to size and skill level, if appropriate. Instructors supervise all tie-ins, belays, and climbs on high ropes courses and spotting on low elements courses. Participants are not stacked more than three levels high vertically (in a pyramid, for example) on each other at any time. No one should stand on the middle of someone else's back.

Challenge Courses Links

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

Challenge Courses Know-How for Girls

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

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



Climbing and Rappelling: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

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

Climbing and Rappelling Gear

Required Gear

- Climbing helmets that have the UIAA-approved label (Union of International Alpine Association) must be worn for all outdoor natural climbing situations where the participant is more than 6 feet off the ground or on belay. It is recommended that a disposable liner, such as a shower cap or surgical cap, be worn underneath the helmet to protect against the spread of head lice.
- A chest harness with seat harness or full-body harness may be required for specific climbing or ropes activities.
- Sturdy shoes
- Close-fitting clothing; avoid wearing loose clothing, especially around the head and neck
- Portable drinking water
- Raingear, as necessary

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Climbing and Rappelling

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios, keeping in mind that Daisies do not participate in climbing and rappelling and Brownies participate in climbing only*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.**
 - For bouldering, top roping and multi-pitch climbing, an instructor with documented experience, indicating competence in equipment maintenance, safety and rescue techniques, proper use of the course and hands-on training (must provide certification) or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in Volunteer Essentials directly supervises the group. . Ensure that there is a regular process of

review and update for all instructors. A minimum of two instructors are present, and instructors are skilled in selecting appropriate activities, teaching and supervising spotting and belaying techniques, and modifying tasks to provide an appropriate experience for the ages and skill levels in the group. Before use, instructors inspect all equipment, course components, and landing areas in the activity area.

- Indoor or outdoor artificial climbing walls and auto belay or harnessed indoor ropes courses facilitators have experience, indicating competence in equipment maintenance, safety and rescue techniques, proper use of the course and hands-on training. A minimum of one facilitator and an additional adult are present, and facilitators are skilled in selecting appropriate activities, teaching and supervising spotting and lowering techniques, and modifying tasks to provide an appropriate experience for the ages and skill levels in the group. Before use, facilitators inspect all equipment, course components, and landing areas in the activity area.

The instructor-to-participant ratios are as follows:

- Bouldering and top roping: 1 instructor to 10 participants
- Multi-pitch climbing: 1 instructor (qualified lead climber) to 3 participants

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

- Select a safe site.** Permits and permission requests are filed as required for outdoor natural climbing sites and facilities. All permanent structures and the belaying system are planned and constructed by experienced individuals. Plans and procedures are established to avoid unauthorized use of the site, structures, and equipment. The artificial climbing site must be posted to warn against unauthorized use.
- Compile key contacts.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls as well as abrasions and sunburn. A sharp knife, hardware, and extra rope of appropriate length for rescue are available at the site. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. Specialized safety and rescue procedures are planned and practiced to ensure the ability to remove a participant from a rappelling or climbing situation. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Sharp objects, jewelry, and watches are removed and pockets emptied. Long hair is pulled back from the face and fastened under the helmet to prevent tangling.

On the Day of Climbing or Rappelling

- Get a weather report.** If climbing and rappelling outdoors, on the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if

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

- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Ensure that equipment is well-maintained***. There is a documented maintenance schedule and periodic inspection by instructors and outside professionals of all artificial structures and equipment used in the activities. A use log is kept on all equipment subject to stress, wear, and deterioration. A written equipment monitoring and retirement process is established and followed.
- **Participants learn about and prepare for climbing and rappelling.** Instructors teach a set of readiness and action commands to all participants for climbing, spotting, and belaying. All participants utilize muscle warm-up and stretching activities before beginning physical activities. Instructors describe the objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants before beginning an activity.
- **Participants practice safe climbing and rappelling techniques.** Spotting techniques (if necessary) are taught, demonstrated, and practiced by participants prior to any climbing or rappelling activity. All activities are appropriately spotted. For activities where partners are needed, instructors match participants according to size and skill level, if appropriate. Instructors supervise all tie-ins, belays, and climbs on climbing sites and spotting on bouldering sites.

Climbing and Rappelling Links

- International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation: www.theuiaa.org
- Rockclimbing.com: www.rockclimbing.com

Climbing and Rappelling Know-How for Girls

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

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



Cross-Country Skiing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that www.SitSki.com and [Disabled Sports USA](http://www.disabledsportsusa.org/cross-country-skiing/) <http://www.disabledsportsusa.org/cross-country-skiing/> provide to people with disabilities.

Cross-Country Skiing Gear

Required Gear:

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Cross-Country Skiing

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

emergencies and evacuation procedures. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of Cross-Country Skiing

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

Cross-Country Skiing Links

- Cross Country Ski Areas Association: www.xcski.org
- National Ski Patrol: www.nsp.org
- The World of Cross Country Skiing: www.xcskiworld.com

Cross-Country Skiing Know-How for Girls

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

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



Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

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

Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Gear

Required Gear:

- Protective helmet with properly fitting safety harness that meets the Snell Memorial Foundation's RS-98 or S-98 standards or the American Society for Testing and Materials ([ASTM](#)) F2040 requirements (or both) and displays the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal
- Ski or snowboarding boots
- Skis or snowboards with bindings
- Ski poles (not needed for snowboarding)
- Sunglasses or ski goggles to protect eyes from bright snow glare

Recommended Gear:

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

Prepare for Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

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

On the Day of Downhill Skiing or Snowboarding

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Safeguard valuables.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Learn the basics of skiing and snowboarding.** Participants learn how to ride ski lifts, including line courtesy, loading and unloading, and emergency procedures. Skiers and snowboarders ski and snowboard under control. Participants ski responsibly, and the rules of the ski area are explained and observed.
- ❑ **Follow downhill skiing and snowboarding safety standards.** Skiers and snowboarders follow these guidelines:
 - Do not ski off-trail or in an unmarked or closed area.
 - Make others aware before you turn.
 - Yield the right-of-way to those already on the slope.
 - Do not cross the path of skiers.
 - Avoid objects and obstacles, such as trees and rocks.
 - To rest or adjust equipment, stop on the sides of the slope or trail.
 - Move quickly to the side of the trail or slope after falling, unless injured.
 - Summon the ski patrol if a skier is injured.

Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Links

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

Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Know-How for Girls

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



Fencing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

Fencing Gear

Required Gear

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Fencing

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

On the Day of Fencing

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

Fencing Links

U.S. Fencing Association: www.usfencing.org

U.S. Fencing Coaches Association: www.usfca.org

International Fencing Federation: www.fie.org

Fencing Know-how for Girls

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



Geocaching: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that Handicaching.com provides to people with disabilities.

Geocaching Gear

Required Gear:

- GPS device

Recommended Gear:

- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Portable drinking water
- Cell phone
- Clothing appropriate for the activity and weather
- Notebook and pen or pencil
- Swag (or “stuff we all get”), which is the items that geocachers place into caches—usually small plastic toys, key chains, sunglasses—for other geocachers to take once they’ve located a cache. Topographical and/or standard map of geocaching area
- Daypack to carry personal belongings
- Hiking boots for wilderness areas, or comfortable and sturdy walking shoes for urban environments
- Whistle

Prepare for Geocaching

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. For a large group of girls participating in geocaching, it is recommended that girls organize themselves into small groups.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** The geocaching instructor has experience and skill in teaching/supervising geocaching, topographical-map reading, and proper usage of GPS devices and has documented experience according to your council’s guidelines, as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*. For geocaching activities that involve caving, rock climbing, and similar activities, refer to the appropriate Safety Activity Checkpoints for details about instructor credentials and/or skill sets. The instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls before geocaching.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Select a safe geocaching location.** Learn about the terrain of a geocaching site by learning about the Difficulty/Terrain rating (D/T) on the cache page of geocaching.com. The ratings, which range from 1/1 to 5/5, measure the level of difficulty for finding a cache at a designated location. A terrain rating of 1 typically means the cache is accessible for people with disabilities. Keep in mind that a GPS device provides a direct line measurement from the starting point to a

destination; a GPS does not include the distance around path obstructions such as bodies of water.

- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in activities.
- ❑ **Develop a geocaching curriculum.** Encourage girls to plan the details of a geocaching trip, and develop a geocaching curriculum that includes lesson plans that cover elements such as the purpose of the activity, skills necessary, safety considerations, diagrams to aid with comprehension, and navigational resources.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of soft tissue and bone injury, and hypothermia. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from Emergency Medical Services response time, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training. On the Day of Geocaching
- ❑ **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the geocaching activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if weather conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open, flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls learn about geocaching.** Girls develop skills about GPS use, latitude and longitude, and reading maps. Ideally, each girl is able to use her own GPS, or two girls share a GPS. When more than three participants share a GPS device, it becomes more difficult for girls to actively participate in the geocaching activity.
- ❑ **Practice safe geocaching.** To prevent injury when searching for caches, inspect areas with care before trekking into potentially dangerous locations or placing hands into unknown nooks and crannies such as ground holes, ponds, creeks, or urban buildings and structures. Be on lookout for sharp edges, animals, insects, and garbage.

Geocaching Links

- Geocaching—The Official Global GPS Cache Hunt Site: www.geocaching.com
- Geocaching with NaviCache: www.navicache.com
- TerraCaching—For Love of the Hunt: www.terracaching.com

Geocaching Know-How for Girls

- **Cache in, trash out.** Like the Leave No Trace initiative, geocachers are encouraged to leave caching sites cleaner than they found them. Geocachers are invited to participate in International [Cache In Trash Out](#) events, which are worldwide clean-up efforts.
- **Find a benchmark.** Using a GPS or directions provided by the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's** National Geodetic Survey,

you can seek out NGS survey markers and other items that have been marked in the United States. Visit www.geocaching.com/mark to learn more.



Horseback Riding: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

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

Horseback Riding Gear

Required Gear

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Horseback Riding

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Organize groups and arrange for adult supervision.** *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the Introduction to the Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Riding instructors are adults (at least 18 years old) who have current certification from an accredited horsemanship instructor training organization, such as the [Certified Horsemanship Association](#) and [American Association for Horsemanship Safety and see link to list below](#), or documented proof of a minimum of three years' experience successfully instructing in a general horseback riding program. Assistant riding instructors are at least 16 years old and are certified by an accredited horsemanship instructor training organization or have documented proof of at least one year's experience successfully instructing in a general horseback riding program. Riders are supervised by instructors or assistant instructors at all times when in the proximity of horses, whether mounted or not. For ring or corral riding and trail riding, at least one instructor and one assistant instructor supervise a group of 10 or fewer riders. For ring and corral riding, one additional instructor is required for every five additional riders. For beginners and younger girls, or for difficult trails, in trail riding, increased instructors may be needed.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Assess participants' maturity level.** Girls must possess sufficient physical coordination and balance to participate in riding. They are old enough to understand and practice safety procedures, to use good judgment in reacting to situations, and to take responsibility for themselves and their horses. Some stables have weight limits for rider eligibility, so check with the stable when making reservations.
- Select a safe site*.** Obtain permission and any necessary permits before riding on public or private lands; records of maintenance checks, requests, and repairs must be kept. The stable operator provides evidence of liability insurance and instructor certification and references from other youth-group users of the stable. For both Girl Scout council-owned and non-Girl Scout riding facilities, the riding area is away from outside distractions and free of debris; the barn and riding

areas do not have exposed barbed wire fencing; the instructional rings, corrals, paddocks, and stables have clearly posted rules and regulations; the horses are properly cared for, and the stables, corrals, and barns are clean and uncluttered. Tack (saddles, bridles, and so on) is clean and in good condition. Communicate with the horseback-riding organization about any rider weight limitations; in some cases, heavier riders can cause a horse pain, which, in turn, may cause horses to exhibit dangerous behavior.

- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces. Riders may not ride barefoot, in sandals, or in hiking boots with lug soles. Riders do not wear backpacks, day packs, or fanny packs.
- ❑ **Take safety precautions.** An emergency vehicle is readily available. Plans for communication with emergency services and fire officials are arranged in advance and known by each instructor. Plans for response in an emergency—such as a fire, severe weather, an injured rider, or an injured or loose horse—are known by all participants and instructors. At Girl Scout facilities, communication between the riding area and the site director or healthcare personnel is possible. In stable and ring areas, telephone numbers for the fire department, local hospital or emergency ambulance service, and veterinarian are conspicuously posted, and the location of the fire alarm is known to all girls and adults.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls as well as abrasions and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of Horseback Riding

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** On the morning of horseback riding, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Safeguard valuables.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls learn about safe horseback riding.** A pre-ride demonstration is given to first-time riders, including mounting, dismounting, starting, stopping, steering, and maintaining a balanced body position. Avoid changing clothing, such as putting on raingear, while mounted on the horse, because it may scare the horse; instead, dismount for clothing changes or adjustments.
- ❑ **Test and classify riders according to riding ability*.** The horse and the riding area are assigned according to the rider's ability. Beginning riders attend an introductory safety lesson, including information on horse psychology and behavior and approaching, handling, and leading a horse. Before trail riding, all

riders warm up in a ring or corral to ensure that they are well suited to their horses and can control all the gaits and functions required during the trail ride. Ensure that riders feel confident and demonstrate basic skills in controlling the horse (stop, start, and steer) and maintaining proper distance.

- ❑ **Follow basic horseback safety standards***. To ensure that equipment fits properly and/or is properly adjusted, an instructor makes a safety check of each rider's clothing, footwear, helmet, and saddle. He or she checks stirrup length by ensuring that riders are able to raise their behinds off the saddle about one hand's depth. Front and rear cinches are checked for tightness, twigs, folds, and bends. The instructor also checks the safety of the riding area before each session. Only one rider is allowed on a horse at any time, and there is no eating or drinking while riding. Riders should dismount before going through small gates.
- ❑ **Respect ring- or corral-riding standards***. Each horse and rider is under the observation of an instructor at all times, and the riding ring has good footing for the horses and is free of dangerous obstructions. The fencing is at least 42 inches high, visible, and well maintained. Gates to the ring are shut.
- ❑ **Inspect and don't spook horses***. Horses displaying uncomfortable or abnormal behaviors should be dismounted and checked for injuries and poor equipment fitting, and may need to be walked back to the stable on foot. If a horse gets loose, do not chase it; instead, an adult calmly attempts to retrieve the horse.
- ❑ **Respect trail-riding standards***. The length of the trail ride and the gait of the horses are geared to the ability of the least experienced rider. Riding trails have good footing and are free of dangerous obstructions such as low-hanging branches. Trails are marked, mapped, regularly inspected, and maintained. The participants ride single file, one full horse length apart, with an instructor at the head and at the rear of the group. Riders have control of horses, maintain the spacing between horses, and increase distances between horses when the horses' speed increases. Horses are walked (not ridden) up and down hills, and are walked for the final 10 minutes of any riding period in order to cool down.
- ❑ **Avoid public roads and highways whenever possible**. If a group must cross a road, the instructor first halts the group in a line well before the road, checks for traffic, and then signals the group to cross. At the signal, all horses are turned to face the highway and all cross at the same time.

Horseback Riding Links

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

Horseback Riding Know-How for Girls

- **Get to know your horse**. Did you know there are more than 50 colors of horses? Thoroughbreds are identified by their colors, which include bay,

black, chestnut, dark bay or brown, gray, and roan. Visit www.thinklikeahorse.org to learn more about horses.

- **Hold your horses.** Before horseback riding, learn how to mount, dismount, rein, and other horseback riding procedures at www.mahalo.com/how-to-ride-a-horse.
- **Respect the horse.** Did you know that horses feel less comfortable when they can't see the rider's eyes? For that reason, avoid wearing sunglasses.

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



In-Line Skating and Roller Skating: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

In-Line and Roller Skating Gear

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

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for In-Line and Roller Skating

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

On the Day of In-Line Skating or Roller Skating

- Get a weather report.** If skating outdoors, on the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are

appropriate, and if skating outside, make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Safeguard valuables.** Secure equipment and other valuables in a dry, locked storage area if skating indoors.
- **Girls learn basic skating skills.** Girls receive basic instruction in skating skills, including how to fall and get up. Practice sessions are scheduled for beginners. Girls learn to perform basic skating skills before attempting more advanced skills. Gentle warm-up exercises are done before any strenuous skating; cool-down exercises end the sessions.
- **Follow basic in-line and roller-skating safety standards*.** Respect safety rules, such as:
 - Everyone skates in the same direction.
 - Girls do not stop in the main skating area (when skating in a rink).
 - Skaters yield the right-of-way to those already in the rink.
 - Skaters do not cut across the paths of other skaters.
 - Skaters do not push, shove, or race.
 - A falling skater does not grab hold of another skater.
 - A fallen skater rises quickly, unless injured.
 - Girls do not skate faster than their ability to stop, and skaters do not wear headphones while skating.
 - Loose or sharp articles, such as handbags, combs, and keys are not carried in pockets, hands, hair, or any place where they might cause injury to the skater in the event of a fall, or injure another skater by falling to the floor.
- **Practice safe outdoor skating.** Outdoors, girls skate in areas where traffic or pedestrians will not interfere. Check local ordinances for any restrictions. Girls skate in the street or in a parking lot only if it is closed to traffic. When skating on a walkway, yield to pedestrians. Skate on the right side, pass on the left.

In-Line and Roller-Skating Links

- Roller Skating Association International: www.rollerskating.org.

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

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

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



Other Land Sports: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

Gear for Other Land Sports

Recommended Gear

- Appropriate clothing, supplies, tools, and other equipment, depending on location and specific activity
- Ample drinking water

- Daypack to carry personal belongings, as appropriate
- Girls who wear eyeglasses have shatterproof lenses or wear eyeglass guards. A band should be worn to hold eyeglasses securely.
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses

Prepare for Other Land Sports

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

On the Day of Other Land Sports

- Get a weather report.** If participating in an outdoor activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather source to determine if conditions are appropriate. Be prepared to alter the activity plan or have an alternate activity prepared if weather conditions change. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. If outdoors, in the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the

lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. Outdoor activities are suspended during an electrical storm or in very hot, humid weather.

- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Safeguard valuables.** Secure equipment in a dry, locked storage area or have girls wear a daypack to carry personal belongings.
- ❑ **Ensure that equipment is well-maintained*.** There are sufficient floor mats for gymnastics, tumbling, and similar activities. Inspect rented or borrowed equipment carefully before using it.
- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity and take breaks.** Sharp objects, jewelry, and watches are removed and pockets emptied. Long hair is pulled back from the face and fastened to prevent tangling. Sufficient rest periods are given to avoid overexertion and to replenish fluids.
- ❑ **Take safety precautions.** Fatigued or injured girls are removed from competition and cared for promptly. A seriously injured girl is moved only by trained rescue personnel. An injured girl is not returned to practice or competition without the written approval of a physician.

Other Land Sports Links

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



Recreational Tree Climbing Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

Tree Climbing Gear

Required Gear

Sturdy shoes

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Tree Climbing

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult to girl ratio, see the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. In addition, the instructor to participant ratio shall not exceed 1 instructor for every 6 girls.
NOTE: The instructor to participant ratio is NOT the same as the adult to girl ratio that is found in the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Both ratios MUST be complied with when girls are participating in tree climbing. For example, if there are 16 Juniors participating in a tree climbing activity, there must be 3 instructors plus 2 adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** An instructor with documented experience, indicating competence in equipment maintenance, safety and rescue techniques, proper use of the equipment and hands-on training or documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials* directly supervises the group. The instructor has provided written documentation of the completed training. Ensure that there is a regular process of review and update for all instructors. Instructors are skilled in selecting appropriate activities, teaching and supervising climbing and decent techniques, and modifying tasks to provide an appropriate experience for the ages and skill levels in the group. Before use, instructors inspect all equipment, climb all ropes, and clearly designate a helmet-only area for safety.
- Select a safe site.** Permits and permission requests are filed as required for climbing trees. All trees are inspected and pre-climbed before the event to ensure participant safety. Plans and procedures are established to avoid unauthorized use of the site.

Climbing areas are clearly marked so passersby will not be in danger of coming in contact with falling debris.

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

On the Day of Climbing

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check noaa.gov or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. Be prepared to alter the activity plan or have an alternate activity prepared if weather conditions change. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Ensure that equipment is well-maintained*.** There is a documented maintenance schedule and periodic inspection by instructors and outside professionals of all equipment and trees used in the activities. A use log is kept on all equipment subject to stress, wear, and deterioration. A written equipment monitoring and retirement process is established and followed.
- Participants learn about and prepare for climbing.** Instructors teach a set of readiness and action commands to all participants for climbing and decent. All participants utilize muscle warm-up and stretching activities before beginning physical activities. Instructors describe the objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants before beginning an activity.
- Participants practice safe climbing and decent techniques.** All activities are appropriately supervised. Instructors are the only ones to clip participants in and out of their tie-in systems.

Recreational Tree Climbing Links

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

Recreational Tree Climbing Know-How for Girls

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

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



Segway: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Photo courtesy of Segway, Inc.

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

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

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

Segway Gear

Required Gear

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Segway

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the Introduction to the Safety Activity Checkpoints, keeping in mind that Segway use is restricted to Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure that:
 - The Segway instructor has experience and skill in teaching and supervising Segway PT.
 - The instructor reviews the operating procedures with girls before riding a Segway.
 - The experienced Segway instructor teaches participants how to ride, turn, and stop in a controlled, safe location free of obstructions and traffic.
 - Segway PTs are ridden in pedestrian environments and not on streets.
 - The instructor supports and spots participants when they step on and off of a Segway, and ensures that riders are comfortable riding a Segway before participating in a Segway tour or ride.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment.

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

On the Day of the Segway Activity

- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the Segway activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if weather conditions are appropriate. Do not ride Segways in rain or strong winds. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with heads between them.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Practice safe Segway procedures.**
 - Ensure that the practice of riding the Segway PT is legal in the planned location of activity.
 - Remember that, although most states allow Segway PTs on sidewalks, town and city laws may differ.
 - Ensure the Segway riding location is safe; do not ride in traffic, on steep slopes or hills, on slippery surfaces, or on gravel, sand, or other loose surfaces.
 - Girls are encouraged to plan details of their Segway trips.
 - Beginners start by riding in Segway's slowest mode.
 - Riders do not misuse or "push" a Segway past its limits; for instance, riders do not lean forward when the Speed Limiter Alert is on, nor do they continue to ride when the Stick Shake Warning is on.
 - Take care when turning left and right and when stopping and parking a Segway.
 - When riding on sidewalks in urban areas, be on alert for pedestrians, doors opening, and low overhead obstructions.
 - Give right-of-way to pedestrians, and ride Segway on right-hand side of sidewalks and paths.
 - Do not ride a Segway over curbs; use the cutout of a curb instead.
 - When riding a Segway, keep at least two Segway tires' distance from another rider.

Segway Links

- Segway: www.segway.com
- Segway Online: www.segwayonline.com

Segway Know-How for Girls

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



Shooting Sports: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

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

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

Shooting Sports Gear

Required Gear

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Shooting Sports

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

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

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

- **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** One adult is a certified [National Rifle Association](#) Range Safety Officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor or has equivalent certification. Documented experience and skill teaching/supervising firearm safety or shooting sports according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*. The instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand, and posts safety rules at the site. Shooting sports are well supervised and appropriate to age, skill level, and type of shooting.
- **Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Girls learn about firearms & shooting sports*.** Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, such as handling the firearm, loading the ammunition, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices. Before firearm activities, girls learn the following:
 - ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction. This is the primary rule of gun safety. A safe direction means that the gun is pointed so that even if it were to go off it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control where the muzzle or front end of the barrel is pointed at all times. Common sense dictates the safest direction, depending on different circumstances.
 - Shooters stand or lay behind the shooting line to shoot as instructed.
 - Girls waiting to shoot stay well behind the firing range boundary. A table or shelf for holding extra ammunition is provided for all shooters.
 - Never point a gun at a person, even when not loaded.
 - Ammunition is not picked up until the "load" command is given.
 - Never shoot the firearm until the "fire when ready" command is given.
 - Never pull the trigger when the firearm is not loaded; this is called dry firing and can cause damage to the firearm.
 - When aiming the firearm, keep the barrel pointed toward the target. Shoot only at the target and never at anything else, including trees and animals. Never shoot a firearm straight up into the air.
 - Wait until the all-clear command is given before retrieving targets.
 - Shooter should keep finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
 - When holding a gun, shooters should rest their finger on the trigger guard or along the side of the gun. Until the command is given to fire, do not touch the trigger.
 - Keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.
 - Whenever a firearm is picked up, the safety device should be immediately engaged if possible.
 - If shooter does not know how to open the action or inspect the chamber(s), they should leave the gun alone and get help from someone who does.

- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Also have girls tie back long hair.
- ❑
- ❑ **Ensure that equipment is in good condition.** Make sure that firearm is clean and in good working order. Ammunition, backstops for targets and targets are in good repair.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with certificates in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of sunburn, puncture and bullet wounds. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a Wilderness First Aider. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of the Shooting sports Activity

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

Practice safe shooting sports

Follow all facility safety instructions*.

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

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

Shooting Sports Links

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

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



Skateboarding: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

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

Skateboarding Gear

Required Gear

- Skateboard (beginners should start with a standard skateboard, approximately 32 inches in length) with sturdy wheels
- Protective helmet with properly fitting safety harness that meets the American Society for Testing and Materials ([ASTM](#)) F1492 requirements, displaying the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal
- Snug-fitting elbow pads and kneepads
- Skateboarding/in-line skating wrist guards
- Sneakers

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Skateboarding

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

On the Day of Skateboarding

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** For outdoor skateboarding, on the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate, and make sure, if skateboarding outside, that the ground is free of ice. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Safeguard valuables.** Secure equipment and other valuables in a dry, locked storage area if skateboarding indoors.
- ❑ **Girls learn basic skating skills.** Girls receive basic instruction in skateboarding skills. Girls learn to perform basic skateboarding skills before attempting more advanced skills. Gentle warm-up exercises are done before any strenuous skating; cool-down exercises end the sessions.
- ❑ **Follow basic skateboarding safety standards*.** Be aware of surroundings and stay out of the way of other skateboarders. Follow skate park or facility rules. Loose or sharp articles, such as handbags, combs, and keys, are not carried in pockets, hands, hair, or any place where they might injure a skater in the event of a fall, fall to the floor, or injure another skater. Girls do not skate faster than their ability to stop, and skaters do not wear headphones while skating. To help avoid injuries, instruct girls to discontinue skateboarding if they're experiencing exhaustion or pain.
- ❑ **Practice safe outdoor skateboarding.** Outdoors, girls skate in areas where traffic or pedestrians will not interfere. Check local ordinances for any restrictions. Girls skate in the street or in a parking lot only if it is closed to traffic. When skating on a walkway, yield to pedestrians.

Skateboarding Links

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

Skateboarding Know-How for Girls

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

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



Snowshoeing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

Snowshoeing Gear

Required Gear:

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Snowshoeing

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

services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of Snowshoeing

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

Snowshoeing Links

- National Ski Patrol: www.nsp.org
- Snowshoe Magazine: www.snowshoemag.com
- The United States Snowshoe Association: www.snowshoeracing.com
- Leave No Trace: www.lnt.org

Snowshoeing Know-How for Girls

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



Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing Gear

Required Gear:

- Hat
- Winter coat

- Waterproof winter boots
- Sled
- Toboggan
- Snow tube

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing

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

On the Day of Sledding, Tobogganing, or Snow Tubing

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. Xcski.org provides reports about snow conditions by region. If weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or

postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.

- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Safeguard valuables.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- **Practice safe sledding, tobogganing, and snow tubing.** Conditions are monitored, and breaks are taken to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Girls slide downhill feet-first to reduce the potential for head injuries from collisions. Girls and adults agree on the portion of slope to be used for sledding and the portion to be used for walking uphill.

Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow-Tubing Links

- Sled Riding: www.sledriding.com

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

- **Learn about competitive and Olympic sledding.** Find out about the sport of sled racing on the [USA Bobsled and Skeleton Federation site](#).
- **Know the history of sledding.** Traditionally sleds were used to transport goods and people in places where wheels couldn't operate. Toboggans made of poles tied together with leather were used by Native Americans to carry food, clothing, and other items through snow.



Spelunking: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

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

Caving Gear

Required:

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Caving

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for information*
- Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** Ensure that at least one adult is an experienced caver. *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** A guide with documented experience in cave exploration accompanies the group into the cave. A guide can also help decide which caves are suitable. Pre-trip instruction is given by an adult with documented experience according to your council’s guidelines.
- Select a safe site*.** Obtain guidance from a local chapter of the National Speleological Society to select a cave to explore. Never explore a cave without a guide and without written permission from the site owner/operator. Check with your Girl Scout council for approval if needed.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for information*
- Girls learn about caving.** Girls learn about basic caving guidelines before planning a caving trip, and they must understand safety procedures and know how to handle equipment.

- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of soft tissue and bone injury, and hypothermia. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from Emergency Medical Services response time, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of Caving

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

Caving Links

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

Caving Know-How for Girls

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

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



Vaulting on Horseback: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

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

Vaulting Riding Gear

Required Gear

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Vaulting on Horseback

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.
- Organize groups and arrange for adult supervision.** *For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience*.** Vaulting instructors are adults (at least 18 years old) who have current Vaulting Coach certification from an accredited horsemanship instructor training organization, such as the [Certified Horsemanship Association](#), or documented proof of a minimum of three years' experience successfully instructing vaulting in a riding program. Assistant Vaulting Coaches are at least 16 years old and are certified by an accredited horsemanship instructor training organization or have documented proof of at least one year's experience successfully instructing in a general horseback riding program. Riders are supervised by instructors or assistant instructors at all times when in the proximity of horses, whether mounted or not. For vaulting, at least one instructor and one assistant instructor (who serves as a spotter) supervise a group of 8 or fewer riders. One additional instructor is required for every five additional riders. For beginners and younger girls, or for difficult trails, in trail riding, increased instructors may be needed.
- Compile key contacts.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Assess participants' maturity level.** Girls must possess sufficient physical coordination and balance to participate in riding. They are old enough to understand and practice safety procedures, to use good judgment in reacting to situations, and to take responsibility for themselves and their horses. (Some stables have weight limits for rider eligibility. Check when making reservations.)

- ❑ **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing jewelry. Riders may not ride barefoot, in sandals, or in hiking boots with lug soles. Riders do not wear backpacks, day packs, or fanny packs.
- ❑ **Take safety precautions.** An emergency vehicle is readily available. Plans for communication with emergency services and fire officials are arranged in advance and known by each instructor. Plans for response in an emergency—such as a fire, severe weather, an injured rider, or an injured or loose horse—are known by all participants and instructors. At Girl Scout facilities, communication between the riding area and the site director or healthcare personnel is possible. In stable and ring areas, telephone numbers for the fire department, local hospital or emergency ambulance service, and veterinarian are conspicuously posted, and the location of the fire alarm is known to all girls and adults.
- ❑ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of injury from falls as well as abrasions and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

Selecting a Site

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

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

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

On the Day of Horseback Riding

- ❑ **Get a weather report.** On the morning of horseback riding, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
- ❑ **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Safeguard valuables.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- ❑ **Girls learn about safe horseback riding*.** A pre-ride demonstration is given to first-time riders, including mounting, dismounting, starting, stopping, steering, safety rolls, maintaining a balanced body position, and landing technique for vaulting. Avoid changing clothing while mounted on the horse, because it may scare the horse; instead, dismount for clothing changes or adjustments.
- ❑ **Test and classify riders according to riding ability*.** The horse and the riding area are assigned according to the rider's ability. Beginning riders attend an introductory safety lesson, including information on horse psychology and behavior and approaching, handling, and leading a horse. Before vaulting, all riders warm up with ground exercises to help prevent injuries and soreness. Ensure that riders feel confident and demonstrate basic skills in controlling the horse (stop, start, and steer) and maintaining proper distance.
- ❑ **Follow basic horseback safety standards*.** To ensure that equipment fits properly and/or is properly adjusted, an instructor makes a safety check of each rider's clothing, footwear, helmet, and saddle. The instructor also checks the safety of the riding area before each session. Only one rider is allowed on a horse at any time, and there is no eating or drinking while riding. Riders should dismount before going through small gates. Riders should learn to vault on, vault off and master the basic level compulsories on the barrel before executing them on the horse.
- ❑ **Respect ring- or corral-riding standards.** Each horse and rider is under the observation of an instructor at all times, and the riding ring has good footing for the horses and is free of dangerous obstructions. The fencing is at least 42 inches high, visible, and well maintained. Gates to the ring are shut.
- ❑ **Inspect and don't spook horses.** Horses displaying uncomfortable or abnormal behaviors should be dismounted and checked for injuries and poor equipment fitting, and may need to be walked back to the stable on foot. If a horse gets loose, do not chase it; instead, one person calmly attempts to retrieve the horse.

Horseback Riding Links

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

Horseback Riding Know-How for Girls

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

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



Ziplining: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

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

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

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

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

Zipline Gear

Required Gear

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

Recommended Gear

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

Prepare for Zip Lining

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

On the Day of the Ziplining Activity

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

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

Ziplinings Know-How for Girls

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

Additional Resources:

- <http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/056/056060000003500R.html>
- http://www.skytourszipline.com/files/9613/2837/7136/Zipline_Guide_Job_Description.pdf
- <http://www.zipline.com/>
- <http://www.ziplinerider.com/>
- <http://explorebrowncounty.com/zip-lines>

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