

**Certificate of Insurance (COI):** Required from vendor providing this activity for Council Approval. Visit [GSNI's webpage](#) for information on requesting a COI from the venue.



**GSNI Properties:** To participate in axe, knife, and hatchet throwing at GSNI camps, participants must be 12 years old and older.

**Required Training:** One adult must receive USA Archery Level 1 Instructor training to use tomahawk range at GSNI camps. Girl Scout Troops can hire GSNI facilitators.

Shooting Type	Activity Permitted For	Participant-to-Instructor Ratio	Instructor/Expert Certification
Ax/Knife/Hatchet Throwing	C, S, A	2:1; 4:1 with another adult assisting	One adult is trained and experienced in blade throwing safety specific for the ax, knife, or hatchet being used including proper form and technique, range rule specifications, and emergency procedures.

**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 safely handle these tools—tools that can be used in the great outdoors.

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 Girl Scouts 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 youth 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 accommodations. Always be sure to contact the location and/or the instructor in advance to ensure they are able to accommodate those with disabilities.

**Equity.** 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 and have access to whatever is needed to fully participate, such as proper equipment, prior experiences, and the skills needed to enjoy

the activity. See the Equity section of the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for general advice about expense,

**Emergency Action Plan (EAP).** Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) before starting any activity and review it so all are prepared. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury, missing person, sudden illness, or sudden weather or water emergencies.

### **Ax, Knife, and Hatchet Throwing Checkpoints**

**Assess participants' maturity level.** Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves or 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, technique, range rule specifications, and emergency procedures. Ensure the experienced instructor reviews all rules, range, and operating procedures beforehand.

***Note:** The instructor-to-participant ratio is different from the adult-to-youth 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 Girl Scouts are participating in throwing sports. For example, if 15 Cadettes are on the throwing line, there must be four instructors plus four adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors) who are present during the activity.*

Troops must provide one adult certified in Adult and Pediatric CPR/First Aid/AED who is not instructing the activity.

**Select a safe site.** Check with council staff to see if an approved vendor list is available. 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, is checked each time and is in good condition.
- Range rules and throwing command controls are clearly posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping onto the range.
- Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity are posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping onto the range.
- Backstops or a specific safety zone 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 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 two 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 ax 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 feet.

- 10 feet 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:**

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 feet from the targets to designate the safe zone.
- Only the two participating throwers and the supervisor are allowed inside the lane at one time. This includes ensuring the area behind the throwers is clear of any other person up to 6 feet.
- There needs to be 8-foot-tall fencing on the sides around the throwing area. This fencing must cover at least 15 feet to the front of the targets and connect to the fencing behind the targets with the back fencing.
- There needs to be 8-foot-tall fencing covering the area behind the target.
- If the targets are not fully enclosed in fencing with a ceiling, then there must be fencing at least 10 feet away behind the targets.
- Under no circumstances can spectators or the public be allowed to walk behind the target, even behind the 8-foot-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.

**Ensure equipment is properly sized for participants 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 (as measured from the top of the head to the bottom of the handle), and the face (blade) of the axe must be no longer than 4 inches and not overly sharp.

**Girl Scouts should learn about throwing.** Throwers 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 thrower's 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 participants 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.

**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)