



Marksmanship

PURPOSE

The purpose of this program is to educate Girl Scouts on firearm safety and marksmanship skills, where they can take aim at stationary targets in a safe, clean, and Girl Scout-friendly environment.



LEGACY

Did you know that Marksmanship was one of the original merit badges created by Juliette Gordon Low? This “Council’s Own” Badge program was originally developed by Cadette Troop 10088 to learn how to stay safe around firearms and how to accurately shoot stationary and moving targets. Girl Scouts of Southeast Florida has now updated this badge program to be more accessible for all Girl Scouts to learn firearm safety, maintenance, and shooting proficiency.

Firearms knowledge is essential for promoting safety, responsibility, and informed decision-making in any society where guns are present. It helps prevent accidents through safe handling and storage, supports responsible ownership by ensuring compliance with laws, and reduces risks during civilian-law enforcement interactions. Educated individuals are better prepared for emergencies, contribute to balanced public policy, and help reduce fear or stigma around firearms. Whether one owns a gun or not, understanding firearms fosters a safer, more informed, and respectful society.

GIRL SCOUT LEVELS / REQUIREMENTS

To earn the Marksmanship patch, Girl Scouts must complete the following requirements.

- Cadette, Senior, Ambassador Girl Scouts that are over 12 years of age only:
 - **all** of the starred (*) activities in the Discover section,
 - **One activity** from both the Firearms Safety and Personal Safety sections
 - **at least 2** activities in the Connect section, including the starred (*) activity, and
 - **a Take Action Project**



Girl Scouts will master the following concepts to achieve this badge. Concepts 1-4 must be completed before proceeding to Concept 5.

Concept 1 * Principles of Firearms Safety

Concept 2 * Safe Storage and Response to Unsecured Firearms

Concept 3 * Personal Protection while participating in Shooting Sports

Concept 4 * Firearm Maintenance

Concept 5 * Marksmanship skills

Please review the [Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge for All Girl Scouts](#).

RESOURCES

- These activities may only be attempted at a council pre-approved range, and instructor/leader/girl ratios must adhere to GSUSA Safety Activity Checkpoints for Shooting Sports. To host shooting sports activities, you **must** have an NRA Range Safety Officer or USA Shooting Sports Instructor with your group.
- Nexus Shooting Range in Davie, Florida has agreed to host Girl Scouts to complete this Council's Own Badge. Contact for Nexus Shooting is Bernie Hsiao, (954) 587-8005, <http://www.nexusshooting.com>
 - You can approach the manager at a shooting range near you to see if they have staff available to assist with the badge requirements.
 - You can also reach out to troop parents or Service Unit members to find an adult that is a NRA Range Safety Officer or USA Shooting Sports Instructor to assist your group. The training is available through [NRA Basic Range Safety Officer Course | Course Description | NRA Training](#)
- Closed-toes shoes (sneakers) are required. Long pants, long sleeves or a jacket, and hair pulled away from your face or a cap are recommended.
- At the end of this packet (see "Resources"), you will find the following:
 - Basic Principles of Gun Safety
 - How to Store Firearms Properly in Your Home
 - GSUSA Safety Checkpoints for Shooting Sports (2024-2026 edition)



- Useful resources can be discovered online or by visiting your local county library. Some resources to get you started are below.
 - [USA Shooting](#)
 - [USA Youth Education in Shooting Sports](#)
 - [National Shooting Sports Foundation Safety Resources](#)

ACTIVITIES

DISCOVER

1. Firearms Safety – As with all Girl Scout activities, the safety of our members is Girl Scouts of Southeast Florida’s top priority. During this section, you will learn and reinforce the importance of safety during shooting sports activities. Choose one of the activities below to complete.

- **ACTIVITY #1**
Review the four principles of firearm safety. As a group or with your instructor/guardian, discuss each principle and why it is crucial to safely handling firearms.
- **ACTIVITY #2**
Recite from memory the four basic principles of firearm safety to your instructor or parent.
- **ACTIVITY #3**
Create a poster or short video explaining the four principles of firearm safety to share with others. Include your reasoning for why each principle is important to safe firearm handling.

2. Firearms Storage – Ensuring that firearms are stored properly is another essential part of firearm safety. During this section of the badge, Girl Scouts will learn about safe storage methods as well as what to do if they find a firearm that is not safely secured. Once completed, share what you have learned with your family.

- **ACTIVITY #1 ***
Talk with your instructor about how to safely secure a firearm and what you should do if you see one that is not safely secured.
- **ACTIVITY #2 ***
Research different firearm safes, locks, and other storage methods to familiarize yourself with the best practices of firearm storage. Ask your parents, relatives, or friends about how their family safely stores their firearm(s).



- **ACTIVITY #3**
Perform a short skit demonstrating what you should do if you ever see a firearm that is not safely secured.

3. Personal Safety – Each individual on a shooting range must also take steps to ensure protection of themselves while participating in shooting sports. Choose one of the activities below to complete.

- **ACTIVITY #1**
Design a poster or video explaining the importance of eye and ear protection on the range, and how to properly wash your hands with de-leading soap.
- **ACTIVITY #2**
Demonstrate proper use of eye and ear protection on the range, and how to properly wash your hands with de-leading soap.

4. Firearm Care and Maintenance – As with any tool, firearms also require care and maintenance to ensure they are operating correctly.

- **ACTIVITY #1 ***
Visit a gunsmith or have your instructor demonstrate how to properly clean your firearm as well as the importance of maintaining your firearm.
- **ACTIVITY #2**
Learn to check that the firearm is unloaded, disassemble the firearm, clean each piece, and reassemble the firearm.
- **ACTIVITY #3**
Create a poster or video explaining the importance of firearm maintenance and what issues may arise if a firearm is not cleaned regularly.

5. Marksmanship Training

- **ACTIVITY #1 ***
With an instructor, learn how to properly handle a firearm at each step of the process from approaching the shooting line to loading the firearm to shooting.
- **ACTIVITY #2 ***
With an instructor's guidance, load a .22 bolt-action rifle, and fire 10 rounds at the designated target. Review target with instructor for feedback and continue to practice shooting as time allows.



- **ACTIVITY #3 ***
With an instructor's guidance, load a .22 semi-automatic rifle, and fire 10 rounds at the designated target. Review target with instructor for feedback and continue to practice shooting as time allows.
- **ACTIVITY #4 (AGES 14+ ONLY)**
With an instructor's guidance, load a .22lr handgun, and fire 10 rounds at the designated target. Review target with instructor for feedback and continue to practice shooting as time allows.

CONNECT

- **ACTIVITY #1: Careers ***
Discover what careers require you to carry or have knowledge of firearms and the education, experience and/or training required to pursue that occupation. Some examples are police officer, security guard, border patrol, private investigator, armored vehicle guard, gunsmith, and military service.
- **ACTIVITY #2: Law Enforcement Officer**
Speak with a law enforcement officer about gun safety issues in your community.
- **ACTIVITY #3: Improve Your Skills**
Continue to improve your marksmanship skills by practicing at a range over several months.
- **ACTIVITY #4: Military Members**
Interview a member of the military about what type of firearm training their job requires.



TAKE ACTION

Share what you've discovered while doing this program by completing a Take Action Project. Some suggestions are listed below:

- Firearm Safety Awareness Event
 - Host an event that promotes firearm safety and invite professionals to speak about their career which allows them to carry a firearm.
- Firearm Safety Awareness Display
 - Gain permission from a local community organization or library to provide a display that promotes firearm safety in the home.
- Communicate Firearm Safety in Your Community
 - Create and share a video about what you have learned regarding firearm safety and how to safely store firearms in the home.
- Bust Stereotypes
 - Observe how shooting sports and their related professions are marketed in the media. Do you see mostly men or women depicted? Create a Take Action Project to bust that stereotype.



Resources

Basic Principles of Gun Safety

1. Always assume all guns are loaded.
2. Never point the gun at something you aren't willing to destroy.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger until just before firing.
4. Know your target and what lies beyond.

How to Store Firearms Properly in Your Home

- Store firearms in a locked (fingerprint access is the best and preferred type) cabinet, safe, gun vault, or storage case when not in use, ensuring they are in a location inaccessible by children and cannot be handled by anyone without the owner's permission.
- Store ammunition in a locked location separate from firearms.
- Educate everyone in the family about firearm safety.

Range Safety Considerations

Shooting ranges all operate differently and it is important to consider the safety of the girls and adults. Make sure to research the range you choose to go to and check their safety precautions.

- Air quality within indoor ranges is very important to avoid lead poisoning. Youth are especially sensitive to lead poisoning, so if working indoors, ask about air quality. Also, expecting mothers should not be at indoor ranges due to lead exposure. Check with the range you choose to visit about their air filtration system to protect your Girl Scouts.
- Ask the range about their shooting lane setup. Some ranges have private bays that are only accessible by the group using it. If possible, it is preferred to have separate lanes from the general public for additional safety.



Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for Shooting Sports, 2024 Edition [Safety Activity Check-2024-2026.pdf](#)

Shooting Sports/Guns

Council Approval: Required

Shooting Type	Activity Permitted For	Participant-to-Instructor Ratio	Instructor/Expert Certification
Target Paintball	B, J, C, S, A	B – 5:1 J, C, S, A – 10:1	One adult is trained in paintball safety, range rules, and emergency procedures.
Air/BB Guns	B, J, C, S, A	B – 5:1 J, C, S, A – 10:1	One adult is a certified RSO or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Rifle	Age 12 & older	8:1	One adult is a certified RSO or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Shotgun, Trap, Skeet Shooting	Age 12 & older	8:1	One adult is a certified RSO or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Muzzle Loading	Age 12 & older	2:1	One adult is a certified RSO or USA Shooting Sports instructor.
Pistol	Age 14 & older	4:1	One adult is a certified RSO or USA Shooting Sports instructor.

Note: Automatic firearms are not permitted at any time.

About Shooting Sports/Guns

Why teach shooting sports? Handling a gun safely and good marksmanship develop positive traits such as patience, discipline, determination, focus, attention to detail, and persistence. Since these skills are key elements of leadership and confidence, we encourage Girl Scouts to take what they learn from any sport or activity and apply it in their lives, communities, and the world.

We recognize the risks that accompany shooting sports. Learning how to handle guns properly and safely is of paramount importance, as is the healthy respect members will develop when properly trained in shooting sports. There are a variety of styles and sizes of guns, which are used for different age levels. The guns members will be learning on are for the express purpose of safe target shooting. Girl Scouts are not permitted to hunt.

As of 2023, firearms are the number one cause of death for children in the United States. Given this statistic, families may have strong feelings about their child holding or being around firearms. Engage in open dialogue and actively listen to all families about their comfort and concerns before proceeding. Each family must determine whether or not their Girl Scout should participate. There should be no judgment in any case.



Note: Refer to [Target and Shooting Sports Master Progression Chart](#) for age and grade level requirements. Written permission must be obtained by your Girl Scout council in advance of the activity. Once approved, you must have written permission from a parent/guardian before a Girl Scout is permitted to participate in target shooting.

Learn More

Safety regarding various shooting sports/events: [USA Shooting](#)

Safety at home and on the range: [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#)

Safe shooting certification: [USA Clay Target SAFE Certification](#)

Include Girl Scout Members with Disabilities. Talk to Girl Scout members with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations. Always be sure to contact the location and/or the instructor in advance to ensure they are able to accommodate those with disabilities. Visit [Move United](#) for resources about adaptive shooting.

Equity. Consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the Girl Scout members in your troop that could affect their ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with members and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all Girl Scout members and their families feel comfortable and have access to whatever is needed to fully participate, such as proper equipment, prior experiences, and the skills needed to enjoy the activity. See the [Equity](#) section of the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for general advice about expense,

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) before starting any activity and review it so all are prepared. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury, missing person, sudden illness, or sudden weather or water emergencies.

Shooting Sports/Guns Checkpoints

Assess participants' maturity level. Participants must be old enough to understand safety procedures and handle equipment so as not to endanger themselves or others.

Verify instructor knowledge and experience. One adult needs to be a certified National Rifle Association Range Safety Officer (RSO) or USA Shooting Sports instructor or have equivalent certification or documented experience and skill teaching/supervising firearm safety or shooting sports according to your council's guidelines.

Note: The instructor-to-participant ratio is different from the adult-to-youth ratio that is found in [Introduction: Standard Safety Guidelines](#). Both the instructor ratio and the adult-to-youth ratio must be complied with when members are participating in target sports.



Connect with your Girl Scout council for approved

sites. Groups are required to use council-approved indoor and outdoor firing ranges. Your council must approve all sites in advance.

Keep in mind that safe sites include those where:

Equipment is stored in a box, closet, or cabinet and locked when not in use.

Ammunition and firearms are stored in separate, locked containers or areas with different locks and combinations.

Caliber firearms have working trigger locks for storage (exceptions: BB and air guns).

Equipment, including targets, is checked each time and is in good condition.

Clear safety signals and range commands to control the activity are posted and taught to all participants in advance of stepping onto the range.

Backstops or a specific safety zone are set behind the targets.

Clearly delineated rear and side safety buffers are known to the entire facility population.

The shooting line is clearly defined.

At an indoor range, check that:

Targets are well-lit.

Doors or entries to the range are locked or blocked from the inside.

Fire exits are not blocked.

Equipment is properly sized for the shooters.

At an outdoor range, check that:

Targets are not placed in front of houses, roads, trails, or tents.

Areas with pedestrian traffic are avoided.

Areas are clear of brush. A hillside backstop is recommended.

The shooting area and the spectator area behind the shooting area are clearly marked.

In the shooting area, there is a safe distance at least 100 yards behind the targets and 30 yards on each side of the range.

The range is not used after nightfall.

Learn about shooting. Girl Scouts develop skills based on proper procedures and form, handling the equipment, getting the right stance, sighting, and observing safety practices.

Ensure firearms are always pointed in a safe direction. This is the primary rule of target shooting sport safety. A safe direction means that the firearm is pointed so that even if it were to go off it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control where the front end of the firearm is pointed, always.

On the Day of Shooting

Dress appropriately. Avoid wearing dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces that may become entangled in equipment. Tie back long hair.

Limit shooters' exposure to lead. For firearm sports, be sure that the range safety officer and/or the instructor provide wet wipes to cleanse hands and faces immediately after shooting. In addition, have participants wash their hands and faces with soap and cold water as soon as possible. Cold water keeps pores closed



so that less lead is absorbed into the bloodstream. Do not take casings as souvenirs.

Ensure the instructor reviews the rules and operating procedures with participants beforehand. The instructor covers safety procedures, including:

No dry firing, as it can damage equipment.

Keep the safety clip on until it is time to shoot.

Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, away from self and others.

Safety and Required Gear

Firearm ammunition

Targets

Safety glasses

Ear protection

Barrel-blocking device (sleeve) for paintball

Co2 or compressed air tank for paintball

Paintball hopper (loader) for paintball

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