Safety Activity Checkpoint

Tubing
HIGH-ADVENTURE ACTIVITY: Trip or High-Adventure Approval Form Required

Council Approval: Required
Activity Permitted For: J C S A
Not Allowed For: Daisies and Brownies

About Tubing
Tubing involves floating down a river or other body of water in a doughnut-shaped inner tube. Tubing is popular both as a relaxing leisurely activity (in slow-moving waters) and as an adventurous recreational activity in faster-paced rivers. A fun thing to do on a tubing adventure is to create exploration games to see who can locate the most interesting nature gems, such as caves and peculiar plants or birds.

As a safety precaution, keep in mind that tubes occasionally flip, causing tubers to sometimes fall out of their tubes as they travel over rapids and through rough patches of water. Tubing can be done on lakes or rivers. As river tubing is often a one-way trip, be sure to arrange transportation from the tubing final destination.

If participating in boat towed tubing, be sure to take safety precautions that comply with American Red Cross small craft safety guidelines.

Learn More:
- American Whitewater
- Tubing sites: River Tubing USA River Tubing
- Whitewater Rescue Institute
Include Girls with Disabilities
Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn about the resources and information that the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability provides for people with disabilities.

Safety Activity Checkpoints
For recommended adult-to-girl ratios, see Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints 2019-2020. In addition, one adult will be the lead tuber, while another adult will be the sweep tuber. The lead adult knows firsthand the hazards and rapids on any river to be tubed.

Know the river flow. Be careful about where you roll out of a tube. If tubing in fast-moving water, the undersurface current may catch you off guard. Do not get out of a tube where the flow of water is fastest—just above the riverbed, where there is little resistance to flow.

If towing behind a motor boat, the operator must be an adult driver (at least 21 years old) with a valid license to operate the motorboat. There must be a spotter at the stern watching a girl while towing at all times. Girls are not permitted to be towed by jet skis or wave runners.

Girls are not permitted to drive or operate motorized boats.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult must be certified in American Red Cross Small Craft Safety, Moving Water Module from the American Red Cross, have experience in teaching and/or supervising tubing activities, or have documented experience.

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 Checkpoint for samples, or ask your instructor for guidelines.

Prior to tubing, girls receive verbal instruction. This should include how to float through rapids, how to breathe while swimming in rapids, and how to swim to shore. There is only one person to a tube, and tubes that are tied together are secured very snugly, with no slack between the tubes. Avoid long, dangling ropes that can get snagged on various obstructions.

Research river condition. Never go whitewater tubing on water that has not been run and rated. No tubing is taken on whitewater more difficult than Class II, as defined by the American version of the International Scale of River Difficulty. Be aware of possible changes in river level and its effects on the run’s level of difficulty.

Make sure tubing on whitewater or semi-protected waters meets the Safety Code of American Whitewater.

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.

Safeguard valuables. Don’t leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place.

Get a weather report. Never go tubing on a stormy day. On the day of the activity, consult Weather.com or other reliable sources to assess weather and river conditions and water and air temperature. If weather conditions prevent the trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.

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, keep a sharp lookout for boats and other obstructions.
Safety Gear

- 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.
- Tube
- Closed-toe sport sandals with heel strap, water socks, or shoes (no flip-flops)
- At least one graspable and throw-able coast guard approved 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 Tubing

Tubing 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. Gather the following information to complete this form:
  - Confirmation that your chaperones are registered members of Girl Scouts of Northern California and have a current background check. Troop Leaders can find this information in their [Volunteer Toolkit](#).
  - Name of First Aider and a copy of their current CPR/First Aid certification card. Certification needs to be renewed every two years. If you are hiking or backpacking farther than 30 minutes from a medical facility, please have the information of the member, who is certified in Wilderness First Aid, accompanying your troop.
  - Confirm that the necessary online and in-person courses have been completed for this trip. You can find more information or register for these courses in your [Volunteer Learning Portal](#) in the section called Trip & Outdoor Advisor.
    - For example, the **Camp Out course** is required for all camping trips that involve advanced outdoor cooking or camping trip with girls to a campground or other non-GSNorCal outdoor facility for longer than 1 night without indoor plumbing and electricity. Girls should have already had practice sleeping and cooking outdoors.
    - The **Extended Trips course** is required for troops traveling three (3) nights or more.
    - The **Backpacking course** is required before you take girls on an overnight backpacking adventure.

- **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.