

Sledding and Tobogganing



Council Approval: Required
Activity Permitted For: D B J C S A
Includes: Snow tubing
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.
Council permission and COI not required if sledding at GSNI camps.

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 and conduct rules and learn to perform basic steering skills, including how to slow down and stop. Members are never to be towed behind a motor vehicle including a snow mobile.

You can always connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. In addition, 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](#)
- More on sledding: [Sled Riding](#)

Include Girl Scout Members with Disabilities

Communicate with Girl Scout members with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about resources and information for people with disabilities at [Disabled Sports USA](#).

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, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Select a safe site. Ensure that sledding takes place in a safe spot, an area away from roads and free of vehicles. The site should have no obstructions such as rocks, poles, benches, trees, or signposts. The nature of the terrain, potential hazards (such as an avalanche or frozen lake), mileage, and approximate activity time should be known to all group members 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 for sledding is strongly recommended.

Do not permit towing. Girl Scout members are not permitted to be towed on sleds, toboggans, or tubes behind a motor vehicle of any kind including snow mobiles. Never use a motorized vehicle to pull a sled or tube.

Get a weather report. On the morning of the activity, check [Weather.com](https://www.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.

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 underwear
- Snow pants, snowsuit, or waterproof pants over warm layers