



Scuba

Council Approval: [Required](#)

Activity Permitted For: C S A

About Scuba

Scuba is an acronym for “self-contained underwater breathing apparatus” and requires specialized equipment. Scuba diving can be done in a variety of locations, including oceans, lakes, and rivers.

Divers can progress from exploratory experiences in pools, to various certification training courses, and finally to recreational dives.

Organizations such as the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), Scuba Schools International (SSI), and the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), offer online tools to locate certified scuba instructors. Scuba diving is a challenging activity, and girls who wish to learn to scuba dive must be at least 12 years old and meet the age and health requirements set by the certifying agency.

Learn More:

- Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI): [PADI](#)
- Scuba Schools International (SSI): [Dive SSI](#)
- National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI): [NAUI](#)
- World Recreational Scuba Training Council: [WRSTC](#)
- Project Aware: [Project Aware](#)
- Diver’s Alert Network (DAN): [Diver's Alert Network](#)
- World’s best dives for kids and teens: [Sport Diver](#)
- Family-friendly scuba dives: [The Active Times](#)

Pool-Only Scuba Experience Programs

Most dive agencies offer non-certification scuba experience programs for beginner participants of varying ages. This is a great way to explore the sport before “diving in.” Follow dive agency standards for age, health, supervision, and maximum depth requirements. Girl Scout adult-to-girl ratios must be maintained.

A Girl Scout swim test is required prior to participating in a scuba experience program. Contact your council for information on if the dive professional teaching the class can administer the test prior to water activities. An example of the swim test can be found here: [Swim Test](#)

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers and ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the location in advance to ensure they are able to accommodate those with disabilities, and check out the [Handicapped SCUBA Association](#) and more information on [adaptive scuba programs](#).

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Ensure participants are able to participate in scuba activities. Each person must complete the [World Recreational Scuba Training Council](#) (WRSTC) [medical form](#), including a doctor's signature stating the student is fit for diving prior to enrollment.

Ensure participants are able to swim. Scuba requires a high degree of ability and comfort in the water, called "watermanship." Dive training organization watermanship evaluations vary, but typically include demonstration of ability to swim a minimum of 200 yards, tread water for 15 minutes, or swim 500 yards with mask, fins, and snorkel--or some combination. Consult the instructor.

Ensure participants also have an understanding of the body of water they are going to dive in and aware of the type of marine life they may come across.

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 scuba-diving teacher holds instructional certification from SSI, PADI, NAUI, or other industry-recognized dive training organization. Verify that the certifying agency has guidelines for working with youth.

Maintain appropriate ratios. These ratios must be followed:

Type of training	Instructor to student ratio
Pool training activities	1:8
Confined water training activities	1:6
Open water training dive	1:4; 2 students may be added with additional instructor
Open water certification	1:4 instructor with a certified assistant
<i>These ratios are considered maximum and should be reduced if environmental conditions or other factors are not optimal.</i>	

To maintain general supervision of the girls, non-diving volunteers may be able to supervise pool or confined-water activities by watching from the pool deck or surface. For open water training dives, non-divers may supervise from land or boat. Among the student divers, instructors, and watchers, there must always be two unrelated adults, one of whom is female, who are approved by your council.

Select a safe diving site. Make sure your instructor is familiar with the scuba site. Scuba trips to unknown or non-designated areas are not allowed.

Size up scuba gear. Communicate girls' ages, heights, and weights to instructors and equipment providers to ensure the appropriate size of scuba gear is available. *Be sure that the instructor and participants check equipment before use.* See gear lists below.

Use the buddy system. All divers must use the buddy system above and under the water. *Solo diving is prohibited within Girl Scout programs.*

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.

Get a weather and wind report. Never scuba dive on a stormy or extremely windy day. Check weather.com or other reliable weather source to determine if conditions are appropriate. Know how to respond if weather conditions change quickly.

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. If on a boat, follow the instructions of the boat captain.

Recreational Diving. After becoming certified divers, Girl Scouts may continue with recreational (non-training) dives, based on certification levels. A dive professional is required to provide expert supervision.

- Follow dive agency standards which will give guidelines on what progressive experiences are possible. Most agencies have Junior Diver standards; adhere to requirements to dive with an adult, parent, or professional.
- Pre-entry level certification/supervised diver courses (such as PADI Scuba Diver) requirements for maximum depth and supervision must be met. Verify that all participants are certified by a reputable dive agency. All divers (Girl Scouts and adults) must provide proof of diving experience within 6 months of the dive, or take remedial instruction.
- The ratio for recreational diving is 1:8 professional-to-diver.
- Solo diving in Girl Scouts is prohibited; all divers must dive with a buddy.
- Full penetration diving of wrecks and overhead environments are prohibited by recreational divers in a Girl Scout program.
- Rebreathers or any gases/blends except air and up to 36% enriched air are prohibited. Only those certified to use enriched air blends may do so.

Scuba-Diving Gear

Required Gear for all Dive Activities

- Fins, mask, snorkel, and boots (if conditions warrant)
- Compressed gas cylinder and valve
- Buoyancy control device (BCD) with tank mount or separate backpack, and low-pressure inflator
- Primary regulator and alternate air source
- Breathing gas monitoring device/Submersible Pressure Gauge (SPG)
- Depth monitoring device
- Time monitoring device
- Quick-release weight system and weights (if necessary for neutral buoyancy)
- Adequate exposure protection for local dive conditions
- Emergency oxygen kit and waterproof first aid kit (1 per group)

Additional Required Gear for Open Water Dives

- When divers are riding or waiting on boat, each wears 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.
- At least one graspable and Coast-Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) should be immediately available for each group on the water.
- Compass.
- Dive tables or dive computer.
- Audible emergency surface signaling device.
- Personal surface marker buoy.
- Floating dive flag (1 per group or as dictated by local regulations).
- Dive tool/knife (certified divers) unless prohibited by local regulations.
- Lights, slate and pencil, drift buoy, or other gear, as conditions require.

Recommended Gear

- Mask defogger solution
- Swimsuit with rash guard and swim tights, or dive skin
- Waterproof, coral-safe sunscreen (SPF of at least 15) and lip balm