



Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding: Safety Activity Checkpoints



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

Whether girls are participating in snowboarding or traditional downhill, slalom, Super G, or other types of skiing, participants use trails and slopes matched to their abilities. [Skiing.about.com](#) describes various [ski levels](#), which range from “never-ever” to expert. In planning a Girl Scout ski or snowboarding trip, contact the ski resort or organization to inquire about rental equipment, lift tickets, and accommodations for large groups. With appropriate instructors, equipment and hills/levels, Girl Scout Daisies are permitted to participate in skiing. However, snowboarding is not permitted for Daisies.

Caution: Girls are not allowed to do aerial tricks on skis or snowboards.

Know where to downhill ski and snowboard. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions and approval. Also, locate ski resorts by region at [ABC-of-Snowboarding](#)

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 that [Disabled Sports USA](#) provides to people with disabilities.

Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Gear

Required Gear:*

- Protective helmet with properly fitting safety harness that meets the Snell Memorial Foundation's RS-98 or S-98 standards or the American Society for Testing and Materials ([ASTM](#)) F2040 requirements (or both) and displays the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal
- Ski or snowboarding boots
- Skis or snowboards with bindings
- Ski poles (not needed for snowboarding)
- Sunglasses or ski goggles to protect eyes from bright snow glare

Recommended Gear:

- Hat
- Thick, water-resistant gloves or mittens
- Heavy insulating socks
- Sunscreen and (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm
- Windproof, waterproof jacket and pants

Prepare for Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Girls plan the activity.** See the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios see the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.*** Instructors are certified by the [Professional Ski Instructors of America](#) (PSIA) or possess equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines. Instructors have experience teaching and/or supervising downhill skiing/snowboarding for the age group(s) involved.
- Compile key contacts.** See the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Select a safe downhill skiing and/or snowboarding site.*** Girls are encouraged to plan trip details and include adequate rest periods with opportunities to replenish fluids and eat high-energy foods (such as fruits and nuts). A nutritious, high-energy snack is planned, with beverages provided to prevent dehydration. Ensure that terrain and potential hazards are known to all participants.
- 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 frostbite, cold exposure, hypothermia, sprains, fractures, and altitude sickness. Emergency transportation is available; if any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from Emergency Medical Services response time, ensure the presence of a first-aider with Wilderness First Aid. See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for information about first-aid standards and training.
- Get in shape.** Participants get in condition by exercising before the skiing or snowboarding trip..

On the Day of Downhill Skiing or Snowboarding

- Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](#) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the 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.** See the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Learn the basics of skiing and snowboarding.** Participants learn how to ride ski lifts, including line courtesy, loading and unloading, and emergency procedures. Skiers and snowboarders ski and snowboard under control. Participants ski responsibly, and the rules of the ski area are explained and observed.

- **Follow downhill skiing and snowboarding safety standards***. Skiers and snowboarders follow these guidelines:
 - Do not ski off-trail or in an unmarked or closed area.
 - Make others aware before you turn.
 - Yield the right-of-way to those already on the slope.
 - Do not cross the path of skiers.
 - Avoid objects and obstacles, such as trees and rocks.
 - To rest or adjust equipment, stop on the sides of the slope or trail.
 - Move quickly to the side of the trail or slope after falling, unless injured.
 - Summon the ski patrol if a skier is injured.

Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Links

- The Professional Ski Instructors of America and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors: www.thesnowpros.org
- National Ski Patrol: www.nsp.org
- U.S. Ski Team: www.uskiteam.com
- U.S. Snowboarding: www.ussnowboarding.com

Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Know-How for Girls

- **Know the slopes.** Skiing.about.com details [trail ratings](#), which include green circle as the easiest, blue square as intermediate, and black diamond for expert skiers and snowboarders.
- **Prepare for snowboarding.** Learn about the snowboard stance, using a snowboard, and how to avoid injuries at safesnowboarding.com.

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