



**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.

**Required Training:** Two adult instructors must have a current Range Safety Officer (RSO) training certificate. Girl Scout troops must hire RSO's for participation at GSNI camps' air rifle ranges.

**Activity Permitted for:** See [Target and Shooting Sports—Master Progression Chart](#)

**Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois' Property Specifications:**

**GSNI Air Rifle Range:** For participation at GSNI's Air Rifle Ranges, participants must be at least 10 years old and older. Troops may hire GSNI facilitator.

Shooting Type	Activity Permitted For	Participant-to-Instructor Ratio	Instructor/Expert Certification
Target Paintball	B, J, C, S, A	B – 5:1 J, C, S, A – 10:1	One adult is trained in paintball safety, range rules, and emergency procedures.
Air/BB Guns	B, J, C, S, A	B – 5:1 J, C, S, A – 10:1	One adult is a certified RSO or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Rifle	Age 12 & older	8:1	One adult is a certified RSO or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Shotgun, Trap, Skeet Shooting	Age 12 & older	8:1	One adult is a certified RSO or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Muzzle Loading	Age 12 & older	2:1	One adult is a certified RSO or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Pistol	Age 14 & older	4:1	One adult is a certified RSO or USA Shooting Sports instructor.

**Note:** Automatic firearms are not permitted at any time.

**About Shooting Sports/Guns**

Why teach shooting sports? Handling a gun safely and good marksmanship develop positive traits such as patience, discipline, determination, focus, attention to detail, and persistence. Since these skills are key elements of leadership and confidence, we encourage Girl Scouts to take what they learn from any sport or activity and apply it in their lives, communities, and the world.

We recognize the risks that accompany shooting sports. Learning how to handle guns properly and safely is of paramount importance, as is the healthy respect members will develop when properly trained in shooting sports. There are a variety of styles and sizes of guns, which are used for different age levels. The guns members will be learning on are for the express purpose of safe target shooting. Girl Scouts are not permitted to hunt.

As of 2023, firearms are the number one cause of death for children in the United States. Given this statistic, families may have strong feelings about their child holding or being around firearms. Engage in open dialogue and actively listen to all families about their comfort and concerns before proceeding. Each family must determine whether or not their Girl Scout should participate. There should be no judgment in any case.

**Note:** Refer to [Target and Shooting Sports Master Progression Chart](#) for age and grade level requirements. Written permission must be obtained by your Girl Scout council in advance of the activity. Once approved, you must have written permission from a parent/guardian before a Girl Scout is permitted to participate in target shooting.

**Learn More**

- Safety regarding various shooting sports/events: [USA Shooting](#)
- Safety at home and on the range: [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#)
- Safe shooting certification: [USA Clay Target SAFE Certification](#)

**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. Visit [Move United](#) for resources about adaptive shooting.

**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.

## Shooting Sports/Guns 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 a certified National Rifle Association Range Safety Officer (RSO) or USA Shooting Sports instructor or have equivalent certification or documented experience and skill teaching/supervising firearm safety or shooting sports according to your council's guidelines.

*Note: The instructor-to-participant ratio is different from the adult-to-youth ratio that is found in [Introduction: Standard Safety Guidelines](#). Both the instructor ratio and the adult-to-youth ratio must be complied with when members are participating in target sports.*

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

**Connect with your Girl Scout council for approved sites.** Groups are required to use council-approved indoor and outdoor firing ranges. Your council must approve all sites in advance.

**Keep in mind that safe sites include those where:**

- Equipment is stored in a box, closet, or cabinet and locked when not in use.
- Ammunition and firearms are stored in separate, locked containers or areas with different locks and combinations.
- Caliber firearms have working trigger locks for storage (exceptions: BB and air guns).
- Equipment, including targets, is checked each time and is in good condition.
- 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, check that:**

- Targets are well-lit.
- Doors or entries to the range are locked or blocked from the inside.

- Fire exits are not blocked.
- Equipment is properly sized for the shooters.

**At an outdoor range, check that:**

- Targets are not placed in front of houses, roads, trails, or tents.
- Areas with pedestrian traffic are avoided.
- Areas are clear of brush. A hillside backstop is recommended.
- The shooting area and the spectator area behind the shooting area are clearly marked.
- In the shooting area, there is a safe distance at least 100 yards behind the targets and 30 yards on each side of the range.
- The range is not used after nightfall.

**Learn about shooting.** Girl Scouts develop skills based on proper procedures and form, handling the equipment, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices.

**Ensure firearms are always pointed in a safe direction.** This is the primary rule of target shooting sport safety. A safe direction means that the firearm is pointed so that even if it were to go off it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control where the front end of the firearm is pointed, always.

**On the Day of Shooting**

**Dress appropriately.** Avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Tie back long hair.

**Limit shooters' exposure to lead.** For firearm sports, be sure that the range safety officer and/or the instructor provide wet wipes to cleanse hands and faces immediately after shooting. In addition, have participants wash their hands and faces with soap and cold water as soon as possible. Cold water keeps pores closed so that less lead is absorbed into the bloodstream. Do not take casings as souvenirs.

**Ensure the instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with participants beforehand.** The instructor covers safety procedures, including:

- No dry firing, as it can damage equipment.
- Keep the safety clip on until it is time to shoot.
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, away from self and others.

**Safety and Required Gear**

- Firearm ammunition
- Targets
- Safety glasses
- Ear protection
- Barrel-blocking device (sleeve) for paintball
- Co2 or compressed air tank for paintball
- Paintball hopper (loader) for paintball