

## Safety Activity Checkpoint Cross-Country Skiing

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

**Council Approval:** Required

**Activity Permitted For:** \*D B J C S A



**Activity Not Recommended For:** \*Daisies

**Approved Vendor is not required.**

### About Cross-Country Skiing

Also referred to as back-country, Nordic, and XC skiing, cross-country is a form of skiing where skiers rely on their own locomotion to move across snow covered terrain, rather than using ski lifts or other forms of assistance. Unlike downhill skiing, in which the entire boot is attached to the ski, only the toe of the cross-country boot is attached to the ski. Cross-country skiing is not recommended for Daisies due to the more complex nature of the cross-country ski and the fact that young girls will typically not learn with ski poles- which means it may be far more difficult for an adult volunteer to corral and manage a group of Daisies for this activity. Daisies may find it too labor intensive and not enjoyable, which is why it is not recommended. However, while cross country skiing is not recommended for Daisies, it is permitted in councils located in regions where cross-country skiing with young children is common and typical.

Know where to cross-country ski: designated cross-country ski trails are recommended. Connect with GSNorCal for site suggestions and approval [travel@gsnorcal.org](mailto:travel@gsnorcal.org). In addition, [xcski.org](http://xcski.org) provides information about cross-country skiing trails.

#### Learn More:

- [Cross Country Ski Areas Association](#)
- [National Ski Patrol](#)
- [XC Ski World](#)

## 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. For resources and information on accessible sport and adventure activities, visit [Move United](#).

## 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 or adult, missing girl, or sudden illness.

**Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** An adult with experience teaching gives instruction and/or supervises cross-country skiing for the ages involved, or has documented experience, according to GSNorCal's guidelines.

**Select a safe cross-country skiing site.** 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). All group members should know the nature of the terrain, potential hazards (such as an avalanche or frozen lake), mileage, and approximate cross-country skiing time. When a latrine is not available, individual cat holes located at least 200 feet away from water sources should be used to dispose of human waste.

**Map the course.** Before skiing, designate a meeting place where girls can contact a supervising adult and be sure to share that course with your emergency contact at home.

**Designate a meeting spot.** The route should be marked on a map. Before skiing, designate a meeting place where girls can contact a supervising adult.

**Recover from a fall.** The act of hoisting back up while wearing skis can be a cumbersome process. Have girls learn how to get back up on their skis.

**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 caused by extremes of temperature, such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke, frostbite, cold exposure, and hypothermia, as well as sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. Emergency transportation should be available. 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

certification. Girls must be trained in winter survival (such as snow-cave building, whiteouts, and avalanche avoidance), as needed. Search-and-rescue procedures are written out in advance and arrangements are made for medical emergencies and evacuation procedures. The designated adult should have a working cell phone for emergencies. You might want to consider using long-range walkie-talkies for those areas where cell coverage may be spotty. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training. [[SAFETYWISE: First Aid & First Aiders](#)]

**Follow cross-country ski-safety standards.** Ski area rules are explained and observed:

- Girls should ski under control to avoid other skiers and objects.
- Girls must yield the right-of-way to those already on the trail. They step to the side to let faster skiers pass. A descending skier has the right of way.
- A faster skier should indicate her desire to pass by calling “Track, please.”
- Girls do not ski close to the edge of an embankment or a cliff.
- Girls must not walk on ski trails.



#### **Safety and Required Gear**

- Skis
- Ski poles
- Boots
- Thick, water-resistant gloves or mittens
- A winter hat
- Heavy insulating socks
- Thermal underwear or long johns
- Sunglasses or ski goggles to protect eyes from glare
- A water bottle
- High-energy food (such as fruits and nuts)
- A daypack to carry personal belongings

## **Girl Scouts of Northern California’s Approval Process for Cross Country Skiing**

Cross-country skiing 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, have a current background check, completed the troop chaperone course and troop driver course (if transporting girls), and completed the [California State Mandated Reporter Training](#). 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.
    - The **Trip & Outdoor Advisor Course** is required for all overnight and [high-adventure activities](#).

- 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 **Girl Scout Small Craft Safety Training** is required before you take girls on a small craft water adventure.
- **Adding high-adventure facilities to the Approved Vendor List: No Approved Vendors Required.**