



Archery: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Approval: Girl Scouts San Diego requires leaders to obtain advance approval before participating in archery, except when enjoying a council-sponsored archery experience. Send an [Activity Approval Form](#) to your service unit activity consultant.

One of the oldest weapons and hunting methods, archery is still used for its traditional purposes, but is common today as a recreational and competitive activity. There are a variety of styles and sizes of bows and arrows, but they're all used for one purpose: to hit a target. Archery is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies or Brownies. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others. Ensure that bows and arrows are appropriate to the age, size, strength, and ability of the girls.

Know where to participate in archery. Look for organized indoor and outdoor archery ranges. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information for people with disabilities at [Disabled Sports USA](#).

Required Archery Gear*

- Bows and arrows
- Target

Recommended Archery Gear

- Sunscreen and (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Quivers
- Wrist, finger, and arm protection, such as finger tabs and arm guards (right- and left-handed models)

Prepare for Archery

- Communicate with council and parents.** Make provisions for safe handling of archery equipment to and from the range. For additional information see the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Girls plan the activity. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.

- **Arrange for adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.*** One adult is a certified [USA Archery](#) instructor or has equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines. The instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with girls beforehand, and posts safety rules at the site. Ensure that there is a ratio of one instructor for every ten girls. Archery games away from a regular course are well supervised and appropriate to age, skill level, and location of shooting.
- **Compile key contacts.** See the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- **Girls learn about archery.*** Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, such as stringing the bow, nocking the arrow, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices. Before archery activity, girls learn the following:
 - Archers straddle the shooting line to shoot.
 - Girls waiting to shoot stay well behind the archery line. A quiver for holding arrows is provided for each line of shooters. Never point a bow and arrow at a person, even when not drawn.
 - Arrows are not picked up until the "load" command is given.
 - Never shoot an arrow until the "fire when ready" command is given.
 - Never draw the string and let go without an arrow; this is called dry firing and can break the bow.
 - When aiming arrow, keep tip pointed toward the target. Shoot only at target and never at anything else, including trees, animals, etc. Never shoot an arrow straight up into the air.
 - Wait until the all-clear command is given before retrieving arrows.
- **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Make sure girls and adults avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Also have girls tie back long hair.
- **Ensure that equipment is in good condition.*** Make sure that arrows are not warped and do not have cracked nocks or loose or missing feathers; bowstrings do not have broken or loose strands, and bows do not have loose or broken arrow rests; backstops for targets are in good repair. A beginner uses arrows that extend one to two inches in front of the bow when the bow is at full draw. Only target tip arrows are used, never broadhead/hunting tips.
- **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a first-aid kit and a first-aider with certificates in first aid, including adult and child CPR or CPR/AED, who is prepared to handle cases of severe sunburns and puncture wounds. 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. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of the Archery Activity

- **Get a weather report.** On the morning of an outdoor archery activity, check [weather.com](#) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the archery activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.
- **Use the buddy system.** See the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- **Safeguard valuables.** Archery equipment is stored in its proper storage container and locked when not in use—again, see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- **Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** 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.
- **Practice safe archery.*** The following are required for all ranges:
 - Archery equipment stored in box/closet/cabinet and locked when not in use
 - Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity at the firing line and during the retrieval of arrows
 - Arrow stop and a supplementary backstop or specific safety zone behind the targets

- Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers, known to the entire facility population
- Clearly defined shooting line
- **At an outdoor range:**
 - Targets are not placed in front of houses, roads, trails, or tents.
 - Avoid areas with pedestrian traffic.
 - Clear areas of brush; a hillside backstop is recommended.
 - Be sure the shooting area and the spectator area behind the shooting area are clearly marked.
 - In the shooting area, ensure a distance of at least 50 yards behind the targets and 20 yards on each side of the range. An outdoor range is not used after nightfall.
- **At an indoor range:**
 - Targets are well-lit, and doors or entries onto the range are locked or blocked from the inside.
 - Do not block fire exits.

Archery Links

- National Field Archery Association: <https://www.nfaa.usa.com/>
- USA Archery: www.usarchery.org
- World Archery Center: www.worldarchery.org

Archery Know-How for Girls

- **Learn how to string a bow.** Read a step-by-step guide at [Archery World U.K. Web site](http://www.archeryworlduk.com).
- **Learn archery safety basics.** Learn tips such as “Never put an arrow into a bow unless you are on the shooting line” on the http://www.kidbow.com/archery_rules_for_kids.htm

***These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**