



## Windsurfing

**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.

If participating in this activity as part of a trip, troops must complete the [GSNI Troop Trip Travel Request Form](#).

**Activity Permitted for:** J C S A

**Not Recommended for:** Daisies and Brownies

## About Windsurfing

Windsurfing is an exciting surface water sport that combines the elements of surfing and sailing by using a standing board and sailing rig. It consists of a board usually 8 to 10 feet long, powered by the wind. The rig is connected to the board and consists of a mast, boom, and sail. Learning to windsurf entails learning the concepts of wind and balance. It can be experienced both inland and at the coast, from cruising across flat water in a lake to riding waves at the beach.

To fully enjoy the sport, windsurfers should be comfortable in the water, be strong swimmers, and possess a certain measure of strength, balance, coordination, and attention.

It is best for beginners and intermediate-level windsurfers to learn and practice in standing-level water surrounded by land, such as a lake or saltwater bay or alcove. Advanced to expert windsurfers can ride waves in the ocean. Windsurfing instructors usually begin the instructional process on land to guide students through a start-up sequence so participants can orient themselves to the equipment and know what to do when they get in the water.

### Learn More

- [Surfer Today: How to Sail](#)

**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 lake or beach area park office and the instructor or facility hosting the event in advance to ensure they are able to accommodate those with disabilities. Learn about water safety for children with special needs.

**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. Learn about [equity in sailing](#) through the stories of sailors of many different identities and experiences.

**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.

## Windsurfing Checkpoints

**Confirm swimming ability.** Success on the water depends on comfort and ability in the water. Conducting a swimming assessment in advance is highly recommended. Windsurfers should be competent swimmers. See [Swimming Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for a sample assessment or ask your instructor for guidelines. If a swimming assessment is not possible, presume all participants are non-swimmers.

**All windsurfers must wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.** Type III life jackets are recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears.

**Size up sailboards.** Communicate ages, heights, and weights with windsurfing instructors to ensure the appropriate size equipment is available. Request that sails be the appropriate size (according to weight, height, and ability level) for windsurfers; the larger the sail, the more powerful the sailing capacity. Sailboard decks should be textured (not smooth) to provide traction.

**Select a safe location with a soft, sandy, or muddy bottom.** Choose a location that does not have a sharp-edged or rocky bottom, which can be dangerous and cut feet and limbs. The launching area should be easily accessible and clear of overhead power lines.

**Safeguard valuables.** Do not leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place. If working with a windsurfing school or camp, call to inquire about the organization’s storage amenities.

**Prepare for emergencies.** Instructors should hold the American Canoe Association (ACA) Paddlesports Safety Facilitator certification or Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module or equivalent experience. Ensure the presence of a waterproof first aid kit. Troops must provide one adult certified in Adult and Pediatric CPR/First Aid/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first aider with Wilderness First Aid certification.

**Learn recovery techniques.** One thing is certain about windsurfing: you will fall off the board. Learn how to recover quickly and easily to avoid fatigue.

**Stay with the board.** If remaining in the water while taking a break from windsurfing, stay near the board. Lifeguards become concerned if they see a windsurf board “missing” a windsurfer.

**Troubleshoot exhaustion.** In the case of fatigue while in the water (and in light winds), raise the sail down over the back of the board, position leg on top of the sail to prevent it from falling off the board, and paddle (or walk, if water is shallow enough) back to shore.

### Safety Gear

- The facility will provide the windsurfing board, sail, and life jackets.
- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears.
- At least one graspable and throwable Coast Guard–approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water.
- Bring waterfront/beach essentials, blankets for the sand, towels, and a change of clothes.