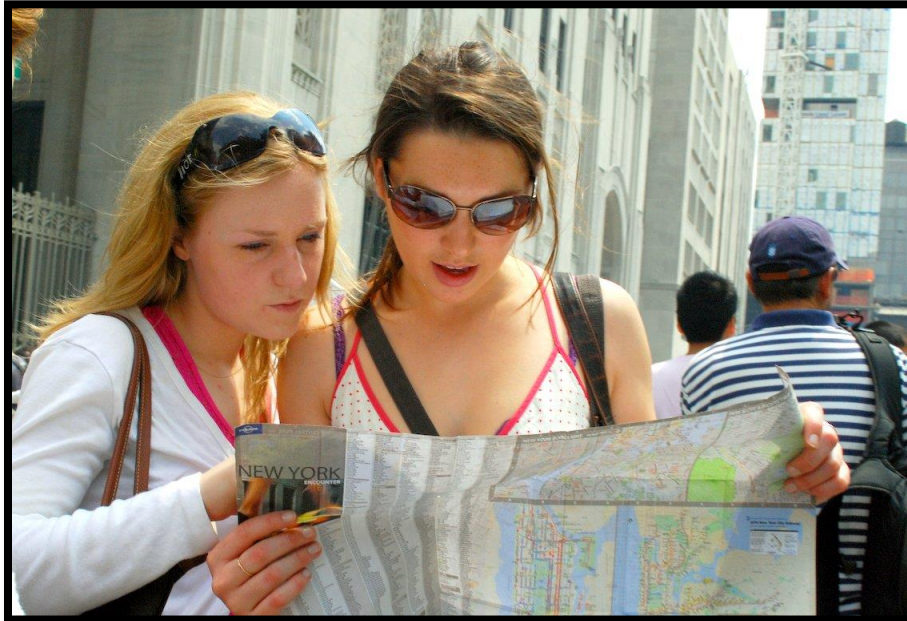


Council Approval: Not required

Activity Permitted for: J C S A

Not Allowed For: Daisies and Brownies



About Orienteering

Orienteering is an activity that involves using a map, compass, and navigational skills to find your way around or across an unfamiliar area. The activity may also incorporate camping, backpacking, boating, hiking, cross-country skiing, or horseback-riding skills.

Orienteering often takes place on wilderness trails, although events can take place in just about any terrain such as a beach, urban area, or park. Orienteering uses control markers to flag various land features found on the map, serving as checkpoints along a course.

Be certain to practice Leave No Trace while orienteering. Girls should always stay on trails.

Orienteering is not allowed for Daisies and Brownies, but they may be ready to learn pre-orienteering activities such as map reading, navigation, and map drawing. Brownies may also enjoy geocaching. See [Geocaching Safety Activity Checkpoint](#).

Learn More:

- [Orienteering USA](#)
- [Orienteering Course Safety](#)
- Ethics and generally accepted rules of orienteering: [Orienteering Association of British Columbia](#)

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 Checkpoint for Trail Orienteering

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.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Participants receive instruction from a person experienced in orienteering before navigating an orienteering course. First-timers participate on a beginner-level course. Girls with previous topographic map-reading experience may be eligible to attempt an advanced beginners' course.

Select a safe orienteering site. The site selected is a park, camp, or other area with a good trail network; proper landowner permission is secured to use the site.

Always avoid orienteering during hunting season.

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. 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 training. Learn more on how to become a Troop First-Aider by logging into your [MyGS Account- gsLearn](#).

Follow basic orienteering safety standards. Girls take part as a group or with buddies. Each participant is given a specific time period to complete the course and must check in at the finish area whether or not she completed the course. Beginning and finishing course times of each participant are carefully noted to ensure that all participants have returned.

Take proper precautions in areas where poisonous plants, snakes, or ticks are prevalent.

Map your course. [Get to know map symbols](#) and how things like elevation and relief are communicated on maps.

Learn about orienteering techniques. Before participating in orienteering, [learn about strategies such as pacing, thumbing, and handrails](#).

Plan the right activity for the age group. Juniors should do orienteering in small groups and be accompanied on a course by an adult with basic instruction in orienteering. Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who have received training may orienteer in groups of at least two.

Competitive orienteering courses often require participants to operate independently; solo competition is not allowed for inexperienced girls or Juniors. However, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors whose skills match or exceed the demands of the course may participate in such competitions.

Plan ahead. When participating in a meet, there should be a clear area of safety (a safety lane), a specific finish time and location, and a search-and-rescue procedure designed by the competition's host and the Girl Scout adult volunteer.

Practice Leave No Trace skills before participating in orienteering. Pick up garbage you find along the way, be sure not to trample vegetation, and be aware of wildlife.

Safety Gear

- Orienteering map
- Compass and watch
- Emergency signaling whistle
- Long pants, hiking boots, sneakers
- Daypack to carry personal belongings

