



Arts and Crafts: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Whether girls are painting, knitting, bookbinding, sculpting, making origami or jewelry, or doing any one of a number of arts and crafts, the options for artistic self-expression are endless. Girls are encouraged to plan the details of their arts and crafts, and it's important that activities are appropriate to each girl's age, experience with tools, attention span, and the complexity of the project. Also keep environmental impact in mind; for instance, when doing arts and crafts outdoors, don't use materials such as glitter that will pollute campgrounds.

Know where to do arts and crafts. Connect with your Girl Scout council for site suggestions. Ensure that the location is well-ventilated.

Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that the [National Institute of Art and Disabilities](#) and [National Arts and Disability Center](#) provide to people with disabilities.

Required Gear for Arts and Crafts

- Protective face- and eye-safety equipment, such as masks, shatterproof lenses, eyeglass guards, or goggles are worn, when appropriate, for protection against sparks, dust, fumes, and debris.
- Due to a potential for extreme allergic reactions to latex, Girl Scouts recommends the use of vinyl or nitrile gloves when such gloves are necessary for a project.
- Any safety equipment indicated by industry standards—for example, heavy gloves when handling hot or sharp objects. For specific guidelines, see the Consumer Product Safety Commission's [Art and Craft Safety Guide](#).

- Long hair is tied back; girls do not wear loose clothing or jewelry when using machinery or tools with moving parts
- First-aid kit

Recommended Gear for Arts and Crafts

- Age-appropriate materials (for example, with younger girls, use water-based paints and products that are easily removed from clothes, and scissors with blunt ends).
- Clothing appropriate for the activity.

Prepare for Arts and Crafts

- Communicate with council and parents. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Girls plan the activity. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios. In addition, supervision is increased when advanced equipment, such as soldering irons, burners, or power saws, is used. Use of cutting tools, hammers, and spray paints is carefully supervised.
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience. For activities beyond those described in Girl Scout publications, the instructor must have skill in teaching arts and crafts and documented experience according to your council's guidelines, as outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*. The instructor teaches girls the basic skills and demonstrates the safe use and care of equipment—for example, cutting tools are used with the blade away from the body.
- Compile key contacts. See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Select a safe arts and crafts site. Ensure that:
 - Girls have sufficient space to move around while working, and that there is enough space for table work for each girl, when appropriate.
 - Work sites are well ventilated for activities involving hazardous materials and spray paints (for example, turpentine, spray fixatives and varnishes) or ceramic dust.
 - Flammable material is used only in work spaces away from ignition sources such as open flames, heaters, and candles.
 - Provision is made for proper and safe disposal of all waste materials.
 - Fire exits are clearly marked, and fire safety equipment is on hand.
 - Food and beverages are not consumed in activity areas.
- Prepare for emergencies. When specialized equipment, power machinery, or chemicals are being used, ensure the presence of a first-aider with a current certificate in first aid, including adult and child CPR or CPR/AED. Ensure a first-aid kit is available and that emergency procedures are clearly posted for swallowing a chemical, getting a chemical in the eyes, skin contact with a chemical, and so on. See *Volunteer Essentials* for information about first-aid standards and training.
- Use safe equipment and materials.
 - Art materials are purchased from reputable sources, such as school-supply houses. Product labels clearly indicate what the material is and how to write or call the manufacturer.
 - Girls never use donated or discarded material whose ingredients are not known, that are very old, or that are unlabeled since they may be toxic.
 - Care is taken to protect girls from dyes, pigments, preservatives, and other chemicals that may provoke allergies.
 - Girls who are physically or psychologically disabled, or who are on medication, may be at greater risk from toxic materials.
 - Kilns are ventilated, and children using them are directly supervised.

- Educate about potentially hazardous materials. The following materials may be used only after girls have received adequate safety instruction:
 - Dusts or powders that can be inhaled or that can get in the eyes
 - Organic solvents, volatile glues, or solvent-containing products such as aerosol sprays
 - Anything that stains the skin or clothing (or that cannot be washed out of clothing)
 - Acids, alkalis, bleaches, or other irritating or corrosive chemicals
 - Review the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) of any chemical before deciding to use it. Follow instructions provided.
 - Ensure that girls wash their hands after using supplies labeled “hazardous.”
 - If transferring hazardous materials to another container, ensure this container is labeled “hazardous.”

On the Day of the Arts and Crafts Activity

- **Get a weather report.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints
- **Use the buddy system.** See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Exercise caution when handling and storing equipment and supplies.
 - Equipment and supplies are locked in a storage area whenever possible. Safety and operating instructions for dangerous equipment (for example, power tools and kilns) are reviewed and posted.
 - Scissors, knives, and other cutting tools are cleaned, oiled, and sharpened, as needed.
 - Flammable materials, such as paints and solvents, are labeled and stored in a dry, well-ventilated area out of the reach of young children. Equipment and supplies are used for their intended purpose only. Turpentine or paint thinner may be used as a paint solvent with adequate ventilation. Gasoline is never used as a paint solvent.
 - Solvent- or oil-soaked rags are kept in waste cans that meet fire safety codes and are emptied daily.
 - Containers of solvents are covered. They evaporate quickly, and inhalation can be hazardous.
 - Manufacturers’ labels on paints, chemicals, and aerosol cans are read before product use. These substances are used only in well-ventilated areas away from any open flames.
 - When transferring substances into other containers, label each container as to content and procedures for use and disposal.
 - When girls gather natural materials (such as leaves), conservation principles are taught and practiced.
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Arts-and-Crafts Links

- <http://lessonplans.craftgossip.com/>
- www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts
- <https://www.pinterest.com/>

Arts-and-Crafts Know-How for Girls

- **Select cool craft projects.** After discussing themes, available supplies, and techniques, create a list of potential projects and begin researching how to create the project. Perform keyword searches for the craft projects. These sites (among others) provide arts-and-craft projects: <http://lessonplans.craftgossip.com/>, www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts and www.pinterest.com.