



Recreational Tree Climbing

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

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

Activity Permitted for: J C S A

About Recreational Tree Climbing

In recreational tree climbing, climbers explore the beauty of living trees with guided facilitator support. Recreational tree climbers use ropes, harnesses, saddles, and climbing techniques to ascend into the crowns of trees and the canopies of forests. Care should be taken to keep climbers and trees safe.

Climbing may be done on branches that have at least 6 inches of living tissue. A full inspection of the health of the tree and surrounding area must be made.

Leave No Trace

While climbing in natural areas, it is important to respect the environment. Read tips from the [Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics](#).

Learn More

- [The Tree Climbing Planet](#) offers courses and resources.
- The [Global Organization of Tree Climbers](#) has an interactive map to help you find tree-climbing programs.

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, check out [Move United](#) to learn about adaptive climbing.

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.

All Troops must provide one adult certified in Adult and Pediatric CPR/First Aid/AED AND Wilderness and Remote First Aid or Wilderness First Responder.

Recreational Tree Climbing Checkpoints

Choose a certified instructor. The facilitator needs to have documented experience in leading and teaching tree climbing.

- Ensure the instructor climbs all routes before participants begin.
- Ensure only instructors clip participants in and out of the tie-in system.
- Ensure a process for managing safety and performing rescues is in place.

Climbing Type	Grade Levels	Safety Standards and Gear	Additional Information
Recreational Tree-Climbing	J, C, S, A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harnesses • Helmets if climbing above 6 feet • Rope, webbing, and hardware designed for this purpose 	Combining arboriculture, climbing, and fun, this unique activity is described by The Tree Climbing Planet . Instructor must have certification from verified organizations.

Ensure helmet-only areas are clearly designated to protect participants and passersby from falling debris.

File required permits. Contact the park ranger or jurisdictional authority for guidance.

Inspect equipment. The instructor will inspect all equipment before each use. Equipment will be well-maintained. A Use Log will track wear, stress, and deterioration of gear. Outside professionals should periodically inspect all trees and equipment. A written process for equipment monitoring and retirement needs to be followed.

Get a weather report. On the morning of the activity, visit [Weather.com](#) to determine if conditions are appropriate. Be prepared to alter the activity plan if weather conditions change. Participants must not climb when trees or gear are wet. In a storm, take shelter away from all trees and other tall objects. Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground, on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

Participants receive instruction. Instructors must describe the climb's objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants. Climbers learn:

- Readiness and action commands.
- Muscle warm-up and stretching techniques.
- Safety procedures and site-specific hazards.

Safety Gear

- Climbing equipment—such as ropes, webbing, harnesses, hardware, and helmets—designed for this purpose and appropriate for the size of the user
- Climbing helmets worn by all participants who will be more than 6 feet off the ground or on belay; helmets must be approved by the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA)
- Sturdy shoes