

Snowshoeing: Safety Activity Checkpoint

Council Approval: Not Required

Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A



About Snowshoeing

Snow shoeing has been around for thousands of years and is a great way for girls of all ages to get outdoors in the winter. Snowshoeing extends the hiking season into winter. It lets girls enjoy favorite trails and parks in a new way. Best of all, all ages and ability levels can enjoy the sport together.

As the saying goes, "If you can walk, you can snowshoe." The learning curve is much shorter than that of skiing or snowboarding.

There are a few techniques, however, that are worth practicing: widening your stance (to avoid stepping on snowshoe frames), going up and down hills, traversing slopes, and pole usage.

No lift ticket is required. In ski areas, you can often rent snowshoes.

Learn More:

- For those who are new to the activity: [Snowshoe Magazine](#)

Include Girls with Disabilities

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

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Instruction needs to be given by an adult who has had experience teaching and/or supervising snowshoeing or has documented experience according to GSNorCal's guidelines.

Know girls' limits, especially for new or inexperienced snowshoers. There is nothing wrong with a half-hour hike—15 minutes out and 15 minutes back. Start slowly, planning short routes and building up the level of adventure once girls gain confidence and ability.

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

Select a safe snowshoeing trail. 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). Stick to established trails at first. Many ski areas have cross-country ski trails that snowshoers can share. On those, you are never too far from other people, and you are not likely to encounter avalanche hazards.

Be able to recognize trail hazards. Creek crossings, changing weather, avalanche conditions, and tree or rock wells can be difficult or downright dangerous.

Share your plan. Make sure a contact knows where you are snowshoeing and when to expect the group to return home.

Practice recovering from a fall. The act of getting up while wearing snowshoes can be a cumbersome process. It does not happen a lot, but girls can fall down when snowshoeing, most often on descents. Have girls practice getting back up from the ground.

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, and sprains. 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 for the conditions: Be sure girls carry extra layers for warmth, particularly extra base layer tops in case the ones they are wearing get wet from exertion or the weather. Know the signs of hypothermia so you can recognize them in girls.

Follow snowshoeing safety standards:

- When sharing the trail with cross-country skiers, try to make your own trail whenever possible, staying out of the tracks skiers have worked hard to set.
- Skiers have the right-of-way on trail systems, since it is easier for a snowshoer to step off the trail safely than it is for a skier to stop or go around. Always be polite to the folks you meet along the trail.
- A skier indicates her desire to pass by calling "track, please."
- Do not snowshoe close to the edge of an embankment or a cliff.

Safety and Required Gear

- Snowshoes, sized to each person's height/weight
- Poles sized to each person's height
- Winter boots
- Thick, water-resistant gloves or mittens
- A winter hat
- Heavy insulating socks
- Thermal underwear or long johns
- A water bottle
- High-energy food (such as fruits and nuts)
- A daypack to carry personal belongings
- A windproof, waterproof jacket