

Fencing: Safety Activity Checkpoint

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

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A



About Fencing

Derived from the word “defense,” fencing is a sport and martial art that involves using swords called foils (practice swords), sabers, and épées (a fencing sword with a bowl-shaped hand guard). The objective of fencing is to touch the opponent with the tip of a sword without being 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. Daisies learn about fencing games and the rules of fencing but should use only foam (mock) swords.

Learn More:

- U.S. Fencing Association: www.usafencing.org
- U.S. Fencing Coaches Association: www.usfca.org
- International Fencing Federation: www.fie.org
- Fencing 101: [USA Fencing](#)

Include Girls with Disabilities

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

Safety Activity Checkpoint

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

Note: The instructor-to-participant ratio is not the same as the adult-to-girl ratio in [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints 2018-2019](#). Both ratios should be complied with when girls are participating in fencing, particularly Daisies and Brownies.

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

Select a safe site. Check GSNorCal's [Approved Vendor List](#) for fencing facilities within our council area. Call the facility ahead of time to determine what accommodations they have for children and to learn their experience levels by age group.

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

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

Dress appropriately for the activity. Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Also, have girls tie back long hair.

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

Safety and Required Gear

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

Girl Scouts of Northern California's Approval Process for Fencing

Fencing 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 4-6 weeks prior to your event.
- **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.

Questions: Contact GSNorCal's Risk Management Team at Travel@GirlScoutsNorCal.org