

## Cross-Country Skiing: Safety Activity Checkpoint

**HIGH-ADVENTURE ACTIVITY:** [Trip or High-Adventure Approval Form Required](#)



**Council Approval: Required**

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

**Approved Vendor is not required.**

### About Cross-Country Skiing

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 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 Daisies.

Know where to cross-country ski: designated cross-country ski trails are recommended. Connect with GSNorCal for site suggestions and approval. In addition, [xcski.org](http://xcski.org) provides information about cross-country skiing trails.

#### Learn More:

- [Cross Country Ski Areas Association](#)
- [National Ski Patrol](#)
- [XC Ski World](#)

### Include Girls with Disabilities

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

### Safety Activity Checkpoints

**Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** An adult with experience teaching gives instruction and/or supervises cross-country skiing for the ages involved, or has documented experience, according to your council's guidelines.

**Select a safe cross-country skiing site.** Girls are encouraged to plan trip details and include adequate rest periods with opportunities to replenish fluids and eat high-energy foods (such as fruits and nuts). All group members should know the nature of the terrain, potential hazards (such as an avalanche or frozen lake), mileage, and approximate cross-country skiing time. When a latrine is not available, individual cat holes located at least 200 feet away from water sources should be used to dispose of human waste.

**Map the course.** The route should be marked on a map. Before skiing, designate a meeting place where girls can contact a supervising adult.

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

**Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in first aid, including adult and child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. Emergency transportation should be available. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with wilderness first aid. Girls must be trained in winter survival (such as snow-cave building, whiteouts, and avalanche avoidance), as needed. Search-and-rescue procedures are written out in advance and arrangements are made for medical emergencies and evacuation procedures. See Girl Scouts' *Volunteer Essentials* resource for information about first-aid standards and training.

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

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

#### **Safety and Required Gear**

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

## **Girl Scouts of Northern California's Approval Process for Cross Country Skiing**

- **Cross-country skiing is considered a high-adventure activity and must be pre-approved by the council.**
- **Trip or High-Adventure Approval Form:** Submit the online [Trip or High-Adventure Approval Form](#) to council at least 4-6 weeks prior to your activity.

- **High-Adventure Approved Vendor List:** GSNorCal troops/groups must select a [high-adventure vendor](#) from the High-Adventure Approved Vendor List, which consists of organizations that meet Girl Scouts safety and insurance requirements for the activity. For the safety of our members, before a troop uses a high-adventure site/vendor for a troop or service unit event, the council must approve the high-adventure site/vendor. This process is designed to ensure a safe experience and protect the council's and volunteer's legal interests.
- **Adding high-adventure facilities to the Approved Vendor List:** If your preferred vendor is not listed on the High-Adventure Approved Vendor list, please follow the simple steps in the [Volunteer Essentials](#) for adding High Adventure Vendors.

