



Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

Council Approval: Required – High Risk

Tier 1

Activity Permitted For: D B J S C A

About Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

Whether girls are participating in snowboarding or traditional downhill, slalom, Super G, or other types of skiing, participants use trails and slopes matched to their abilities. Skiing.about.com describes various ski levels, which range from first-time beginner to expert.

In planning a Girl Scout ski or snowboarding trip, contact the ski resort or organization to inquire about rental equipment, lift tickets, and any special accommodations for large groups, and always know the location of the first-aid station. With the appropriate instructors, equipment, and hills/levels, Daisies are permitted to participate in skiing and snowboarding. Most mountains have wonderful educational programs for children as young as four years old!

Note: Even experienced girls are not permitted to do aerial tricks on skis or snowboards.

Learn More:

- Professional Ski Instructors of America and American Association of Snowboard Instructors: The Snow Pros
- National Ski Patrol
- U.S. Ski and Snowboard
- Locate ski resorts by region: ABC of Snowboarding

Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers, and ask about specific needs and accommodations. Call ahead to the ski and snowboard resort about accommodating people with disabilities—most are extremely accommodating and offer specialized instructors and trails. You can even ask to speak to an instructor ahead of time.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Be in shape. Participants get in condition by stretching and exercising before the skiing or snowboarding trip. Skiing takes endurance and balance, so be in shape!

Learn how to ride ski lifts. This includes line courtesy, loading and unloading, and emergency procedures.

Observe the basics. Ski and snowboard under control. Participants should ski responsibly, and not beyond their ability level. All rules of the ski area must be explained, learned, and followed.

Stay on trails. Do not ski off-trail or in an unmarked or closed area.

Be aware of terrain. Avoid objects and obstacles, such as trees, rocks, growth coming up under thin snow coverage, and melted puddles, which can occur in spring or during fluctuating weather.

Understand right-of-way protocol. Make others aware before you turn. Yield the right-of-way to those already on the slope. Do not cross the path of skiers.

Prepare for falls. Move quickly to the side of the trail or slope after falling, unless injured.

Summon the ski patrol if a skier is injured. They are usually dressed in red.

Know the slopes. Skiing.about.com details trail ratings, which include green circle as the easiest, blue square as intermediate, and black diamond for expert skiers and snowboarders. Review the trail maps before hitting the slopes.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. Instructors are certified by the Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) or possess equivalent certification or documented experience according to your council's guidelines. Instructors have experience teaching and/or supervising downhill skiing/snowboarding for the ages involved.

Select a safe downhill skiing and/or snowboarding 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. Plan for a nutritious, high-energy snack, and provide beverages to prevent dehydration. Ensure that terrain and potential hazards are known to all participants.

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.

Ensure emergency transportation. Make sure 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 winter wilderness first-aid experience.

Safety and Required Gear

- Protective helmet with properly fitting safety harness that meets the Snell Memorial Foundation's RS-98 or S-98 standards or the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F2040 requirements (or both) and displays the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) seal
- Ski or snowboarding boots
- Skis or snowboards with bindings
- Ski poles (not needed for snowboarding)

- Sunglasses or ski goggles to protect eyes from glare
- Insulated water-resistant gloves or mittens
- Insulating socks and thermal underwear
- Sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 and lip balm for snow glare protection
- Windproof and waterproof ski jacket and pants

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