

Row Boating



About Row Boating

Rowing uses oars to propel a boat across the water and is one of the earliest forms of transportation. It's a great way to build teamwork and skill. Beginners can start rowing in a stable boat on flat water. Most Daisies do not have the reach needed to row a standard rowboat.

Daisies may use basic row boats only if they have an adult in the boat with them. Interested rowers can progress to competitive "crew" racing, or specialized rowing, like Venetian gondolas. Currents, waves, rapids, and wind affect conditions. Those conditions and type of boat will determine what is appropriate for your troop. See the Paddling and Rowing Sports—Master Progression Chart in *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

Most rowing is done on flat water with little or no current, like a lake, calm river, or pond. Oceans and rivers can be suitable if rowers have advanced instruction and skills. Consult local experts or your council for suggestions.

You can learn a lot about rowing online. You should learn basic skills from an expert, but it's fun to discover gear options, places to go, and cool tips. Check out the basics at [U.S. Rowing](#).

Also find out about collegiate and Olympic rowing. Some colleges and universities have women's crew teams, which race streamlined boats called "sculls" and "shells" in races called "regattas."

Learn More:

- [Rowing vocabulary](#)
- [U.S. Rowing Association](#)
- General boating safety: [Boat Safe](#), [Boat-Ed](#), [U.S. Coast Guard](#)

Council Approval: Required
Activity Permitted For: *D B J C S A
Not Recommended For: Daisies, except with an experienced adult in each rowboat.

Training: One adult with small watercraft and basic water rescue required for activity.

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

Waiver required and attached to this Safety Activity Check point.

[Troop Trip Travel Form](#) may need to be completed.

Include Girl Scout Members with Disabilities

Talk to Girl Scout members with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the rowing instructor in advance to ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Additional Resources:

Check out inspiring stories of rowers with disabilities at [Paralympic.org](https://www.paralympic.org).

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, capsizing, or sudden illness.

Ensure participants are wearing PFDs. ([U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket](#).) Type III life jackets are recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears.

Exception for competitive racing sculls and shells: because they can get caught on oars in fast-paced team rowing, it is acceptable to carry life jackets in a chase boat. All competitive rowers must be strong swimmers.

Check swimming ability. Only strong swimmers may row in sculls and shells.

Practice recovery procedures. The instructor should demonstrate self-recovery and righting techniques for the type of boat being used. Girls can then learn and practice these skills, as appropriate for the trip. This will help prevent them from becoming disoriented or frightened if they end up in the water.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. The skill level of the adults must be higher than the difficulty of the intended activity.

Ensure the instructor will review site-specific emergency techniques for the type of craft used.

Ensure the lead instructor has firsthand knowledge of the hazards and conditions of the location and type of boat being used.

Ensure adult certifications are appropriate for the activity.

Check lifeguard qualifications. Ensure lifeguards overseeing rowing have the proper training, experience, and rescue equipment for the body of water and the specific watercraft involved.

Arrange for watchers/helpers. An adult watcher or skilled helper is required to assist the instructor. This person should have basic skills in rowing and supports the group by reinforcing instructions and watching for possible emergencies. Basic water rescue, small craft safety, or similar training is the preferred preparation. Consult the instructor for specific watcher/helper qualifications.

Select a safe site. Don't row in unknown areas; know the locations of all shipping channels. Rowing is not permitted farther than one mile from the nearest shore. Make sure of the following:

- Busy channels are avoided when possible and crossed carefully, when necessary, at a 90-degree angle to the channel traffic,
- Surf zones and areas with standing waves are avoided,
- On long passages, boats are close enough together so that a group decision can be made if wind and water conditions change,
- You are aware of possible changes in water level, due to tides or dam releases, and how these affect water conditions.

Avoid hazards. These include strainers, sieves, hydraulics, waterfalls, bridges, dams, fences, and low power lines. Rapids must be avoided.

Do not exceed boat weight and capacity. Many boats have a plate near the stern (back) showing these maximums.

Ensure boats are not overloaded with gear. Gear should be distributed evenly among rowers.

Know universal signals. Whistle and visual signals should be used to pass messages or call for help. Learn them at [Paddle Education](#).

Prepare for emergencies. Pack a waterproof first aid kit if taking a rowing trip and follow other guidelines in “Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.”

File a float plan. If participating in a long-distance trip, file a float plan with a reliable person who will notify authorities should your group not return on time.

On the Day of Paddling or Rowing:

Get a weather and wind report. Check Weather.com or other reliable weather sources, including the “boat and beach” forecast, which covers wind speed, water temperature, and wave height. Be prepared with a backup plan or postpone the activity if weather prevents the outing.

Review what to do in a storm. If thunder is heard or lightning seen, get everyone off the water immediately. Do not return until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last evidence of the storm. If you cannot get to shore, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, head into the wind at a 45-degree angle, and stay low. If possible, do not touch metal or water when lightning is possible.

Report accidents. Notify marine law enforcement or your council as appropriate.

Safety and Required Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III life jackets recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications)
- Rowboat, scull, or shell sized appropriately for the participants and suitable for the type of water.
- Oars that are the right size and style for the boat type and person using them
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, compressed air horn, or VHF radio on navigable waters
- At least one graspable and throwable Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water (for boats 16 feet or longer)
- Rescue gear appropriate for boat type and conditions
- Emergency gear appropriate for the activity type and distance from shore, such as:
 - Bailer (a scoop for removing water from a boat) or foot pump.
 - Emergency repair kit: duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers, spare plugs
 - A spare oar or paddle, first aid kit, repair kit, and standard safety equipment, including signaling equipment.
 - Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, pocket-knife, 10-foot by 10-foot tarp, rope, food, and appropriate liquids (food and water bottles should be secured in the boat)
- All other items required by the boating jurisdiction in which girls will row.



Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois Permission, Waiver and Release of Liability for Rowboats

- *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 he/her designee.*
- *Participants must be old enough to understand the safety procedures so as not to endanger themselves or others.*

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.). _____

Please list any restrictions of participant that we should be aware of as she participates in this activity. _____

Please list any medications the participant will have with her. _____

Activity – Rowboat activities may take place on just about any body of water (lake, stream, or river) so long as proper equipment, instruction, safety precautions are used and *Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints* are followed. Girl Scouts may do Rowboat on water that has been rated up to Class III difficulty, depending on the age and ability of the participants. Participants must be able to work as a team to lift, carry and paddle the board. Participants are required to wear approved life jackets and safety gear for the type of tripped planned.

Clothing - Participants should be wearing clothing that is appropriate for the type of trip that is planned. Basic gear would include:

- Layered clothing that is easily changeable, depending on temperatures and that protects participant from the sun.
- Appropriate footwear, such as boat shoes, closed-toed and nonslip hiking/sport sandals with heel strap, or water shoes (no flip-flops).
- Waterproof sunscreen (SPF of at least 15).
- Hat and sunglasses.

Additional Activity Information, if any: _____

I acknowledge that Rowboat activity is a 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 physically and mentally fit to participate in this Rowboat activity. I acknowledge that this Permission, Waiver and Release of Liability for Rowboat 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: _____; 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 Rowboat 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 release 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; 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 Rowboat 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 _____