Sledding, Tobogganinig, 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.

### Sledding, Tobogganinig, and Snow Tubing Gear

**Required Gear:**
- Hat
- 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) and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- 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.
  o Advance written permission from GSGATL is required for this activity, use the Travel Approval Form located on our website
  o Before any travel away from the normal meeting space:
    ▪ Appropriate training as outlined in the Volunteer Position Description AND Trips & Overnights must be successfully completed
    ▪ Leaders should have a current Minor & Adult Health History for each participant
    ▪ Each girl must have a signed Permission for Girl Scout Activity
    ▪ Each troop must have a currently approved volunteer adult with current First Aid/CPR certification in attendance.

☐ Girls plan the activity. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.

☐ Arrange for adult supervision & transportation.
  o For activities, travel, and camping trips, all adults attending must successfully pass the GSGATL volunteer approval process (reference Policy 4, page 24, in Volunteer Essentials) and be registered members of Girl Scouts before participating in trips with the troop (reference Policy 2, page 23, Volunteer Essentials). For events, travel, and camping trips, two unrelated female adults who do not live in the same household must be present at all times. Ensure that the skill level of the adults is higher than the difficulty of the intended activity. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for adult/girl ratios.
  o When transporting girls to or from an activity, approved male volunteers must be accompanied in the vehicle by an unrelated female volunteer who does not share the same household. At no time may an approved male volunteer be alone with girls. An exception to this policy includes a limited number of GSGATL sponsored or approved events (with prior written consent).

☐ 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. When a latrine is not available, individual cat holes at least 200 feet away from water sources are used to dispose of and bury human waste; tampons, sanitary supplies, and toilet paper are packed out (visit www.lnt.org for more information).

☐ 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, Tobogganig, and Snow-Tubing Links
- Sled Riding: [www.sledriding.com](http://www.sledriding.com)

Sledding, Tobogganig, 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](http://www.usabobsled.org).
- 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.