



Orienteering

Activity Permitted for: J C S A

Not Recommended for: Daisies and Brownies

Council Approval: Required as per Council Policy P1; [Activity/Trip Permission \(2129\)](#) for orienteering that includes hikes over 3 miles and/or hikes more than 30 minutes away from emergency services.

Vendor Approval: Not Required

Required Training: 281 GS 201 Trips & Overnights (gsLearn); At least one adult trained for hiking – 281 GS 202 Day Trail Hiking for orienteering that includes hikes over 3 miles and/or hikes more strenuous due to elevation changes, rugged terrain, or other challenges. Hikes more than 30 minutes away from emergency services require first aider with Wilderness First Aid Certification.

About Orienteering

Orienteering is an activity that involves using a map, compass, and navigational skills to find your way around or across an unfamiliar area. The activity may also incorporate camping, backpacking, boating, hiking, cross-country skiing, or horseback-riding skills.

Orienteering often takes place on wilderness trails, although events can take place in just about any terrain such as a beach, urban area, or park. Orienteering meets use control markers to flag various land features found on the map, serving as checkpoints along a course. Be certain to practice Leave No Trace while orienteering. Girls should always stay on trails.

Orienteering is not recommended for Daisies and Brownies, but they may be ready to learn pre-orienteering activities such as map reading, navigation, and map drawing. Brownies may also enjoy geocaching, see [Geocaching Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

Learn More

- [Orienteering USA](#)
- Ethics and generally accepted rules of orienteering: [Orienteering Association of British Columbia](#)

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. If hiking over 3 miles, share your orienteering route and itinerary with your emergency contact and council.

Orienteering Checkpoints

Required Prerequisite 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.

Required Training: At least one adult trained for hiking – 281 GS 202 Day Trail Hiking for orienteering that includes hikes over 3 miles and/or hikes more strenuous due to elevation changes, rugged terrain, or other challenges. Hikes more than 30 minutes away from emergency services require first aider with Wilderness First Aid Certification.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Participants receive instruction from a person experienced in orienteering before navigating an orienteering course. First-timers participate on a beginner-level course. Girls with previous topographic map reading experience may be eligible to attempt an advanced beginners' course.

Select a safe orienteering site. The site selected is a park, camp, or other area with a good trail network; proper landowner permission is secured to use the site.

Always avoid orienteering during hunting season.

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; 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.

Follow basic orienteering safety standards. Girls take part as a group or with buddies. Each participant is given an allotted time to complete the course and must check in at the finish area, whether she completed the course or not. Beginning and finishing course times of each participant are carefully noted to ensure all participants have returned.

Take proper precautions in areas where poisonous plants, snakes, or ticks are prevalent.

Map your course. [Get to know map symbols](#) and how things like elevation and relief are communicated on maps.

Learn about orienteering techniques. Before participating in orienteering, [learn about strategies such as pacing, thumbing, and handrails](#).

Plan the right activity for the age group. Juniors should do orienteering in small groups and be accompanied on a course by an adult with basic instruction in orienteering. Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who have received training may orienteer in groups of at least two.

Competitive orienteering courses often require participants to operate independently; solo competition is not recommended for inexperienced girls or Juniors. However, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors whose skills match or exceed the demands of the course may participate in such competitions.

Plan ahead. When participating in a meet, there should be a clear area of safety (a safety lane), a specific finish time and location, and a search and rescue procedure designed by the competition's host and the Girl Scout adult volunteer.

Practice Leave No Trace skills before participating in orienteering. Pick up garbage you find along the way, be sure not to trample vegetation, and be aware of wildlife.

Safety Gear

- Orienteering map
- Compass and watch
- Emergency signaling whistle
- Long pants, hiking boots, sneakers
- Daypack to carry personal belongings