

## Safety Activity Checkpoint

### Target Sports

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

**Council Approval:** Required

**Activity Permitted For:** See [Target and Shooting Progression Chart](#)



**Includes:**

- Air guns
- BB
- Muzzle
- Pistol
- Paintball (target paintball)
- Rifle
- Skeet

### About Shooting Sports

Why teach shooting sports? Handling a gun and good marksmanship develop positive traits such as patience, discipline, determination, focus, attention to detail, and persistence. Since these skills are key elements of leadership and confidence, we encourage girls to take what they learn from any sport or activity and apply it in their lives, communities, and the world.

Learning how to handle guns properly and safely is of paramount importance, as is the healthy respect girls will develop when properly trained in shooting sports. There are varieties of styles and sizes of guns, each appropriate for specific grade levels. The guns girls will be learning on are for the express purpose of safe target shooting. Girls are not permitted to hunt.

**Note:** Girls are not permitted to use firearms unless they are 12 years old or older. **Written permission must be obtained from GSNorCal in advance of the activity.** Once approved, you must have written permission from a parent/guardian before a girl is permitted to participate in target shooting.

**Learn More:**

- Safety re: various shooting sports/events, and youth videos: [USA Shooting](#)
- More safety information: [National Rifle Association](#)
- Safety at home and on the range: [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#)
- Trap and skeet shooting for high school girls: [USA High School Clay Target League](#)
- Safe shooting certification: [USA Clay Target Safety](#)
- Learn how to shoot: [Revolutionary War Veterans](#)

### 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, missing girl, or sudden illness.

**Assess participants' maturity level.** Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others.

**Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** One adult needs to be a certified National Rifle Association Range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor, or have equivalent certification or documented experience and skill teaching/supervising firearm safety or shooting sports according to GSNorCal's guidelines and as outlined in [Volunteer Essentials](#).

**Note:** The instructor-to-participant ratio is not the same as the adult-to-girl ratio that is found in [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints 2023-2024](#). Both the instructor-ratio and the adult-to-girl ratio must be complied with when girls are participating in shooting sports. For example, if 15 Cadettes are on the shooting line, then there must be three instructors plus two adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).

**Connect with Girl Scout of Northern California for approved sites.** Groups are required to use council approved indoor and outdoor firing ranges. Council must approve all sites in advance. Please submit new vendors to council for approval 6-8 weeks in advance.

**Keep in mind that safe sites include those where:**

- Equipment is stored in a box, closet, or cabinet and locked when not in use.
- Ammunition and firearms are stored in separate locked containers or areas with different locks and combinations.
- Caliber firearms have working trigger locks for storage (exceptions: BB and air guns).
- Equipment, including targets, are checked each time and are in good condition.
- Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity are posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping on to the range.
- Backstops or specific safety zones are set behind the targets.
- Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers are known to the entire facility population.
- The shooting line is clearly defined.

At an outdoor range:

- Targets are not placed in front of houses, roads, trails, or tents.
- Areas with pedestrian traffic are avoided.
- Areas are clear of brush. A hillside backstop is recommended.
- The shooting area and the spectator area behind the shooting area are clearly marked.
- In the shooting area, there is a safe distance at least 100 yards behind the targets and 30 yards on each side of the range.
- The range is not used after nightfall.

At an indoor range, check that:

- Targets are well lit.
- Doors or entries to the range are locked or blocked from the inside.
- Fire exits are not blocked.
- Ensure equipment is properly sized for the girls.

**Girls should learn about shooting.** Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, handling the equipment, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices.

**Ensure that firearms are always pointed in a safe direction.** This is the primary rule of target sport safety. A safe direction means that the firearm is pointed so that even if it were to go off it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control where the front end of the firearm is pointed at all times.

**Ensure that equipment to be used is in good condition.** Make sure that the equipment is clean, in good working order, and nothing is broken or loose. Targets and backstops for targets must be in good repair.

## On the Day of Shooting:

**Dress appropriately.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Tie back long hair. Wear closed toed shoes.

**Ensure the instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand.** The instructor covers safety procedures, including:

- No dry firing, as it can damage equipment
- Keep the safety clip on until it is time to shoot
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, away from self and others

**Limit shooters' exposure to lead.** For firearm sports, be sure that the range safety officer and/or the instructor provide wet wipes for the girls to cleanse their hands and faces immediately after shooting.

In addition, the girls must return to a restroom facility and wash their hands and faces with soap and cold water. Cold water keeps pores closed so that less lead is absorbed into the blood stream. Girls should not take casings as souvenirs.

## Safety Gear

- Firearm (automatic firearms are not permitted at any time)
- Ammunition
- Targets
- Safety glasses
- Ear protection

- Barrel-blocking device (sleeve) for paintball
- CO2 or compressed air tank for paintball
- Paintball hopper (loader) for paintball

## Target Sports—Shooting Sports Progression Chart

Shooting Type	Grade Level Minimum Age	Participant-to- Instructor Ratio	Instructor/Expert Certification
Slingshot	D B J C S A	D, B - 5:1 J C S A - 10:1	One adult instructor is trained in slingshot safety, form, and technique, range rules, and emergency procedures.
Target Paintball	B J C S A	B - 5:1 J C S A - 10:1	One adult is trained in paintball safety, range rules, and emergency procedures.
Air/BB Guns	B J C S A	B - 5:1 J C S A - 10:1	One adult is a certified National Rifle Association range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Rifle	Age 12 & older	8:1	One adult is a certified NRA range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Shotgun- Trap/ Skeet Shooting	Age 12 & older	8:1	One adult is a certified NRA range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Muzzle Loading	Age 12 & older	2:1	One adult is a certified NRA range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Pistol	Age 14 & older	4:1	One adult is a certified NRA Range Safety Officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.

## Girl Scouts of Northern California’s Approval Process for Shooting Sports

Shooting Sports 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 [MyGS Account - GSLearn](#) 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.
- **Prepare for Emergencies:** The designated adult should have a working cell phone in order to be able to call 911. 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, cold exposure, hypothermia, as well as sprains, fractures, altitude sickness, skin abrasions, and puncture wounds. 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 wilderness first-aid certification. See Volunteer Essentials for information about first-aid standards and training. [\[SAFETY-WISE: First Aid & First Aiders\]](#)