

## Windsurfing: Safety Activity Checkpoint

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 Windsurfing

Windsurfing is an exciting surface water sport that combines the elements of surfing and sailing by using a standing board and sailing rig. It consists of a board usually 8 to 10 feet long, powered by the wind. The rig is connected to the board and consists of a mast, boom, and sail. Learning to windsurf entails learning the concepts of wind and balance. It can be experienced both inland and at the coast, from cruising across flat water in a lake to riding waves at the beach.

To fully enjoy the sport, windsurfers should be comfortable in the water. They should have the ability to swim and possess a certain measure of strength, balance, coordination, and attention.

It is best for beginners and intermediate-level windsurfers to learn and practice in standing-level water surrounded by land, such as a lake or salt-water bay or alcove. Advanced to expert windsurfers can ride waves in the ocean. Windsurfing instructors usually begin the instructional process on land to guide students through a start-up sequence so girls can orient themselves to the equipment and know what to do when they get in the water.

#### **Learn More:**

- [Windsurfing information Sailing and Classes Index](#)
- [Royal Yachting Association \(RYA\)](#)

### **Include Girls with Disabilities**

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations with respect to water sports.

If visiting a waterfront such as a lake or beach area, contact the parks office in advance. Also, contact the instructor or facility teaching or hosting the windsurfing event. Ask about accommodating people with disabilities and make any possible accommodations to include girls with disabilities.

### **Safety Activity Checkpoints**

**Check swimming ability.** 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 event. See the [Swimming Safety Activity Checkpoint](#) for samples, or ask your instructor for guidelines.

**All windsurfers must wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket.** Type III life jackets are recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears.

**Size up sailboards.** Communicate girls' ages, heights, and weights with windsurfing instructors to ensure the appropriate size equipment is available. Request that sails be the appropriate size (according to weight, height, and ability level) for windsurfers; the larger the sail, the more powerful the sailing capacity. Sailboard decks should be textured (not smooth) to provide traction.

**Select a safe location with a soft, sandy, or muddy bottom.** Choose a location that does not have a sharp-edged or rocky bottom, which can be dangerous and cut feet and limbs. The launching area should be easily accessible and clear of overhead power lines.

**Safeguard valuables.** Do not leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place. If working with a windsurfing school or camp, call to inquire about the organization's storage amenities.

**Prepare for emergencies.** In addition to a lifeguard, at least one adult present should have small craft safety certification or equivalent experience. 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, and 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.

**Stay with the board.** If remaining in the water while taking a break from windsurfing, stay near the board. Lifeguards become concerned if they see a windsurf board “missing” a windsurfer.

**Troubleshoot exhaustion.** In the case of fatigue while in the water (and in light winds), raise the sail down over the back of the board, position leg on top of the sail to prevent it from falling off the board, and paddle (or walk, if water is shallow enough) back to shore. [U.S. Sailing](#) provides instructions.

## Safety Gear

- The facility will provide the windsurfing board, sail, and life jackets.
- Girls bring waterfront/beach essentials, blankets for the sand, towels, and a change of clothes.
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15), applied every two hours, and lip balm

## Girl Scouts of Northern California’s Approval Process for Windsurfing

- **Windsurfing 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.