

Hayrides: 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 Hayrides

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

Hayrides are a fun and enjoyable activity for girls of all ages who are visiting a farm and the rides are often part of other autumn festivities such as apple or pumpkin picking. Hayrides on Halloween are often dubbed “haunted hayrides.” These hayrides sometimes incorporate special effects and

actors portraying ghosts, monsters, and other spooky creatures to attract thrill seekers and capitalize on the Halloween season.

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

Learn More:

- On farm and dairy hayride safety: [Safe Agritourism](#)
- Hayride safety checklist: [Safe Agritourism](#)

Include Girls with Disabilities

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

Safety Activity Checkpoints

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

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

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

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

Evaluate the driver. A qualified driver who is licensed to drive a vehicle in the jurisdiction and is an adult at least 18 years of age, but preferably 21 years of age, with several years of driving experience and experience hauling a trailer while driving the vehicle being used.

The hauled vehicle is in good working order. It must meet all state and local safety requirements and displays proper identification showing these conditions have been met. The hauled vehicle has protective sides and rear fencing or gates, as well as rear lights in working order. Any coupling of a trailer to a vehicle is appropriate to the load and has a safety chain.

Assess the safety of the hayride site. Before participating in a hayride, ensure that hayride equipment (tractor/truck, bales of hay) are secure, that vehicle weight limitations and seating capacities are not exceeded, and that paths and trails are free of obstructions. Also ensure that girls are responsible riders who stay seated during the hayride.

Girls learn about and practice safe hayrides. Girls do not ride in the hauling vehicle. The hauled vehicle meets all state and local safety requirements and displays proper identification showing these conditions have been met. The hay or straw is properly stacked to prevent slipping. Sufficient seating space is allowed for each person. Girls and adults remain seated during the ride. No feet hang over edges.

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

Girl Scouts of Northern California's Approval Process for Hayrides

Hayrides are 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.