

Tomahawk, Knife, and Hatchet Throwing

Required with Council Approval: [Required](#)

Activity Permitted For: C S A - see [Master Progression Chart](#)

Approval: Girl Scouts San Diego requires approval for this activity. Request approval at www.sdgirlscouts.org/approval.

About Tomahawk, Knife, and Hatchet Throwing

Some of the oldest weapons, tools, and hunting methods include the ax, tomahawk, knife, and hatchet and they are still used for their traditional purposes in some areas today. Learning how to handle them safely by aiming at targets for accuracy is also common today as a recreational and competitive activity. It is an ideal way to learn how to handle these tools safely, tools that can be used in the great outdoors and wilderness excursions.

Good throwing requires learning positive traits such as patience, determination, focus, attention to detail, discipline, and persistence. Since these skills are likewise key elements of leadership and confidence, we encourage our girls to take what disciplines they learn from any sport or activity and apply it to their participation in their communities and the world.

There are a variety of styles and sizes of tomahawks, knives, and hatchets. The ones the girls will be learning about are designed for the express purpose of hitting a target.

Learn More:

- [National Axe Throwing Federation](#)
- [American Knife Throwers Alliance](#)

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs, interest, and special accommodations. Check with facilities ahead of time to determine what accommodations can be made.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult needs to be trained in tomahawk, hatchet, or knife throwing safety (depending on which you are doing), form and technique, range rules, and emergency procedures.

Note: The instructor-to-participant ratio is not the same as the adult-to-girl ratio found in “Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2018*.” You must follow the Target and Shooting Sports—Master Progression Chart. However, both ratios must be complied with when girls are participating in throwing sports. For example, if 15 Cadettes are on the shooting line, there must be two instructors plus eight adult Girl Scout volunteers (who are not instructors).

Select a safe site. Check with council staff to see if an approved vendor list is offered. If the council does not have an approved vendor list, look for organized indoor and outdoor throwing ranges. Call the facility to determine the following safety information in order to select a safe site:

- Equipment should be stored in a box, closet, or cabinet and locked when not in use.
- Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity are posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping on to the range.
- Backstops or a specific safety zone is set behind the targets.
- Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers are known to the entire facility population.
- The shooting line is clearly defined.

At an outdoor range, check that:

- Targets are not placed in front of houses, roads, trails, or tents.
- Areas with pedestrian traffic are prohibited.
- Areas are clear of brush. A hillside backstop is recommended.
- The shooting area and the spectator area behind the shooting area are clearly marked.
- In the shooting area, there is a safe distance at least 50 yards behind the targets and 20 yards on each side of the range.
- The range is not used after nightfall.

At an indoor range, make sure that:

- Targets are well-lit
- Doors or entries to the range are locked or blocked from the inside.
- Fire exits are not blocked.

For hatchet throwing, indoor ceilings must be a minimum of 12 feet high; metal chain link 15-foot floor-to-ceiling partitions must separate sets of two targets; and within a set of two targets, there must be a 6-foot floor-to-ceiling partition between the targets.

Ensure equipment is properly sized for the girls and is made for throwing. Knives should be between 9 to 16 inches and not overly sharp. Hatchet heads should weigh between 1.25 and 1.75 pounds, the handle should be wood, length must be at least 13 inches, including the handle in the eye of the blade and the face (blade) of the axe must be no longer than 4 inches and not overly sharp.

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves and others.

Girls should learn about throwing. Girls develop skills based on proper procedures and form, handling the equipment, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices.

Always keep the knife/hatchet pointed in a safe direction. This is the primary rule of target sport safety. A safe direction means that the knife/hatchet is handled so that even if it were to be dropped or slip out of the throwers grip it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control your actions at all times.

Ensure that equipment to be used is in good condition. Make sure that the equipment is clean, in good working order, and that nothing is broken or loose. Targets and backstops for targets are in good repair.

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.

Plan in advance. Call ahead to determine any special suggestions from the vendor or facility.

Ensure the instructor reviews all rules, range, and operating procedures with girls beforehand.

Safety Gear

- Targets (positioned at recommended/safe distance)
- Hard shoes (to protect feet from bounce backs)
- Gloves (may be provided)

These checkpoints should be reviewed with the vendor, facility, or your council as appropriate.