



## Tubing

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

**Not Recommended for:** Daisies and Brownies.

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

**Vendor Approval:** Required for outfitter (vendor)

**Required Training:** 281 GS 201 Trips & Overnights (gsLearn): [American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue](#) or ACA Paddlesport online courses. *See below for training prerequisites*

Girl Scouts may not go swimming or tubing without properly trained Lifeguards, who have current American Red Cross (ARC) Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module certification or equivalent and have the proper training, experience, and rescue equipment appropriate to the body of waterway/venue.

## About Tubing

Tubing involves floating down a river or other body of water in a doughnut-shaped inner tube. Tubing is popular both as a relaxing leisurely activity (in slow-moving waters) and as an adventurous recreational activity in faster-paced rivers. A fun thing to do on a tubing adventure is to create exploration games to see who can locate the most interesting nature gems, such as caves and peculiar plants or birds.

As a safety precaution, keep in mind that tubes occasionally flip, causing tubers to sometimes fall out of their tubes as they travel over rapids and through rough patches of water. Tubing can be done on lakes or rivers. As river tubing is often a one-way trip, be sure to arrange for return transportation from the tubing final destination.

If participating in boat towed tubing, be sure to take safety precautions that comply with Girl Scouts small craft safety training and guidelines.

## Learn More

- [American Whitewater](#)
- [River Tubing USA](#)
- [Whitewater Rescue Institute](#)
- [United States Geological Survey \(USGS\) National Water Dashboard is an interactive map to access real-time water data from over 13,500 stations nationwide](#)

## 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 the [National Center on Physical Activity and Disability](#).

**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.

## **Tubing Checkpoints**

**Vendor Approval Required for tubing 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 Training Prerequisites:** To participate in tubing, 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:** Adult volunteer qualified assistants are to complete American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue or ACA Paddlesport online courses and upload certificates of completion in gsLearn. Links to courses can be found in gsLearn Content Library.

**Adult Supervision.** In addition to the standard adult to girl ratio under universal safety standards and guidelines, one adult will be the lead tuber, while another adult will be the sweep tuber. The lead adult knows firsthand the hazards and rapids on any river to be tubed.

**Know the river flow.** Be careful about where you roll out of a tube. If tubing in fast-moving water, the undersurface current may catch you off guard. Do not get out of a tube where the flow of water is fastest—just above the riverbed, where there is little resistance to flow. If towing behind a motorboat, the operator must be an adult driver with a valid license to operate the motorboat. There must be a spotter at the stern watching a girl while towing, always. Girls are not permitted to be towed by jet skis or wave runners.

**Girls are not permitted to drive or operate motorized boats.**

**Identify lifeguard(s).** When tubing at a waterpark or staffed public facility, lifeguards will be provided. For tubing on your own, you will need to recruit a lifeguard. Ask your Girl Scout council for suggestions. At least one lifeguard, certified in American Red Cross Lifeguard Training, and one qualified assistant is present, always. When using more than one lifeguard, lifeguards under 18 may be included in the total when there is at least one adult lifeguard also present. Additional lifeguards and qualified assistants may be needed.

**Exception for lake, rivers, streams.** At least one lifeguard, certified in American Red Cross Waterfront Lifeguard course or the equivalent, is present for every 25 tubers/swimmers, plus one qualified assistant for every 10 tubers/swimmers. *Note: Tubing not allowed in River Class III-IV waters.*

**Certifications for lake, rivers, streams.** At least one lifeguard, certified in American Red Cross Waterfront Lifeguard course or the equivalent, is present for every 25 tubers/swimmers, plus one qualified assistant for every 10 tubers/swimmers or as an alternative, Girl Scouts may tube up to and/or paddle in Class I-II rivers if the following conditions are met:

- All tubers must have completed a swim test.
- All tubers wear a US Coast Guard-approved lifejacket (personal flotation device)
- At least one trip leader, who holds a current ACA Level 3: River Safety and Rescue Skills Assessment or higher, is present for every 25 tubers, plus one qualified assistant for every 10 tubers. See [Swimming Safety Activity Checkpoints for complete details](#).

**Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** One adult must complete Girl Scouts small craft safety training, Moving Water Module, have experience in teaching and/or supervising tubing activities, or have similar and equivalent documented experience according to your council's guidelines.

**Ensure participants are strong swimmers.** Participants' swimming abilities should be classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginning and advanced swimmers) at council approved sites, or participants provide proof of [swim test](#) certification. In the absence of a swim test certification, a swim test is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.

**Prior to tubing, girls receive verbal instruction.** This should include how to float through rapids, how to breathe while swimming in rapids, and how to swim to shore. There is only one person to a tube, and tubes that are tied together are secured very snugly, with no slack between the tubes. Avoid long, dangling ropes that can get snagged on various obstructions.

**Research river condition.** Never go whitewater tubing on water that has not been run and rated. No tubing is taken on whitewater more difficult than Class II, as defined by the [American version of the International Scale of River Difficulty](#). Be aware of possible changes in river level and its effects on the run's level of difficulty. Make sure tubing on whitewater or semi-protected waters meets the [Safety Code of American Whitewater](#).

**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 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.

**Safeguard valuables.** Do not leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place.

**Get a weather report.** Never go tubing on a stormy day. On the day of the activity, consult [Weather.com](http://Weather.com) or other reliable sources to assess weather and river conditions and water and air temperature. If weather conditions prevent the trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.

**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, keep a sharp lookout for boats and other obstructions.

### **Safety Gear**

- 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.
- Closed-toe sport sandals with heel strap, water socks, or shoes (no flip-flops).
- 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.