



Fencing

Activity Permitted for: B J C S A

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

Vendor Approval: Required

Required Training: 281 GS 201 Trips & Overnights (gsLearn)

About Fencing

Derived from the word “defense,” fencing is a sport and martial art that involves using swords called foils (practice swords), sabers, and épées (a fencing sword with a bowl-shaped hand guard). The objective of fencing is to touch the opponent with the tip of a sword without getting hit by the opponent’s sword. A fencing game (or bout) is typically three minutes—the first fencer to score five touches (or hits) wins; if neither reaches five within the designated time, the participant with the most touches wins. If performed correctly and with the proper equipment, fencing is a safe activity with a low injury rate. Most fencing clubs provide students with a full kit of equipment.

Daisies can learn about fencing games and the rules of fencing but should use only foam (mock) swords, as the balance and hand/eye coordination needed to fence are not sufficiently developed at this age.

Learn More

- [USA Fencing](#)
- U.S. Fencing Coaches Association: [USFCA](#)
- International Fencing Federation: [International Fencing Federation](#)

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 United](#).

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.

Fencing Checkpoints

Vendor Approval Required for Fencing. 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 \(#2127\)](#).

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.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult needs to be a certified fencing instructor or have equivalent certification, or documented experience, in accordance with your council's guidelines. Ensure that there is a ratio of one instructor for every ten girls. Fencing is always well supervised and appropriate to age, skill level, and endurance.

***Note:** The instructor-to-participant ratio is different from the adult-to-girl ratio in the [Introduction: Standard Safety Guidelines](#). Both ratios should be complied with when girls are participating in fencing.*

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves or others. Ensure that swords are appropriate to the age, size, strength, and ability of the girls.

Select a safe site. Check with council staff to see if an approved vendor list is offered. If the council does not have an approved vendor list, look for organized fencing companies or organizations. Call the facility ahead of time to determine accommodations for children, and what ages they have experience with.

Always keep the sword pointed in a safe direction. This is an important rule of fencing. A safe direction means that the sword is pointed away from yourself and other persons, leaning it downward when walking or resting, or anytime when not jousting. Maintain control of the sword, always.

Ensure the equipment to be used is in good condition. Make sure that the equipment is clean and in good working order and that nothing is broken or loose. Check that the épée or foil handles and/or wrist and arm guards are in good repair.

Dress appropriately for the activity. Make sure that all participants will avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Also make sure long hair is tied back and always wear closed toed shoes.

Review rules and expectations. The instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand.

Safety and Required Gear

- Foils, sabers, or épées
- Fencing glove
- Plastron (underarm protector worn on fencing arm)
- Fencing jacket
- Fencing knickers or pants that cover knees
- Long socks that go up to knees (soccer socks are recommended)
- Sneakers or court shoes