

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



**Includes:** Snow tubing

### About Sledding and Tobogganing

The history of sledding is quite interesting: Traditionally sleds were used to transport goods and people in places where wheels could not operate. Toboggans made of poles tied together with leather were used by Native Americans to carry food, clothing, and other items through snow. Today, people of all ages enjoy sledding, tobogganing, and tubing as an enjoyable outdoor winter activity and sport. Today, tobogganing is even a formal sport in the winter Olympics.

Sleds and toboggans will vary in design, shape, and material and can range from round plastic discs to rectangular wood structures with metal runners. A toboggan is typically a long, flat-bottomed sled made of thin boards that curve upward in a C-shape at one end. Snow tubes are inflatable, doughnut-shaped rubber or plastic inner tubes similar to those used in water tubing, but with dimpled centers.

Girls must stick to designated sledding, tobogganing, and snow-tubing hills away from roads or heavily wooded areas to enjoy sledding safely. They should also receive basic instruction in sledding safety, conduct rules, and learn to perform basic steering skills, including how to slow down and stop. Girls must never be towed behind a vehicle or snow mobile.

Some ski resorts will offer snow-tubing and tobogganing classes within specially designated areas, so check with your local ski resorts if you have any nearby.

**Learn More:**

- Competitive and Olympic sledding: [Team USA](#)
- Safety Tips on sledding: [Sled Riding](#)

## 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

**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.

**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.

**Select a safe site.** Ensure that sledding is conducted in an area free of vehicles and that the site has no obstructions such as rocks, poles, benches, trees, or signposts. All group members should know the nature of the terrain, potential hazards (such as an avalanche or frozen lake), mileage, and approximate activity time in advance. Avoid sledding near streets or highways.

**Make smart decisions.** Girls should slide downhill feet first (like Olympians) to reduce the potential for head injuries from collisions. Use of helmets is strongly recommended.

**Ensure girls are not towed.** Girl Scouts are not permitted to be towed on sleds, toboggans, or tubes behind a motor vehicle of any kind including snowmobiles. Never use a motorized vehicle to pull a sled or tube.

**Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [Weather.com](#) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.

**Practice safe sledding, tobogganing, and snow tubing.** Conditions should be monitored, and breaks taken to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Girls and adults must agree on the portion of slope to be used for sledding and the portion to be used for walking uphill.

**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 of frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, and altitude sickness. 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. See Volunteer Essentials for information about first-aid standards and training. [[SAFETYWISE: First Aid & First Aiders](#)]

## Safety and Recommended Gear

- Hat, mittens, or warm gloves
- Waterproof winter boots
- Bicycle or ski helmets (may be required by some organized sledding facilities)
- Heavy, wool insulating socks (avoid cotton socks)
- Layered clothing
- Thermal underwear or long johns
- Snow pants, snowsuit, or waterproof pants over warm layers