

Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Sleds vary in design, shape, and material and can range from round plastic discs to rectangular wood structures with metal runners. A toboggan is typically a long, flat-bottomed sled made of thin boards that curve upward in a C-shape at one end. Snow tubes are inflatable, doughnut-shaped rubber or plastic inner tubes similar to those used in water tubing, but have dimpled centers.

Know where to sled, toboggan, and snow tube. Use designated sledding, tobogganing, and snow-tubing hills. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, sledriding.com provides information about U.S. sledding-hill locations. In addition, some ski resorts offer snow-tubing classes and designated areas within the resort for snow tubing.

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 for people with disabilities at [Disabled Sports USA](http://DisabledSportsUSA.org).

Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing Gear

Required Gear:

- Hat, mittens or warm gloves
- Sunglasses
- Winter coat
- Waterproof winter boots
- Sled
- Toboggan
- Snow tube

Recommended Gear

Heavy, wool insulating socks (avoid cotton socks)
Layered clothing
Thermal underwear or long johns
Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15), apply every two hours, and lip balm
Snow pants or snow suit or waterproof pants over warm layers
Bicycle helmet may be required by some snow-tubing facilities and some sledding hills

Prepare for Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing

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. For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Select a safe site. Ensure that sledding is conducted in an area free of vehicles and that the site has no obstructions such as rocks, trees, or signposts. The nature of the terrain, potential hazards (such as an avalanche or frozen lake), mileage, and approximate activity time are known to all group members in advance.

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 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.

Compile key contacts. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Girls learn about sledding, tobogganing, and snow tubing. Girls receive basic instruction in sledding safety and conduct rules. Girls learn to perform basic steering skills, including how to slow down and stop.

On the Day of Sledding, Tobogganing, or Snow Tubing

Get a weather report. On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. Xcski.org provides reports about snow conditions by region. If weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls.

Use the buddy system. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Safeguard valuables. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Practice safe sledding, tobogganing, and snow tubing. Conditions are monitored, and breaks are taken to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Girls slide downhill feet-first to reduce the potential for head injuries from collisions. Girls

and adults agree on the portion of slope to be used for sledding and the portion to be used for walking uphill.

Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow-Tubing Links

Sled Riding: www.sledriding.com

Sledding, Tobogganing, and Snow Tubing Know-How for Girls

Learn about competitive and Olympic sledding. Find out about the sport of sled racing on the [USA Bobsled and Skeleton Federation site](#).

Know the history of sledding. Traditionally sleds were used to transport goods and people in places where wheels couldn't operate. Toboggans made of poles tied together with leather were used by Native Americans to carry food, clothing, and other items through snow.