



Fencing

Council Approval: Required. This is a vendor provided activity.

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.

Activity Permitted for: B J C S A

About Fencing

Derived from the word “defense,” fencing is a sport and martial art that involves using swords called foils (practice swords), sabers, and épées (a fencing sword with a bowl-shaped hand guard). The objective of fencing is to touch the opponent with the tip of a sword without getting hit by the opponent’s sword. A fencing game (or bout) is typically three minutes—the first fencer to score five touches (or hits) wins; if neither reaches five within the designated time, the participant with the most touches wins. If performed correctly and with the proper equipment, fencing is a safe activity with a low injury rate. Most fencing clubs provide students with a full kit of equipment.

Daisies can learn about fencing games and the rules of fencing but should use only foam (mock) swords, as the balance and hand/eye coordination needed to fence are not sufficiently developed at this age.

Learn More

- [USA Fencing](#)
- [U.S. Fencing Coaches Association: USFCA](#)
- [International Fencing Federation](#)

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. For more information, visit [Move United](#).

Equity. Fencing is unfamiliar in many areas, so find a club or school program that will support new participants and meet the group at their level. Check with the provider to ensure adequate, right-sized equipment is available to use. 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. All Troops must provide one adult certified in Adult and Pediatric CPR/First Aid/AED.

Fencing Checkpoints

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult needs to be a certified fencing instructor or have equivalent certification, or documented experience, in accordance with your council’s guidelines. Ensure that there is a ratio of one instructor for every ten youth. Fencing is always well supervised and appropriate to age, skill level, and endurance.

Note: *The instructor-to-participant ratio is different from the adult-to-youth ratio in the [Introduction: Standard Safety Guidelines](#). Both ratios should be complied with when participating in fencing.*

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves or others. Ensure that swords are appropriate to the age, size, strength, and ability of the group.

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 fencing companies or organizations. Call the facility ahead of time to determine accommodations for children, and what ages they have experience with.

Always keep the sword pointed in a safe direction. This is an important rule of fencing. A safe direction means that the sword is pointed away from yourself and other persons, leaning it downward when walking or resting, or anytime when not jousting. Maintain control of the sword, always.

Ensure the equipment to be used is in good condition. Make sure that the equipment is clean and in good working order and that nothing is broken or loose. Check that the épée or foil handles and/or wrist and arm guards are in good repair.

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.

Review rules and expectations. The instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures beforehand.

Safety and Required Gear

- Foils, sabers, or épées
- Fencing glove
- Plastron (underarm protector worn on fencing arm)
- Fencing jacket
- Fencing knickers or pants that cover knees
- Long socks that go up to knees (soccer socks are recommended)
- Sneakers or court shoes