



Cross-Country Skiing

Council Approval: Required - High Risk

Tier 1

Activity Permitted For: B J C S A

About Cross-Country Skiing

Also referred to as back-country, Nordic, and XC skiing, cross-country skiing is an excellent form of exercise and an opportune way to explore the outdoors in the wintertime. As with downhill skiers, cross-country skiers use two poles for guidance and bindings to connect boots to skis. Unlike downhill skiing, in which the entire boot is attached to the ski, only the toe of the cross-country boot is attached to the ski. Contact ski shops and cross-country ski organizations to inquire about rental equipment. Cross-country skiing is not permitted for Daisies.

Know where to cross-country ski: designated cross-country ski trails are recommended. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions and approval. Also, xcski.org provides information about cross-country skiing trails.

Learn More:

- [Cross Country Ski Areas Association](#)
- [National Ski Patrol](#)
- [XC Ski World](#)

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Contact the ski instructor in advance. Ask about accommodating people with disabilities.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Instruction is given by an adult with experience teaching and/or supervising cross-country skiing for the ages involved, or has documented experience, according to your council's guidelines.

Select a safe cross-country skiing 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). The nature of the terrain, potential hazards (such as an avalanche or frozen lake), mileage, and approximate cross-country skiing time should be known to all group members. When a latrine is not available, individual cat holes located at least 200 feet away

from water sources should be used to dispose of human waste (visit www.int.org for more information).

Map the course. The route should be marked on a map. Before skiing, designate a meeting place where girls can contact a supervising adult.

Recover from a fall. The act of hoisting back up while wearing skis can be a cumbersome process. Have girls learn how to get back up on their skis.

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 should be 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. Girls must be trained in winter survival (such as snow-cave building, whiteouts, and avalanche avoidance), as needed. Search-and-rescue procedures are written out in advance and arrangements are made for medical emergencies and evacuation procedures. See Girl Scouts' *Volunteer Essentials* resource for information about first-aid standards and training.

Follow cross-country ski-safety standards. Ski area rules are explained and observed:

- Girls should ski under control to avoid other skiers and objects.
- Girls must yield the right-of-way to those already on the trail. They step to the side to let faster skiers pass. A descending skier has the right of way.
- A faster skier should indicate her desire to pass by calling "track, please."
- Girls do not ski close to the edge of an embankment or a cliff.
- Girls must not walk on ski trails.

Safety and Required Gear

- Skis
- Ski poles
- Boots
- Thick, water-resistant gloves or mittens
- A winter hat
- Heavy insulating socks
- Thermal underwear or long johns
- Sunglasses or ski goggles to protect eyes from glare
- A water bottle
- High-energy food (such as fruits and nuts)
- A daypack to carry personal belongings

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