

Safety Activity Checkpoint **Amusement Parks**



Council Approval: Not Required
Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A

Includes:

- Large theme parks
- Carnivals/ County Fairs
- Smaller amusement-type parks/ Free-standing rides
- Themed adventure parks
- Controlled go-kart activities
- Pop-Up Carnivals

*Waterparks and theme parks that have pools require that lifeguards be present and the Trip/High Adventure form be submitted for approval.

About Amusement Parks

Amusement parks take a wide variety of forms depending on where they are geographically located and the audience they are geared toward. These parks are commercially operated enterprises that offer rides, games, activities, and other forms of entertainment. To ensure a safe park experience, it is important to look at the various activities individually for safety to be sure they are in compliance.

Currently 44 out of 50 states regulate amusement parks. The six without state oversight are Alabama, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, Wyoming, and Utah. These states contain few, if any, amusement parks. (Wyoming has no amusement parks.)

Keep in mind that some locations may have certain activities that are not permissible Girl Scout activities, such as bungee jumping, or provide activities that are subject to approval such as Go-Karts.

Be sure to identify these prior to making final plans, and communicate with girls and adults which activities may be restricted because of age, height, and weight, or need council approval. Also, discuss ride and crowd safety, have a designated meeting space, and encourage girls to act responsibly.

Learn More:

- [Saferparks database](#)
- [Guide to U.S. theme parks](#)
- [International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions](#)

Amusement and other types of adventure parks, as listed above, can be found in most states.

Making Activities Accessible

In order to make your activity accessible to girls of all abilities, it's important to communicate with all girl attendees and their caregivers to learn about and accommodate their varied support needs. Contact the location in advance to ensure they are able to accommodate all girls.

Great examples of theme parks' accessibility services:

- DISNEYLAND in Anaheim, CA: [Services for Guests with Disabilities](#)
- DISNEY WORLD in Orlando, FL: [Services for Guests with Disabilities](#)
- Universal Studios, California: [Accessibility Information](#)
- Universal Studios, Florida: [Making Things Work for Everyone](#)

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities, consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the girls in your troop that could affect a girl's ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with girls and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all girls and their families feel comfortable that they have access to whatever is needed to fully participate, such as the proper equipment, prior experiences, and skills needed to enjoy the activity.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Standard Safety Guidelines. Refer to the "Standard Safety Guidelines" in the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) which apply to all Girl Scout gatherings and activities. When the adult-to-girl ratio, or other safety parameters, are stricter for a specific activity than in the Standard Safety Guidelines, always follow the stricter parameters in the activity chapter.

COVID-19 Guidelines. Review the "Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts" section in the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) under the "Standard Safety Guidelines" section and be certain to consult with [GSNorCal's specific COVID-19 guidance](#). When applicable, always call ahead to the vendor, property or facility involved to check for their COVID-19 safety requirements as you prepare to take girls for this activity.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong, such as, an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Follow Adult to Girl Ratios within the Park: Make sure that safety ratios are still met even when troops split up within the theme park. [[Volunteer Essentials: Safety Wise- Adult to Girl Ratios](#)]

Ensure safety of theme-park rides. Obtain full information about the rides and other activities and evaluate them for safety especially concerning the age, height, and weight levels of girls.

Follow the [Swimming Safety Activity Checkpoint](#). Pay particular attention to water park safety rules. Ensure there are certified lifeguards at each activity. Parents/Guardians should be consulted prior to swimming event to verify girls' abilities.

Know where girls are at all times. Keep track of girls' whereabouts. Conduct a head count before and after activities. Ensure that girls know where to go and how to act when confronted by strangers.

Review plans upon arrival. Adults should obtain a copy of the park guide to facilitate the visit and gain important information on park policies, as well as the location of restrooms and the first-aid station. Plan the rides or events to attend with predetermined groups.

Determine a meeting spot beforehand. Adults should discuss plans for the visit with girls and set a place to meet, establishing a home base spot for girls to go if they are separated from the group.

Verify first-aid particulars. Know where the first-aid station is located. Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a troop first-aider with a current certificate in first aid, including adult and child CPR or CPR/AED. This person has also completed the GSNorCal Online Troop First Aider course and is prepared to handle cases of abrasions, sprains, and fractures. [Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise First Aid & First Aiders](#)

****Council Approval Required.** Most amusement parks do not require council approval for attendance, but in certain circumstances, activities provided by certain amusement parks fall under high-adventure activities. These activities, such as waterparks, swimming, go-kart racing, ziplining, will require council approval. Please make sure that you review the related Safety Activity Checkpoint for these activities and submit the Trip/High-Adventure Approval Form for approval by council.