



Ice Skating: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Ice skating is an exhilarating form of exercise and entertainment in the wintertime and year round—and a safe activity if precautions are taken. It's important to use skates that are properly fitted, securely laced, and properly tied. Figure skates are different from hockey skates and speed skates in that they have a higher top, which provides ankle support during jumps. Falling on the ice is the riskiest situation for skaters, but there are ways to avoid injury. For beginners, falling is part of the learning process and is in the first lesson. Learn tips to avoid injuries at SkatingFitness.com.

Know where to skate. The best places to skate are at an indoor or outdoor ice-skating rink. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Also, for regional ice-skating rinks, visit SkatingFitness.com or the [Ice Skating Institute's website](#). Girls may skate on a pond or lake (which will be far bumpier than a rink and may lead to more falling) with supervision, but may never skate on a stream or river. Consult with park personnel and local police to determine if the ice is safe for skating, before going on the ice. If unsure of the ice thickness, DO NOT skate on it. Girls may skate at night if the area is well lit.

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 [Skating Athletes Bold at Heart](#) and [US Figure Skating](#) provide to people with disabilities.

Ice Skating Gear

Required Gear:

- Ice skates

Recommended Gear:

- For outdoor skating, several layers of warm clothing that allow freedom of movement
- Thermal underwear
- Warm coat
- Stocking hat and scarf

- Gloves or mittens
- Change of socks
- Tissues
- Protective skate gear for beginners (helmet, wrist, elbow, knee pads)
- Sunscreen (SPF of at least 15 dependent on weather and if skating outdoors) and lip balm
- Sunglasses (dependent on weather and if skating outdoors)

Prepare for Ice Skating

- Communicate with council and parents.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Girls plan the activity.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Organize transportation and arrange for adult supervision.** For the recommended adult-to-girl ratios please see the *Introduction to the Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Adults keep a close watch on skaters from outside the main skating area. Check with the rink supervisor in advance to learn how many adults, in addition to the rink staff, are needed to supervise the group while on the ice.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** Practice sessions are scheduled for beginners, where an experienced ice-skating instructor instructs girls in basic ice-skating skills, safety, conduct rules, and has documented experience according to your council's guidelines, .
- Select a safe ice-skating site*.** Obtain council guidance in selecting the ice-skating site; established ice-skating rinks are safest. Ensure that the rink has a smooth skating surface free of debris. Skating surfaces are checked in advance for thickness, and to ensure there are no patches of grass, rocks, and cracks. The rink supervisor is called in advance to arrange for large groups or for practice sessions.
- Compile key contacts.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Prepare for emergencies.** Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider (level 1) 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 as well as abrasions, near drowning, and immersion hypothermia. 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. Basic ice rescue techniques are understood and practiced. Appropriate rescue equipment is on hand for pond and lake skating and includes ring buoy, rope, throw bag, pole, ladder, boat, etc. (indoor rinks do not require such equipment). See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.

On the Day of Ice 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. 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.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Safeguard valuables.** See the *Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints*.
- Warm up for ice skating.** Girls learn to perform basic skating skills, including how to fall and get up, before attempting more advanced skills. Gentle warm-up exercises are done before any strenuous ice skating; cool-down exercises end the sessions.
- Follow basic ice-skating safety standards*.** Follow rink rules, such as:
 - Everyone skates in the same direction.
 - Girls do not stop in the main skating area.
 - 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 on the ice.

- A falling skater does not grab hold of another skater.
- A fallen skater rises quickly, unless injured.
- Loose or sharp articles, such as handbags, combs, and keys are not carried in pockets, hands, hair, or any place where they might cause injury to the skater in the event of a fall, or injure another skater by falling to the floor.

Ice Skating Links

- Ice Skating Institute: www.skateisi.com
- U.S. Figure Skating: www.usfigureskating.org

Ice Skating Know-How for Girls

- **Learn ice-skating techniques.** Learn about ice-skating turns, spins and jumps at iceskate.net, and how to fall and stop at www.skatingfitness.com.

***These checkpoints must be reviewed with the vendor and/or facility, when appropriate.**