

**Council Approval:** Required

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



### About Hayrides

A hayride, also known as a hayrack ride, is a traditional American and Canadian activity consisting of a recreational ride in a wagon or cart pulled by a tractor, horses, or a truck, which has been loaded with hay or straw for comfortable seating. Hayrides originated with farm workers, including children, who rode loaded hay wagons back to barns for unloading. It was one of the few times during the frenetic days of the haying season that workers could stop to rest.

Hayrides are a fun and enjoyable activity for girls of all ages who are visiting a farm and the rides are often part of other autumn festivities such as apple or pumpkin picking. Hayrides on Halloween are often dubbed “haunted hayrides.” These hayrides sometimes incorporate special effects and actors portraying ghosts, monsters, and other spooky creatures to attract thrill seekers and capitalize on the Halloween season.

Although the fact that hayrides are typically regarded as a safe and lighthearted activity, there have been incidents where hayrides have flipped or veered off the road, resulting in terrible consequences. Therefore, it is very important to follow the safety precautions and learn as much as you can about hayride safety ahead of time.

### Learn More:

- On farm and dairy hayride safety and hayride safety checklist: [Safe Agritourism](#)

### 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

Assess the safety of the hayride, the vehicle, and the cab. See hayride safety links provided above.

**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.

**Consider the location.** The hayride must take place on sectioned off property (such as fields) intended for hayride use at a maximum speed of 10 miles per hour. Public roads and highways are not used.

**Girls do not ride on tractors.** The tractor pulling the hayride must weigh more than the gross weight of the heaviest wagon in tow, which is necessary for adequate traction and braking.

**Evaluate the wagon.** Ensure that the wagon has sturdy steps and handrails for easy loading and unloading of passengers. The wagon should have railings and seating. The cab walls should be 3 to 4 feet high.

**Evaluate the driver.** A qualified driver who is licensed to drive a vehicle in the jurisdiction and is an adult at least 21 years of age. Legal adult age is 18, however, based on the experience and maturity level needed for this activity, 21 years of age is required in order to provide enough years of experience controlling the vehicle while hauling a trailer with child passengers.

**The hauled vehicle is in good working order.** It must meet all state and local safety requirements and displays proper identification showing these conditions have been met. The hauled vehicle has protective sides and rear fencing or gates, as well as rear lights in working order. Any coupling of a trailer to a vehicle is appropriate to the load and has a safety chain.

**Assess the safety of the hayride site.** Before participating in a hayride, ensure that hayride equipment (tractor/truck, bales of hay) are secure, that vehicle weight limitations and seating capacities are not exceeded, and that paths and trails are free of obstructions. Also ensure that girls are responsible riders who stay seated during the hayride.

**Girls learn about and practice safe hayrides.** Girls do not ride in the hauling vehicle. The hauled vehicle meets all state and local safety requirements and displays proper identification showing these conditions have been met. The hay or straw is properly stacked to prevent slipping. Sufficient seating space is allowed for each person. Girls and adults remain seated during the ride with no leaning over the edges, and legs and arms do not hang over the trailer. Girls remain securely seated.

Adults accompany girls on the hayride according to the grade level–specific adult-to-girl ratios.

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

Hayrides are 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 the courses below on [GSNorCal’s Training Section](#) of the website.
    - 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:** **Not Required.**
- **Have a Troop First-Aider present.** Troop First Aiders are required for troop/group activities as required for certain Safety Activity Checkpoints including camping, travel and high-adventure activities. [[SAFETYWISE: First Aid & First Aiders](#)] Learn more on how to become a Troop First-Aider by logging into [GSNorCal’s Training Section](#) of the website.