

Safety Activity Checkpoint

Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

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



About Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

Whether girls are participating in snowboarding or traditional downhill, slalom, Super G, or other types of skiing, participants use trails and slopes matched to their abilities. [Skiing.about.com](https://www.skiing.about.com) describes various ski levels, which range from first-time beginner to expert.

In planning a Girl Scout ski or snowboarding trip, contact the ski resort or organization to inquire about rental equipment, lift tickets, and any special accommodations for large groups, and always know the location of the first-aid station. With the appropriate instructors, equipment, and hills/levels, Daisies are permitted to participate in skiing and snowboarding. Most mountains have wonderful educational programs for children as young as four years old!

Note: Even experienced girls are not permitted to do aerial tricks on skis or snowboards.

Learn More:

- Professional Ski Instructors of America and American Association of Snowboard Instructors: [The Snow Pros](#)
- [National Ski Patrol](#)
- [U.S. Ski and Snowboard](#)
- Locate ski resort by region: [ABC of Snowboarding](#)

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.

Be in shape. Participants get in condition by stretching and exercising before the skiing or snowboarding trip. Skiing takes endurance and balance, so be in shape!

Learn how to ride ski lifts. This includes line courtesy, loading and unloading, and emergency procedures.

Observe the basics. Ski and snowboard under control. Participants should ski responsibly, and not beyond their ability level. All rules of the ski area must be explained, learned, and followed.

Stay on trails. Do not ski off-trail or in an unmarked or closed area.

Be aware of terrain. Avoid objects and obstacles, such as trees, rocks, growth coming up under thin snow coverage, and melted puddles, which can occur in spring or during fluctuating weather.

Understand right-of-way protocol. Make others aware before you turn. Yield the right-of-way to those already on the slope. Do not cross the path of skiers.

Prepare for falls. Move quickly to the side of the trail or slope after falling, unless injured.

Summon the ski patrol if a skier is injured. They are usually dressed in red.

Know the slopes. [Skiing.about.com](#) details trail ratings, which include **green circle** as the easiest, **blue square** as intermediate, and **black diamond** for expert skiers and snowboarders. Review the trail maps before hitting the slopes.

Know where the Medical Clinic on the mountain is located.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Instructors are certified by the Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) or they possess equivalent certification or documented experience according to GSNorCal’s guidelines. Instructors have experience teaching and/or supervising downhill skiing/snowboarding for the ages involved.

Select a safe downhill skiing and/or snowboarding 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. Plan for a nutritious, high-energy snack, and provide beverages to prevent dehydration. Ensure that all participants know terrain and potential hazards.

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. Ensure that emergency transportation is 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 winter wilderness first-aid certification. See Volunteer Essentials for information about first-aid standards and training. 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. [[SAFETYWISE: First Aid & First Aiders](#)]

Safety and Required Gear

- Protective helmet with properly fitting safety harness that meets the Snell Memorial Foundation's RS-98 or S-98 standards or the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F2040 requirements (or both) and displays the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal
- Ski or snowboarding boots
- Skis or snowboards with bindings
- Ski poles (not needed for snowboarding)
- Sunglasses or ski goggles to protect eyes from glare
- Insulated water-resistant gloves or mittens
- Insulating socks and thermal underwear
- Sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 and lip balm for snow glare protection
- Windproof and waterproof ski jacket and pants

Girl Scouts of Northern California's Approval Process for Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding are considered high-adventure activities 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.
- **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.