

Tomahawk, Ax, Knife, and Hatchet Throwing



Council Approval: Required

Activity Permitted For: C S A Ages 12+ years old.

Note: See Target Sports—Master Progression Chart

This activity requires a trained facilitator.

Waiver: Required and attached to this Safety Activity Checkpoint.

Certificate of Insurance (COI) is required from vendor providing this activity. Visit <https://www.girlscoutsni.org/resources#COI> to check list of the COIs on file or to request one.

About Ax, Knife, and Hatchet Throwing

Some of the oldest weapons, tools, and hunting methods include the ax, knife, and hatchet and they are still used for their traditional purposes in some areas today. Learning how to handle them safely by aiming at targets for accuracy is also common today as a recreational and competitive activity. It is an ideal way to learn how to handle these tools safely, tools that can be used in the great outdoors and wilderness excursions.

Good throwing requires learning positive traits such as patience, determination, focus, attention to detail, discipline, and persistence. Since these skills are likewise key elements of leadership and confidence, we encourage our girls to take what disciplines they learn from any sport or activity and apply it to their participation in their communities and the world.

There are a variety of styles and sizes of axes, knives, and hatchets. The ones the girls will be learning about are designed for the express purpose of hitting a target.

Learn More:

- [World Ax Throwing League \(WATL\)](#)
- [National Axe Throwing Federation](#)
- [American Knife Throwers Alliance](#)

Include Girl Scout Members with Disabilities

Talk to Girl Scout members with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and special accommodations. Check with facilities ahead of time to determine what accommodations can be made.

Equity

In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the Girl Scout members in your troop that could affect their ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with members and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all Girl Scout members 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 at the beginning of 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 under the Standard Safety Guidelines. Be certain to consult your council's specific COVID-19 guidance which can be accessed under the same section. 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 or adult, 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 trained and experienced in ax, hatchet, or knife throwing safety (depending on which you are doing), form and technique, range rules and specifications, and emergency procedures.

Note: The instructor-to-participant ratio is different from the adult-to-girl ratio found in the Safety Standards and Guidelines. You must follow the Target and Shooting Sports—Master Progression Chart for the proper number of instructors. Additionally, both ratios must be complied with when girls are participating in throwing sports. For example, if 15 Cadettes are on the throwing line, there must be eight instructors plus two adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors) who are present during the activity.

Select a safe site. Check with council staff to see if an approved vendor list is offered. If the council does not have an approved vendor list, look for organized indoor and outdoor throwing ranges. Call the facility to determine the following safety information to select a safe site:

- **Equipment should be stored in a box, closet, or cabinet and locked when not in use.**
- **Equipment, including targets, are checked each time and in good condition.**
- **Range rules and throwing command controls are clearly posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping on to the range.**
- **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 a specific safety zone is 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 indoor range, make sure that:

Indoor Range Specific Guidelines: [WATL for Indoor Range Information](#)

Note: For hatchet throwing, indoor ceilings must be a minimum of 12 feet high; metal chain link 15-foot floor-to-ceiling partitions must separate sets of two targets; and within a set of two targets, there must be a 6-foot floor-to-ceiling partition between the targets.

- Each throwing area is designated as a throwing lane.
- A regulation lane for competition must contain 2 targets.
- Fences or walls block this area from the rest of the facility to keep throwers and axes all contained in a safe environment.
- Only the two participating throwers and the axe throwing coach are allowed inside the lane at one time. This includes ensuring the area behind the throwers is clear of any other person up to 5'.
- 10 ft minimum/clear ceiling height (within the throwing lane) is recommended for safety reasons.
- Targets are well lit.
- Doors or entries to the range are locked or blocked from the inside.
- Fire exits are not blocked.

At an outdoor range, check that:

Indoor Range Specific Guidelines: [WATL for Outdoor Range Information](#)

- Each throwing area is designated as a throwing lane.
- There needs to be a marker of 12 ft from the targets to designate the safe zone.
- Only the two participating throwers and the supervisor are allowed in inside the lane at one time. This includes ensuring the area behind the throwers is clear of any other person up to 6'.

- There needs to be 8ft tall fencing on the sides around the throwing area. This fencing must cover at least 15 ft to the front of the targets and connect to the fencing behind the targets with the back fencing.
- There needs to be 8ft tall fencing covering behind the target.
- If the targets are not fully enclosed in fencing with a ceiling, then there must be fencing at least 10 ft away behind the targets.
- Under no circumstances can spectators or the public be allowed to walk behind the target, even behind the 8ft tall fencing area.
- If there is any reason to go behind the targets, it will only be by an authorized facilitator. Axes must all be put down any time a facilitator is behind a target.
- Outdoor Range Specific Guidelines: Outdoor Range Information

Ensure equipment is properly sized for the girls and is made for throwing. Knives should be between 9 to 16 inches and not overly sharp. Hatchet heads should weigh between 1.25 and 1.75 pounds, the handle should be wood, length must be at least 13 inches, including the handle in the eye of the blade and the face (blade) of the axe must be no longer than 4 inches and not overly sharp.

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

Always keep the knife/hatchet pointed in a safe direction. This is the primary rule of target sport safety. A safe direction means that the knife/hatchet is handled so that even if it were to be dropped or slip out of the throwers grip it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control your actions, *always*.

Dress appropriately for the activity. Make sure that all participating will avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Also make sure long hair is tied back and always wear closed toed shoes.

Verify Instructor Knowledge. Ensure the experienced instructor reviews all rules, range, and operating procedures with girls beforehand.

Safety and Required Gear

- Axes, knives, hatchets
- Targets (positioned at recommended/safe distance)
- Hard shoes (to protect feet from bounce backs)
- Gloves (may be provided)

Target Sports

Target and Shooting Sports—Master 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. *Junior-Ambassador permitted to use air rifles at GSNI camps.
Archery	B J C S A	B - 5:1 J C S A - 10:1	One adult is certified by National Field Archery Association, USA Archery, or Easton Foundation.
3-D Archery	B J C S A	10:1	One adult is a certified by National Field Archery Association, USA Archery, or Easton Foundation. Or demonstrated equivalent experience.
Ax/Knife/ Hatchet Throwing	C S A	2:1	Adult instructors are trained and experienced in blade throwing safety specific for the ax, knife, or hatchet being used including proper form and technique, range rules and specifications, and emergency procedures.
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 Illinois
Permission, Waiver and Release of Liability for
Tomahawk Throwing**

- This two page form is a waiver and release of liability contract between Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois and the participants. Please read it carefully.
- This two page form must be read and signed by the parent or legal guardian of the participant in order for the participant to participate in the activity listed. The form is to be turned in to the troop leader or his/her designee.
- Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and to handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves or others. **Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois will allow girls registered Girl Scouts Cadettes and older to participate in Tomahawk Throwing only on GSNI property, led by a GSNI Ranger.**

Participant Name _____ Age _____ GS Level _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Parent Name _____ Phone _____

Email address _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone _____

Participation Date(s) _____ Year _____

Please list any allergies the participant has (food, nature, medications, etc.): _____

Any restrictions of participant we should be aware of as she participates in this activity: _____

Any medications the participant will have with her: _____

Activity: A GSNI Ranger will be teaching participants about tomahawks and participants will participate in throwing tomahawks at _____ .

Additional Activity Information, if any: _____ .



I acknowledge that this activity is an extreme test of a person's physical and mental limits and carries with it the potential for death, serious injury and property loss. The risks include, but are not limited to, those caused by terrain, facilities, temperature, acts of God, weather, condition of participants, equipment, vehicular traffic, actions of other people including, but not limited to, participants, facilitators, volunteers and spectators. These risks are not only inherent to the participants, but also present for volunteers. I hereby assume all of the risks of participating and/or volunteering in this activity. I realize that liability may arise from negligence or carelessness on the part of the person or entities being release, from dangerous or defective equipment or property owned, maintained or controlled by them or because of their possible liability without fault.

I certify that I am a registered Cadette or older Girl Scout and am physically and mentally fit to participate in this tomahawk throwing activity. I acknowledge that this Permission, Waiver and Release of Liability for Tomahawk Throwing Activity will be used by Girl Scout staff, activity facilitators or their assignees of the activity and it will govern my daughter's actions and responsibilities at the activity. I acknowledge that I must follow the directions and safety rules of the activity and the activity may be cancelled if I do not follow the safety instructions and policies or if my behavior endangers myself or the group.

In consideration of my participation in this program, I hereby take action for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs, next of kin, successors, and assigns as follows: (A) Waive, Release and Discharge from any and all liability for my death, disability, personal injury, property damage, property theft or actions of any kind which may hereafter occur to me including my traveling to and from this program, THE FOLLOWING ENTITIES OR PERSONS: Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois; their directors, officers, employees, volunteers, facilitators, representative, and agents. (B) Indemnify and Hold Harmless, and Agree Not To Sue the entities or persons mentioned in this paragraph from any and all liabilities or claims made as a result of participation in this program, whether caused by the negligence of releases or otherwise. I hereby consent to receive medical treatment that may be deemed advisable in the event of injury, accident and/or illness during this program.

The Permission, Waiver and Release of Liability for Tomahawk Throwing Activity shall be construed broadly to provide a release and waiver to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law. I acknowledge that this Accident Waiver and Release of Liability form will be used by the persons or entities being released in the activity listed above and that it will govern my actions and responsibilities in said activity.

I hereby certify that I have read this document; read the GSNI Tomahawk Throwing Safety Activity Checkpoint; and, I, understand its content. I am aware that this is a release of liability as well as a contract and I sign it of my own free will.

Print Participant's Name Age Signature (if under 18 years old,
Parent/Guardian must also sign) Date

Parent/Guardian Waiver for Minors (Under 18 years old)

I give permission for my daughter to participate in this shooting activity. I understand that there are inherent risks of injury or disability in this activity. I further understand that my daughter must follow the directions and safety rules of the activity. I also understand that the activity may be cancelled if my daughter does not follow safety instructions and policies and/or my daughter's behavior endangers herself or the group.

The undersigned parent and/or legal guardian does hereby represent that he/she is, in fact, acting in such capacity and is fully responsible and agrees to save and hold harmless and indemnify each and all of the parties referred to above from all liability, loss, cost, claim or damage whatsoever which may be imposed upon said parties because of any defect in or lack of such capacity to so act and release said parties on behalf of the minor and the parents or legal guardian.

Print Participant's Name Age Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

If you have any questions, please contact _____

For girls not currently registered as Girl Scouts: I understand my daughter is not covered by Girl Scouts of the USA activity Insurance, but she has my permission to participate in this activity.

Yes _____ No _____ Date _____ Signature of Parent _____