

Council Approval: May Be Required, especially for long trips
If participating in this activity as part of a trip, troops must complete the [GSNI Troop Trip Travel Request Form](#).



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

Activity Permitted for: D B J C S A

About Bicycling

Cycling is a fun activity that Girl Scouts can enjoy their entire lives. As with all activities, progression through skill building and conditioning are very important. Long day cycling trips, mountain and road biking, and long-distance cycling trips can be strenuous. The terrain may be difficult. Riders must also carry more gear and supplies than on short day trips. For this type of cycling, it is essential to have opportunities to condition themselves beforehand. When training for lengthy bicycle trips, set realistic goals for mileage. Plan to gradually increase the distance. For instance, one week aim to ride 10 miles and strive for 15 the next.

Learn More

- [The League of American Bicyclists](#)
- [People for Bikes](#)
- [International Mountain Bicycling Association](#)
- NICA [Teen Trail Corps](#)
- [Adventure Cycling Association](#)
- [USA Cycling](#)

Find out about mountain bike trails in your area at [MTBproject.com](#). Check with your local bicycle coalition or mountain bike association for events that can help you learn. Contact local bike shops and ask if they will host a maintenance clinic or guided ride for your group.

Include Girl Scout Members with Disabilities. Talk to Girl Scout members with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability](#) provides for people 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. Owning a bike is not a requirement to participate in biking; contact local bike shops and clubs about bicycle rental or loan programs. Groups like [Black Girls Do Bike](#) offer supportive information and events; look for similar resources that fit your riders' needs. 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.

Bicycling Checkpoints

Organize cycling groups. Participants should travel in groups of five or six, unless on a bike path, where more can ride together. An adult must ride at the head and rear of every two groups. Groups should ride with at least 150

feet (that's about half the length of a soccer field) between them so that vehicles may pass. Each Girl Scout member must have their own bike, unless riding tandem. Those riding tandem bikes must have their own seats.

Select a safe cycling site or route. A community bike park is an excellent place to evaluate and practice bike handling skills. When selecting a trip route, use designated bicycle paths whenever possible. Avoid routes with heavy traffic and observe all state and local biking rules.

Make careful plans for the type of road or trail to be traveled. For example, secondary roads are quiet, but may have trees, curves, and hills that obstruct visibility. When planning to cycle on trails, check that trails are authorized for cycling by contacting land managers or checking jurisdictional websites and maps. Notify jurisdictional authorities about the group's trip when necessary.

Know your surroundings. Check the location of emergency and medical services along the route.

Consider your riders. Ensure that the length and terrain of the route, the time of day, weather, and equipment are appropriate for the riders' experience levels and physical condition. Review the route together and practice map-reading skills.

Check the ABCs:

- **Air:** Check tire pressure and ensure it meets the tire's specific air requirement.
- **Brakes:** Check that pads and brakes are adjusted appropriately.
- **Chain:** Make sure the chain is engaged with gears and shifting smoothly.

Ride safely. Plan to ride only during daylight hours. Ride with the flow of traffic. Obey traffic regulations, signals, lane markings, and local ordinances pertaining to bicycling. When on natural surface trails, cyclists yield to all others on the trail, including hikers and those on horseback. Review trail etiquette guidelines.

Help riders learn to:

- **Watch the road.** Recognize and avoid common roadway hazards like drainage grates and utility access hole covers, sand, gravel, glass, wet leaves, litter, and other road and trail hazards.
- **Communicate and cooperate with other road and trail users.**
- **Ride defensively, not aggressively.** Each person should stay aware of their surroundings and put themselves in the best position for safety.
- **Prepare for the unexpected.**
- **Pack light.** In addition, cyclists should carry a load weight on practice rides that is similar to the load weight they will carry on the planned, longer trip.
- **Practice packing and storing gear.** Light gear is stored in bicycle panniers (foldable carriers) or packs on the back of the bike.
- **Practice bike-riding skills in traffic.** These include signaling, scanning ahead and behind (especially before moving left), yielding to oncoming traffic, and making left turns. Riders should travel single file with traffic but can ride side-by-side briefly in order to pass a slower rider.
- **Keep a safe distance from the vehicle ahead.**
- **Be aware of hazards.** Understand that motor vehicle traffic presents the greatest danger to cyclists. Other hazards that can also cause cycling accidents include motor oil, wet leaves, parked cars, parked cars with doors that open in front of a cyclist, and rocks.
- **Brake early.** Slow down and brake gradually and early, before necessary, especially on curves and when going downhill. Practice braking under similar conditions before heading out.
- **Stop fully.** It is important to make a full stop and look left, right, and left again, especially at the end of a driveway and before entering a street or roadway.
- **Walk bikes across busy intersections.** Signal properly. Use hand signals to let other cyclists and drivers know when someone plans to turn and stop. Riders should also let other cyclists know when they plan to pass before actually passing.

- **Use lights.** Keep lights on to increase visibility.
- **Make basic repairs.** This should be based on what is age appropriate.
- **Dress the right way.** Dress in layers in cooler temperatures and shed layers as you get warmer. If possible, avoid cotton and use synthetic fabrics instead because they wick sweat away from the skin. Wear reflective or light-colored clothing when cycling at dusk and wear bright-colored or fluorescent clothing during the day. On longer trips in cooler weather, carry extra clothing and rain gear. Remind riders that fancy clothing isn't required. Do not wear dangling earrings, bracelets, or necklaces that can tangle in equipment.
- **Hydrate and fuel.** Everyone needs to bring water (if available, attach a bottle cage to the bike) and energy bars, trail mix, or other snacks that are light, portable, and easy to eat while at a pit stop.
- **Learn emergency moves.** Read about and practice the quick stop, rock dodge, and instant turn at [Bike League](#), which also provides tips for beginners.
- All troops should provide one adult volunteer certified in Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED. This certification is required if biking locally in your neighborhood or at a small local bike park. Wilderness and Remote First Aid or Wilderness First Responder certifications is required for trail mountain biking or if using biking as means of long-term travel on a trip.

On the Day of the Ride

- **Stretch your muscles.** Before cycling, always warm up. Try walking, jogging, or cycling slowly before going faster. Gently stretch your hamstrings, quads, and calves, before and especially after riding.
- **Be prepared in case of an emergency.** Provide a detailed itinerary and plan to call and check in with someone each day. Carry identification and a list of emergency phone numbers and contact information for bike repair shops.
- **Prepare for the long haul.** Adjust bicycles frequently for comfort. Check handlebars after adjusting the seat for proper leg extension. When stopping for the day, cool down gradually by walking around for a few minutes—do not stop cycling abruptly. Watch riders so that they do not push beyond their endurance levels.

Safety Gear. Safety gear needed will depend on the length of your trip, the location, and the weather.

Bicycles should be in good working order and appropriate for the type of ride planned. Seats should be adjusted to the right height for each rider. Cyclists should have a slight bend in the knee when seated. A seat that is set too low is a common problem and causes significant discomfort. Watch for seats set too high; a rider's legs should never be fully extended.

It is also important to have appropriate pedals for the experience level. Beginners should use flat pedals; experienced riders may choose clip-in pedals. Protective bicycle helmets with properly fitted safety straps are required. Helmets should fit comfortably but snugly, be worn level on the head, and not move in any direction when the chin strap is securely fastened.

The helmet should meet the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F1163-88 requirements. Check the helmet for a Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal.

If you're not sure about these pieces of safety equipment, have your troop gather at a local bike shop so the experts can get you all set up!

You will also need a cycling repair kit for each group. Each kit should contain:

- Tire pump
- Spare tubes of appropriate size
- A tire patch kit
- Tools, including tire irons, a screwdriver, an adjustable wrench, pliers, and hex-head (Allen) wrenches
- Lubricating fluid

Each rider should have:

- Front and rear lights, for visibility during the day and at dusk
- Bike bell
- Reflectors
- Two water bottles or a hydration pack
- Day pack
- Appropriate clothing, such as bike shorts designed for cycling with wicking fabric
- Non-perishable, high-energy foods such as energy bars, fruits, and nuts
- Cycling gloves (for comfort; optional)
- Stiff-soled athletic shoes such as court shoes for beginners; shoes with clips for experienced riders using clip-in pedals
- General map and/or bike route map or map app on a smartphone