

Ziplining: Safety Activity Checkpoints

High Risk



A zipline consists of a pulley suspended on a cable, usually made of stainless steel, mounted on an incline. It is designed to enable a user propelled by gravity to travel from the top to the bottom of the inclined cable by holding on to, or attaching to, the freely moving pulley. The various types of ziplines include:

- **Playground ziplines.** These are short and low, intended for child's play and found on some playgrounds and recreation venues. All Girl Scouts are permitted to use them.
- **Ziplines.** These are launched from a platform usually accessed by a staircase, ladder, or climbing wall. They are sometimes found as part of a challenge course. Participants must be able to walk short distances and be able to climb stairs. **Girl Scout Daisies are not permitted to participate in ziplines. In addition, check with the venue before arrival to determine their rules on age, height and weight restrictions.**
- **Canopy Zipline Tours.** These are guided aerial explorations or transit of the forest canopy, most commonly done by means of a series of ziplines or aerial walkways with platforms. **Canopy Tours are not permitted for Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies. In addition, check with the venue before arrival as many have minimum age requirements, as well as height and weight restrictions.**

Know where to find ziplines. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Girl Scouts should use a venue that has professional accreditation by either the [Professional Ropes Course Association \(PRCA\)](#) or the [Association for Challenge Course Technology \(ACCT\)](#) to ensure a regulated experience. Both of these organizations are accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to develop industry standards and regulations. Note that each venue sets its own rules regarding the age and weight of participants, and some states regulate ziplines as amusement rides.

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 and the [National Center of Physical Activities and Disabilities](#) provide to people with disabilities. Some facilities may have specialized harness and a ramp for people who use wheelchairs instead of climbing the stairs, tower or wall. Ensure that one of their staff has training and experience helping people with disabilities participate in ziplining. Note that some venues will not allow participation if a person has recent or recurring injuries or muscular or skeletal disorders. It is recommended that women who are pregnant, and adults who have heart, leg, or back problems not participate in ziplining.

Zipline Gear

Required Gear

- Helmet (supplied by the venue). It is recommended that a disposable liner, such as a shower cap or surgical cap, be worn underneath the helmet to protect against the spread of head lice.
- Harness (supplied by the venue).
- Sturdy closed toed athletic-type shoes.

Recommended Gear

- Long pants or long biker-type shorts.
- Close-fitting top with sleeves.
- Safety gloves (supplied by the venue).
- Protective eye wear, i.e. sunglasses, goggles, etc.
- Sunscreen of at least SPF 15 and lip balm
- Cell phones and other mobile devices, wallets and other loose items should be locked in a locker or your vehicle.

Prepare for Zip Lining

- **Communicate with council and parents.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- **Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.
- **Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios, keeping in mind that Daisies participate in playground zipling only, and Brownies are not permitted to participate in canopy ziplining tours.
- **Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** An instructor with [Association of Challenge Course Technology \(ACCT\)](#) certification or similar documented experience, which includes setting stop ropes, tying required knots, assisting guests in proper harness and helmet fitting, demonstrating proper zipping techniques, operating the zipline activity, breaking guest's speed upon incoming approach, performing retrievals and rescues, inspecting equipment, and educating guests about the venue. Ensure that the instructor has provided written documentation of the completed training, there is a regular process of review and update for all instructors.
- **Compile key contacts.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- **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 injury from falls as well as abrasions and sunburn. Emergency transportation is available; 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.
- **Dress appropriately for the activity.** Wear long pants or biker-type shorts, sturdy closed toed athletic-type shoes, and a close-fitting top with sleeves. No dress shoes, sandals, water shoes or flip-flops. No skirts, regular shorts, ponchos, or dangling jewelry of any kind.

On the Day of the Ziplining Activity

- **Get a weather report.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- **Use the buddy system.** See *the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*. In addition, each girl zip lines independently, but some venues offer dual or side-by-side ziplines.
- **Ensure that equipment is well-maintained*.** Before use, staff should inspect all equipment and gear, as everything will degrade in quality and strength over time. Zipline parts and materials are subject to the

elements and high stresses and must all be inspected regularly for any damage, corrosion, splitting, cracking, stretching or abrasions.

- **Girls learn about and prepare for ziplining.** Instructors teach a set of readiness and action commands to all participants for beginning. All participants may be weighed and their height measured before beginning issued their ziplining equipment. Instructors describe the objectives, safety procedures, and hazards to the participants before beginning an activity. Zipline participants should be provided with a hands-on walkthrough of what will happen at the landing zone when under full speed. Volunteers must attend the orientation session (even if they will not participate) along with the girls and learn what to watch for in order to supervise the girls in their care.
- **Girls practice safe zipline course techniques.** Zipline participants should be provided with an explanation of what each piece of gear is used for and participate in a hands-on walkthrough of what will happen at the landing zone when under full speed. Harnesses are designed to support the human body from the hips and hanging upside down is not permitted.

Zipline Courses Links

- Association for Challenge Course Technology: www.acctinfo.org
- Professional Ropes Course association: www.prcainfo.org

Ziplinings Know-How for Girls

- **Focus on team-building.** Ziplining relies on strong communication and trust. Is your team ready for the challenge?

Additional Resources:

- Zipline specifications according to the Carnival and Amusement Ride Safety Act (Dept. of Labor) <http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/056/056060000003500R.html>

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