



Windsurfing

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 windsurfing instructor/operator (vendor)

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

Girl Scouts may not go swimming or windsurfing without properly certified lifeguards on duty, who have current American Red Cross (ARC) Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module certification or equivalent and have the proper training, experience, and rescue equipment for the body of water being used.

About Windsurfing

Windsurfing is an exciting surface water sport that combines the elements of surfing and sailing by using a standing board and sailing rig. It consists of a board usually 8 to 10 feet long, powered by the wind. The rig is connected to the board and consists of a mast, boom, and sail. Learning to windsurf entails learning the concepts of wind and balance. It can be experienced both inland and at the coast, from cruising across flat water in a lake to riding waves at the beach.

To fully enjoy the sport, windsurfers should be comfortable in the water, be strong swimmers and possess a certain measure of strength, balance, coordination, and attention.

It is best for beginners and intermediate-level windsurfers to learn and practice in standing-level water surrounded by land, such as a lake or saltwater bay or alcove. Advanced to expert windsurfers can ride waves in the ocean. Windsurfing instructors usually begin the instructional process on land to guide students through a start-up sequence so girls can orient themselves to the equipment and know what to do when they get in the water.

Learn More

- [Surfer Today: How to Sail](#)

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 lake or beach area park office and the instructor or facility hosting the event 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.

Windsurfing Checkpoints

Vendor Approval Required for windsurfing instructors/operators. 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 owner operator, 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 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 volunteers are to [complete American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue](#) online course and upload certificates of completion in gsLearn. Links to courses can be found in gsLearn Content Library.

Verify instructor and experience. Ensure that the adult instructor is certified by Windsurfing Instructors and Programs Association (WIPA) or possesses equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines.

Check swimming ability. Participants' swimming abilities should be confirmed and clearly identified (for instance, with colored wristbands to signify beginning and advanced swimmers) at council approved sites, or participants can provide proof of [swim test](#) certification. In the absence of swim test certification, a swim test should be conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance. *Activity not recommended for beginner swimmers.*

All windsurfers must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket. Type III life jackets are recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears.

Size up sailboards. Communicate girls' ages, heights, and weights with windsurfing instructors to ensure the appropriate size equipment is available. Request that sails be the appropriate size (according to weight, height, and ability level) for windsurfers; the larger the sail, the more powerful the sailing capacity. Sailboard decks should be textured (not smooth) to provide traction.

Select a safe location with a soft, sandy, or muddy bottom. Choose a location that does not have a sharp-edged or rocky bottom, which can be dangerous and cut feet and limbs. The launching area should be easily accessible and clear of overhead power lines.

Safeguard valuables. Do not leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place. If working with a windsurfing school or camp, call to inquire about the organization's storage amenities.

Prepare for emergencies. In addition to a lifeguard, at least one adult present should have Girl Scouts small craft safety training certification or equivalent experience. 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, and 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.

Stay with the board. If remaining in the water while taking a break from windsurfing, stay near the board. Lifeguards become concerned if they see a windsurf board "missing" a windsurfer.

Troubleshoot exhaustion. In the case of fatigue while in the water (and in light winds), raise the sail down over the back of the board, position leg on top of the sail to prevent it from falling off the board, and paddle (or walk, if water is shallow enough) back to shore. [U.S. Sailing](#) provides instructions.

Safety Gear

- The facility will provide the windsurfing board, sail, and life jackets.
- Girls bring waterfront/beach essentials, blankets for the sand, towels, and a change of clothes.