

Sailing: Safety Activity Checkpoint

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



Council Approval: Required
Activity Permitted For: J C S A

About Sailing

The sport of sailing has become very high-tech and competitive since its humble beginnings, but sailors and racers still must rely on the force of wind to propel their boats. There are a wide variety of sailboats, including small and large sailboats, keelboats, and multihulls. Sailing is not allowed for Daisies and Brownies.

Note: Girls are not allowed to operate motorized boats without council permission and girls are never allowed to parasail.

Know where to sail. Oceans and lakes are ideal for sailing, but many sailing or yacht clubs offer instructions on reservoirs, rivers, and ponds.

Learn More:

- [American Sail Training Association](#)
- [International Sailing Federation](#)
- [U.S. Sailing](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division](#)

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers, and ask about needs and accommodations. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations.

Learn about the resources and information that the [International Sailing Federation](#) and [Disabled Sports USA](#) provide to people with disabilities.

Safety Activity Checklist

Ensure participants are able to swim and are comfortable in the water. Success on the water depends on comfort and ability in the water. Consult parents/guardians about girls' swim

abilities before the event. See the [“Swimming” Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for samples, or ask your instructor for guidelines.

Each sailor must have a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Ensure that the adult or sailing instructor is certified as a sailing instructor or sailing counselor by U.S. Sailing, holds American Red Cross Small Craft Safety Certification, or possesses equivalent certification.

Compile key contacts. See [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints 2018-2019](#).

Select appropriate sailboats for water and passengers. Make sure craft weight and passenger capacities are not exceeded (some crafts clearly display maximum capacity). Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment.

File a float plan. If participating in a long-distance sailing trip, it is recommended that a float plan be completed, filed and left with a person knowledgeable about the trip. This person should also know when the party is expected back from the trip. Float plans cannot be filed with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Transport sailboats safely. Sailboats are transported on car-top racks or trailers designed to haul sailboats. Sailboats should be secured with two lines across the top and a line at the bow and the stern. Drivers must have prior experience hauling trailers.

Prepare for emergencies. Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in first aid, including adult and child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with wilderness first aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of Sailing:

Get a weather and wind report. Never sail on a stormy or excessively windy day. On the day of the sailing trip or lesson, visit [Weather.com](#) (which includes marine forecasts, including water temperature and wave height) to determine if conditions are appropriate. Intellicast also reports on sailing conditions. If weather conditions prevent the sailing activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity.

Use the buddy system. See [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints 2018-2019](#).

Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning. Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, head into the wind at a 45-degree angle, and stay low.

Ensure docking safety. Ensure that docking lines are in good condition. Follow general safety guidelines provided by boating facility for docking the craft, and ensure the boat is securely connected to the dock before participants exit.

Safety Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications
- Boat shoes, closed-toe and non-slip hiking/sport sandals with a heel strap, or water socks or shoes (no flip-flops)
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, fog horn, or sounding flares
- Layered clothing that’s easily changeable depending on temperatures (waterproof jacket recommended)
- Sailing gloves (these help save tender hands and improve grip)
- A rigging knife
- Emergency repair kit (duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers, shackles, extra line, sewing kit, a spare drain plug, extra cotter rings/pins, and a short piece of light line/rope)
- Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, raincoat, pocket knife, minimum of 10-foot by 10-foot tarp, rope, drinking cup, food and appropriate liquids (food and water bottles should be secured in the sailboat)
- Paddle (as second means of propulsion)
- Bailer (a bucket used to remove water from a boat)
- At least one graspable and throw-able personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water

Girl Scouts of Northern California’s Approval Process for Sailing

Sailing 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.