



Shooting Sports / Guns

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

Includes:

- Air guns / Paintball
- Skeet
- BB
- Rifle
- Muzzle
- Pistol
- Paintball (target paintball)

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

Vendor Approval: Required for outfitter (vendor)

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

Troops/Groups are required to use council approved indoor and outdoor firing ranges. Council must approve all sites in advance.

About Shooting Sports / Guns

Why teach shooting sports? Handling a gun 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 girls to take what they learn from any sport or activity and apply it in their lives, communities, and the world.

Learning how to handle guns properly and safely is of paramount importance, as is the healthy respect girls will develop when properly trained in shooting sports. There are a variety of styles and sizes of guns, each appropriate for specific grade levels. The guns girls will be learning on are for the express purpose of safe target shooting. Girls are not permitted to hunt.

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 is permitted to participate in target shooting.

Learn More

- Safety regarding various shooting sports/events: [USA Shooting](#)
- More safety information: [National Rifle Association](#)
- Safety at home and on the range: [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#)
- Trap and skeet shooting for high school girls: [USA High School Clay Target League](#)
- Safe shooting certification: [USA Clay Target Safety](#)

- Learn how to shoot: [Revolutionary War Veterans](#)

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.

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.

Shooting Sports / Guns Checkpoints

Vendor Approval Required for indoor and outdoor firing ranges for shooting sports and guns, and target paintball. 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 businesses, 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 \(#2147\)](#).

Required Training: Troop/Group Program leaders must complete GSUSA's online leadership courses and GSVSC's 281 GS 201 Trips & Overnights course in gsLearn. Adult volunteer chaperones must complete GSVSC's 281 GS 104 Orientation for Support Volunteers online course in gsLearn.

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-girl ratio that is found in [Introduction: Standard Safety Guidelines](#). Both the instructor ratio and the adult-to-girl ratio must be complied with when girls are participating in target sports.

Use chart below to verify required instructor certifications. **Required Certifications:**

Shooting Type	Grade Level Minimum Age	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 National Rifle Association range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Rifle	Age 12 & older.	8:1	One adult is a certified NRA range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Shotgun, Trap, Skeet Shooting	Age 12 & older.	8:1	One adult is a certified NRA range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Muzzle Loading	Age 12 & older.	2:1	One adult is a certified NRA range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Pistol	Age 14 & older.	4:1	One adult is a certified NRA range safety officer or USA Shooting Sports instructor.

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, are checked each time and in good condition.
- Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity are posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping on to 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 girls.

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.

Girls should learn about shooting. Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, handling the equipment, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices.

Ensure to always keep the firearm 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. Make sure girls and adults 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 for the girls to cleanse their hands and faces immediately after shooting. In addition, the girls must return to a restroom facility and wash their hands and faces with soap and cold water. Cold water keeps pores closed so that less lead is absorbed into the blood stream. Girls should not take casings as souvenirs.

Ensure the instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls 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 (automatic firearms are not permitted at any time)

- Ammunition
- Targets
- Safety glasses
- Ear protection
- Barrel-blocking device (sleeve) for paintball
- CO2 or compressed air tank for paintball
- Paintball hopper (loader) for paintball