

Safety Activity Checkpoint

Tubing

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

Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: J C S A

Not Allowed For: Daisies and Brownies



About Tubing

Tubing involves floating down a river or other body of water in a doughnut-shaped inner tube. Tubing is popular both as a relaxing leisurely activity (in slow-moving waters) and as an adventurous recreational activity in faster-paced rivers. A fun thing to do on a tubing adventure is to create exploration games to see who can locate the most interesting nature gems, such as, caves and peculiar plants or birds.

As a safety precaution, keep in mind that tubes occasionally flip, causing tubers to sometimes fall out of their tubes as they travel over rapids and through rough patches of water. Tubing can be done on lakes or rivers. As river tubing is often a one-way trip, be sure to arrange transportation from the tubing final destination.

Learn More:

- [American Whitewater](#)
- [Tubing sites: River Tubing USA](#)
- [Whitewater Rescue Institute](#)

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 adult, or sudden illness.

Adult Supervision. For recommended adult-to-girl ratios, see [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints 2023-2024](#). In addition, one adult will be the lead tuber, while another adult will be the sweep tuber. The lead adult knows firsthand the hazards and rapids on any river to be tubed.

Know the river flow. Be careful about where you roll out of a tube. If tubing in fast-moving water, the undersurface current may catch you off guard. Do not get out of a tube where the flow of water is fastest—just above the riverbed, where there is little resistance to flow.

If towing behind a motorboat, the operator must be an adult driver with a valid license to operate the motorboat. There must be a spotter at the stern watching a girl while towing, *always*. Girls are not permitted to be towed by jet skis or wave runners.

Girls are not permitted to drive or operate motorized boats.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult must be certified in American Red Cross Small Craft Safety, Moving Water Module from the American Red Cross, have experience in teaching and/or supervising tubing activities, or have documented experience.

Ensure participants are able to swim and are comfortable in the water. Success on the water depends on comfort and ability in the water. Consult parents/guardians about girls' swim abilities before the event. See the [Swimming Safety Activity Checkpoint](#) for samples, or ask your instructor for guidelines.

Prior to tubing, girls receive verbal instruction. This should include how to float through rapids, how to breathe while swimming in rapids, and how to swim to shore. There is only one person to a tube, and tubes that are tied together are secured very snugly, with no slack between the tubes. Avoid long, dangling ropes that can get snagged on various obstructions.

Research river condition. Never go whitewater tubing on water that has not been run and rated. No tubing is taken on whitewater more difficult than Class II, as defined by the American version of the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#). Be aware of possible changes in river level and its effects on the run's level of difficulty.

Make sure tubing on whitewater or semi-protected waters meets the [Safety Code of American Whitewater](#).

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 near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. 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.

Safeguard valuables. Don't leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place.

Get a weather report. Never go tubing on a stormy day. On the day of the activity, consult [Weather.com](#) or other reliable sources to assess weather and river conditions and water and air temperature. If weather conditions prevent the trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.

Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning. Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, keep a sharp lookout for boats and other obstructions.

Safety Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears.
- Tube
- Closed-toed sport sandals with heel strap, water socks, or shoes (no flip-flops)
- At least one graspable and throw-able Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water

Girl Scouts of Northern California's Approval Process for Tubing

Tubing is 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, 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.