



Sailing

Council Approval: [Required](#)

Activity Permitted For: *B J C S A

Not permitted for: Daisies

Not Recommended for: Brownies

About Sailing

The sport of sailing has become very high-tech and competitive since its humble beginnings, but sailors and racers still must rely on the force of wind to propel their boats. There are a wide variety of sailboats, including small and large sailboats, keelboats, and multihulls. Sailing is not permitted for Daisies. While sailing for Brownies is permitted, based on small craft progression for girls sailing is not recommended for Brownies who may not have the maturity and decision-making skill that sailing requires.

Note: Girls are not allowed to operate motorized boats without council permission and girls are never allowed to parasail. The Instructor-to-Girl ratio recommended is one to four.

Know where to sail. Oceans and lakes are ideal for sailing, but many sailing or yacht clubs offer instructions on reservoirs, rivers, and ponds. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions.

Learn More:

- [American Sail Training Association](#)
- [International Sailing Federation](#)
- [U.S. Sailing](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division](#)

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations.

Learn about the resources and information that the [International Sailing Federation](#) and [Disabled Sports USA](#) provide to people with disabilities.

Safety Activity Checklist

Ensure participants are able to swim. Participants' swimming abilities are classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, etc.) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a [swim test](#) is conducted before or on

the day of the activity. If this is not possible, presume all participants are non-swimmers. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.

Each sailor must have a 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.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ahead of time before taking girls out for this activity. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, or sudden illness.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Ensure that the adult or sailing instructor is certified as a sailing instructor or sailing counselor by U.S. Sailing, holds American Red Cross Small Craft Safety Certification, or possesses equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council’s guidelines.

Compile key contacts. See “Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*.”

Select appropriate sailboats for water and passengers. Make sure craft weight and passenger capacities are not exceeded (some crafts clearly display maximum capacity). Consider weather and water conditions, weight of passengers, and equipment.

File a float plan. If participating in a long-distance sailing trip, it is recommended that a float plan be completed and filed (left) with a person knowledgeable about the trip and when to expect the party back. Float plans cannot be filed with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Transport sailboats safely. Sailboats are transported on car-top racks or trailers designed to haul sailboats. Sailboats should be secured with two lines across the top and a line at the bow and the stern. Drivers must have prior experience hauling trailers.

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. On the Day of Sailing:

Get a weather and wind report. Never sail on a stormy or excessively windy day. On the day of the sailing trip or lesson, visit [Weather.com](https://www.weather.com) (which includes marine forecasts, including water temperature and wave height) to determine if conditions are appropriate. Intellicast also reports on sailing conditions. If weather conditions prevent the sailing activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity.

Review rescue tips. [U.S. Sailing](https://www.usasailing.org) provides instructions for small-boat capsizing recovery.

Use the buddy system. See “Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2020*.”

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, secure all loose gear, keep a sharp lookout for other boats and obstructions, head into the wind at a 45-degree angle, and stay low.

Ensure docking safety. Ensure that docking lines are in good condition. Follow general safety guidelines provided by boating facility for docking the craft, and ensure the boat is securely connected to the dock before participants exit.

Safety Gear

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications
- Boat shoes, closed-toe and non-slip hiking/sport sandals with a heel strap, or water socks or shoes (no flip-flops)
- Emergency sound device, such as a whistle, fog horn, or sounding flares
- Layered clothing that's easily changeable depending on temperatures (waterproof jacket recommended)
- Sailing gloves (help save tender hands and improve grip)
- A rigging knife
- Emergency repair kit (duct tape or electrical tape, screwdriver, pliers, shackles, extra line, sewing kit, a spare drain plug, extra cotter rings/pins, and a short piece of light line/rope)
- Emergency survival packet: raincoat, waterproof matches, lightweight/space blanket, hat, raincoat, pocket knife, minimum of 10-foot by 10-foot tarp, rope, drinking cup, food and appropriate liquids (food and water bottles should be secured in the sailboat)
- Paddle (as second means of propulsion)
- Bailer (a bucket used to remove water from a boat)
- 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