



## Sailing

**Activity Permitted for:** \*B J C S A  
**Activity Not permitted for:** Daisies  
**Not Recommended for:** \*Brownies

**Council Approval:** Required as per Council Policy P1; [Activity/Trip Permission \(2129\)](#)

**Vendor Approval:** Required for sailing outfitters (vendors)

**Required Training:** 281 GS 201 Trips & Overnights (gsLearn) *See below for training prerequisites*

## About Sailing

*\*While sailing for Brownies is permitted, carefully evaluate girls' maturity and decision-making skills, based on small craft progression for girls, and consider whether the sailboat type being used is appropriate.*

The sport of sailing has become very high-tech and competitive since its humble beginnings, but sailors and racers still must rely on the force of wind to propel their boats. There are a wide variety of sailboats, including small and large sailboats, keelboats, and multihulls. Sailing is not permitted for Daisies.

**Note:** *Girls are not allowed to operate motorized boats without council permission and girls are never allowed to parasail. The instructor-to-girl ratio recommended is one to four.*

**Know where to sail.** Oceans and lakes are ideal for sailing, but many sailing or yacht clubs offer instructions on reservoirs, rivers, and ponds. Contact your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

## Learn More

- [U.S. Sailing](#)
- [World Sailing](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division](#)

## 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 Unitedhttp://www.disabledsportsusa.org/adaptive-sailing/](http://www.disabledsportsusa.org/adaptive-sailing/) for more information on including people with disabilities.

**Equity.** In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities, 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.

**Infectious Disease Guidelines.** Girl Scouts use a commonsense approach to health and safety. Before participating in Girl Scouting activities, members are to undergo health checks at home for any symptoms such as fever of 100.4 (or need for fever-reducing medications) chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, stomach aches, nausea, or vomiting. Members with any of these symptoms or in need of fever-reducing medication **MUST** stay home until fully recovered.

**Emergency Action Plan (EAP).** Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) before taking girls out for any activity and review it with the girls so they too are prepared. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, sudden illness, or sudden weather or water emergencies.

## Sailing Checkpoints

**Vendor Approval Required for sailing outfitters.** Review Vendor Approval section under the *Standard Safety Guidelines for vendor approval timelines*. Connect with your Girl Scout council for approved vendor suggestions to ensure they are properly insured. If it is not, allow enough time to have the vendor approved. The owner operator should be able to confirm one million dollars General Liability insurance upon request. For privately/locally owned outfitters (vendors), the council will request a certificate of insurance to document evidence of the insurance coverage and name the council as additional insured. Most facilities will accommodate this request if they are able to administratively. [See High Adventure Approved Vendors List \(#2127\)](#).

**Required Prerequisite Training:** Troop/Group Program leaders must complete GSUSA's online leadership courses. Adult volunteer chaperones must complete GSVSC's 281 GS 104 Orientation for Support Volunteers online course in gsLearn.

**Required Training:** 281 GS 201 Trips & Overnights (gsLearn); GS 203 International Trip Training when activity occurs during international or travel via cruise ship.

**Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners and advanced swimmers.) at council approved sites, or participants provide proof of [swim test](#) certification. In the absence of swim-test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. If this is not possible, presume all participants are non-swimmers. See [Swimming Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.

**Mandatory life jacket.** Each sailor must have a 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.

**Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Ensure the adult or sailing instructor is certified as a sailing instructor or sailing counselor by U.S. Sailing, completes Girl Scouts small craft safety training certification, or possesses equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines.

**Compile key contacts.** See [Introduction: Standard Safety Guidelines](#).

**Select appropriate sailboats for water and passengers.** Make sure craft weight and passenger capacities are not exceeded (some crafts clearly display maximum capacity). Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment.

**File a float plan.** If participating in a long-distance sailing trip, it is recommended that a float plan be completed and filed (left) with council and a person knowledgeable about the trip and when to expect the party back. Float plans cannot be filed with the U.S. Coast Guard.

**Transport sailboats safely.** Sailboats are transported on car-top racks or trailers designed to haul sailboats. Sailboats should be secured with two lines across the top and a line at the bow and the stern. Drivers must have prior experience hauling trailers.

**Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first aid kit and a first aider with a current certificate in first aid, including adult and child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared for 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.

### **On the Day of Sailing**

- **Get a weather and wind report.** Never sail on a stormy or excessively windy day. On the day of the sailing trip or lesson, visit [Weather.com](http://Weather.com) (which includes marine forecasts, including water temperature and wave height) to determine if conditions are appropriate. [Intellicast](http://Intellicast) also reports on sailing conditions. If weather conditions prevent the sailing activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity.
- **Review rescue tips.** [U.S. Sailing](http://U.S. Sailing) provides instructions for small boat capsizing recovery.
- **Use the buddy system.** See [Introduction: Standard Safety Guidelines](#).
- **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). 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. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, head into the wind at a 45-degree angle, and stay low.

**Ensure docking safety.** Ensure that docking lines are in good condition. Follow general safety guidelines provided by boating facility for docking the craft, and ensure the boat is securely connected to the dock before participants exit.

**Privately Owned Sailboats.** If using a sailboat that is privately owned, ensure that the owner/operator:

- Is a knowledgeable adult with understanding and ability to assume the responsibility of the safety and well-being of girls and volunteers.
- Agrees to follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints relevant to the activity.
- Maintains the vessel in accordance with the Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Coordinates with the activity leader to confirm the required safety gear is available for all participants, and that the gear meets the specifications of authorities for the local jurisdiction.
- Meets Coast Guard and/or local authority requirements.
- Maintains insurance and registration as required by law in their jurisdiction.

For vessels over 30 feet, see [Offshore Water Vessels Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

**Carbon Monoxide Warning.** Never allow "teak surfing," swim platform dragging, or bodysurfing behind any vessel. Do not operate a motor or generator while anyone is on or holding onto a swim platform, swim deck, swim step, or swim ladder, except for a very brief time when docking, or entering/exiting the vessel. Carbon monoxide emitted at the stern (back) of the boat can cause death in these situations.

### **Safety Gear**

- U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications.
- Boat shoes, closed toe and non-slip hiking/sport sandals with a heel strap, or water socks or shoes (no flip-flops).
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, foghorn, or sounding flares.
- Layered clothing that is easily changeable depending on temperatures (waterproof jacket recommended).
- Sailing gloves (help save tender hands and improve grip).
- A rigging knife.
- Emergency repair kit (duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers, shackles, extra line, sewing kit, a spare drain plug, extra cotter rings/pins, and a short piece of light line/rope).
- Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, raincoat, pocket-knife, minimum of 10-foot by 10-foot tarp, rope, drinking cup, food, and appropriate liquids (food and water bottles should be secured in the sailboat).
- Paddle (as second means of propulsion).
- Bailer (a bucket used to remove water from a boat).
- 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.