



## Tubing

**Council Approval:** Required

**Activity permitted for:** J C S A

**Not Recommended For:** Daisies and Brownies.

### About Tubing

Tubing involves floating down a river or other body of water in a doughnut-shaped inner tube. Tubing is popular both as a relaxing leisurely activity (in slow-moving waters) and as an adventurous recreational activity in faster-paced rivers. A fun thing to do on a tubing adventure is to create exploration games to see who can locate the most interesting nature gems, such as caves and peculiar plants or birds.

As a safety precaution, keep in mind that tubes occasionally flip, causing tubers to sometimes fall out of their tubes as they travel over rapids and through rough patches of water. Tubing can be done on lakes or rivers. As river tubing is often a one-way trip, be sure to arrange transportation from the tubing final destination.

If participating in boat towed tubing, be sure to take safety precautions that comply with American Red Cross small craft safety guidelines.

#### Learn More:

- [American Whitewater](#)
- Tubing sites: [River Tubing USA](#) [River Tubing](#)
- [Whitewater Rescue Institute](#)

### Include Girls with Disabilities

Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn about the resources and information that the [National Center on Physical Activity and Disability](#) provides for people with disabilities.

### Safety Activity Checkpoints

For recommended adult-to-girl ratios, see “Introduction to *Safety Activity Checkpoints 2019*.” In addition, one adult will be the lead tuber, while another adult will be the sweep tuber. The lead adult knows firsthand the hazards and rapids on any river to be tubed.

**Know the river flow.** Be careful about where you roll out of a tube. If tubing in fast-moving water, the undersurface current may catch you off guard. Do not get out of a tube where the flow of water is fastest—just above the riverbed, where there is little resistance to flow.

If towing behind a motor boat, the operator must be an adult driver with a valid license to operate the motorboat. There must be a spotter at the stern watching a girl while towing at all times. Girls are not permitted to be towed by jet skis or wave runners.

**Girls are not permitted to drive or operate motorized boats.**

**Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** One adult must be certified in American Red Cross Small Craft Safety, Moving Water Module from the American Red Cross, have experience in teaching and/or supervising tubing activities, or have documented experience according to your council's guidelines.

**Ensure participants are able to swim.** Participants' swimming abilities should be classified and clearly identified (for instance, with colored headbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, and so on) at council-approved sites, or participants provide proof of swimming-test certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a [swim test](#) is conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.

**Prior to tubing, girls receive verbal instruction.** This should include how to float through rapids, how to breathe while swimming in rapids, and how to swim to shore. There is only one person to a tube, and tubes that are tied together are secured very snugly, with no slack between the tubes. Avoid long, dangling ropes that can get snagged on various obstructions.

**Research river condition.** Never go whitewater tubing on water that has not been run and rated. No tubing is taken on whitewater more difficult than Class II, as defined by the American version of the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#). Be aware of possible changes in river level and its effects on the run's level of difficulty.

Make sure tubing on whitewater or semi-protected waters meets the [Safety Code of American Whitewater](#).

**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 near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. 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.

**Safeguard valuables.** Don't leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place.

**Get a weather report.** Never go tubing on a stormy day. On the day of the activity, consult [Weather.com](#) or other reliable sources to assess weather and river conditions and water and air temperature. If weather conditions prevent the trip, be prepared with a backup plan or alternative activity.

**Be prepared in the event of a storm with lightning.** Exit water immediately and take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them. During storms, if shore cannot be reached, keep a sharp lookout for boats and other obstructions.

## **Safety Gear**

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket (Type III recommended) that fits according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears.
- Tube
- Closed-toe sport sandals with heel strap, water socks, or shoes (no flip-flops)
- At least one graspable and throwable Coast-Guard approved personal flotation device (Type IV buoyant cushion or ring buoy or equivalent) immediately available for each group on the water