In-Line Skating and Roller Skating: Safety Activity Checkpoints

Originally developed as a way for speed skaters to train year-round, in-line skating is now a popular activity and sport that represents a modernized version of roller-skating. All skaters are encouraged to obtain safety rules from the adult or rink manager, and beginners should consider taking lessons from a certified skating instructor. Once girls are skilled skaters, they may wish to participate in more challenging skate activities such as skating backward or hosting skating competitions and games.

Know where to skate. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, to find a skating rink by region, visit the rink locator link at rollerskating.org. Girls skate at night only in well-lit areas.

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 that National Institute on Recreation Inclusion provides to people with disabilities.

In-Line and Roller Skating Gear

Basic Gear

- ☐ Clothing that allows freedom of movement
- ☐ Long-sleeve shirt to help prevent scrapes
- ☐ Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15)
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Daypack to carry personal belongings if skating outdoors

Specialized Gear (for skating outdoors)

- ☐ Snug-fitting elbow pads and kneepads
- ☐ Wrist guards that fit like gloves
- ☐ Bike helmet or other helmet with the American National Standards Institute or SNELL Memorial Foundation seal, or both (helmets must be as snug as possible and be worn low over the forehead, approximately 1 inch above the eyebrows)

Prepare for In-Line and Roller Skating

- ☐ **Communicate with council and parents.** Inform your Girl Scout council and girls' parents/guardians about the activity, including details about safety precautions and any appropriate clothing or supplies that may be necessary. Follow council procedures for activity approval, certificates of insurance, and council guidelines about girls' general health examinations. Make arrangements in advance for all transportation and confirm plans before departure.
- ☐ **Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.
- ☐ **Organize transportation and arrange for adult supervision.** Adults keep a close watch on skaters from outside the main skating floor. The recommended adult-to-girl ratios are two non-related adults (at least one of whom is female) to every:
  - 6 Girl Scout Daisies
  - 12 Girl Scout Brownies
  - 16 Girl Scout Juniors
  - 20 Girl Scout Cadettes
  - 24 Girl Scout Seniors
  - 24 Girl Scout Ambassadors

  Plus one adult to each additional:

  - 4 Girl Scout Daisies
  - 6 Girl Scout Brownies
  - 8 Girl Scout Juniors
  - 10 Girl Scout Cadettes
  - 12 Girl Scout Seniors
  - 12 Girl Scout Ambassadors
- ☐ **Select a safe in-line and roller-skating site.** Obtain council guidance in selecting the skating site; rinks are considered safest, but ensure that the rink has a smooth skating surface free of debris. The rink manager is called in advance to arrange for large groups or for practice sessions. The rink is adequately staffed to monitor the size of the crowd. (Check with the rink supervisor in advance to learn how many adults, in addition to the rink staff, are needed to supervise the group.) Local ordinances or parks offices are checked to see whether skating is permitted on bike paths or in city parks.
- ☐ **Compile key contacts.** Give an itinerary to a contact person at home; call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls' parents/guardian contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and council contacts—keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location.
- ☐ **Select proper-fitting skates.** Girls receive instruction in selecting the proper skate size. Skates are properly fitted, securely laced, and properly tied. Skate wheels, boots, and plates are kept clean and in good condition and are inspected. Girls never skate with broken or missing laces. No dangling decorations are attached to the laces.
- ☐ **Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a 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 injury from falls, especially abrasions. If any part of the activity is located 60 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider (level 2) with Wilderness and Remote First Aid. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of In-Line Skating or Roller Skating

- ☐ **Get a weather report.** If skating outdoors, on the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate, and if skating outside, make sure that the ground is free of ice. If severe 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. In the event of a storm, 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.
- ☐ **Use the buddy system.** Girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl chooses a buddy and is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. If someone in the group is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.
- ☐ **Safeguard valuables.** Secure equipment in a dry, locked storage area if skating indoors.
- ☐ **Girls learn basic skating skills.** Girls receive basic instruction in skating skills, including how to fall and get up. Practice sessions are scheduled for beginners. Girls learn to perform basic skating skills before attempting more advanced skills. Gentle warm-up exercises are done before any strenuous skating; cool-down exercises end the sessions.
- ☐ **Follow basic in-line and roller-skating safety standards.** Respect safety rules, such as:
  - Everyone skates in the same direction.
  - Girls do not stop in the main skating area (when skating in a rink).
  - Skaters yield the right-of-way to those already in the rink.
  - Skaters do not cut across the paths of other skaters.
  - Skaters do not push, shove, or race.
  - A falling skater does not grab hold of another skater.
  - A fallen skater rises quickly, unless injured.
  - Girls do not skate faster than their ability to stop, and skaters do not wear headphones while skating.
  - Loose or sharp articles, such as handbags, combs, and keys are not carried in pockets, hands, hair, or anyplace where they might cause injury to the skater in the event of a fall, or injure another skater by falling to the floor.
- ☐ **Practice safe outdoor skating.** Outdoors, girls skate in areas where traffic or pedestrians will not interfere. Check local ordinances for any restrictions. Girls skate in the street or in a parking lot only if it is closed to traffic. When skating on a walkway, yield to pedestrians. Skate on the right side, pass on the left.

In-Line and Roller-Skating Links

- **Roller Skating Association International:** www.rollerskating.org
- **International Inline Skate Association:** www.inlineonline.co.uk/iisa.htm

In-Line and Roller-Skating Know-How for Girls

- **Keep skates in top shape.** Avoid water, sand, and debris, which damage wheel bearings.
- **Learn how to brake and stop.** Before skating, read up on the safest ways to stop, based on skating ability level, at skatefaq.com. Moves include the wall stop, the brake-pad, and the snowplow.

In-Line and Roller-Skating Jargon

- **Fakie:** The slang term for doing a skating trick backward
- **Shoot-the-duck:** A skating move in which the skater bends one knee all the way down and glides on one foot while the other leg is extended completely forward