

# Skiing and Snowboarding Safety Precautions

Skiing and snowboarding are increasingly more popular with each winter season. The following are tips to help you have a safe ski and snowboarding season.

## Tips for before you go skiing or snowboarding:

- Get into shape, don't ski yourself into shape.
- Obtain proper equipment. Be sure to have your ski or snowboarding bindings adjusted correctly at a local ski shop.
- When buying skiwear, look for fabric that is water and wind-resistant. Look for wind flaps to shield zippers, snug cuffs at wrists and ankles, collars that can be snuggled up to the chin and drawstrings that can be adjusted for comfort and aid in keeping the wind out.
- Dress in layers. Layering allows you to accommodate your body's constantly changing temperature. For example, dress in polypropylene underwear (tops and bottoms), which feels good next to the skin, dries quickly, absorbs sweat and keeps you warm. Wear a turtleneck, sweater and jacket.
- Be prepared. Bring a headband or hat with you to the slopes; remember that 60% of heat loss is through your head. Wear gloves or mittens.
- Wear sun protection. The sun reflects off the snow and is stronger than you think, even on cloudy days.
- Always wear eye protection. Have sunglasses and goggles with you. Skiing and snowboarding are a lot more fun when you can see.

## Tips for while you are on the slopes:

- Take a lesson. The best way to become a good skier or snowboarder is to take a lesson from a qualified instructor.
- The key to successful skiing/snowboarding is control. To have control, you must be aware of your technique, the terrain, and the skiers/snowboarders around you. Be aware of the snow conditions and how they can change. As conditions turn firm, the skiing gets hard and fast. Begin a run slowly.
- If you find yourself on a slope that exceeds your ability level, always leave your skis/snowboard on and side step down the slope.
- The all-important warm-up run prepares you mentally and physically for the day ahead.
- Drink plenty of water. Be careful not to become dehydrated.
- Curb alcohol consumption. Skiing and snowboarding require your total mental and physical presence, neither mixes well with alcohol or drugs.
- Know your limits. Stop before you become fatigued and most of all, have fun.

## **Code of Responsibility.**

Observe the code listed below and share with other skiers the responsibility for a great skiing experience.

- Always stay in control.
- People ahead of you have the right of way.
- Stop in a safe place for you and others.
- Whenever starting downhill or margining, look uphill and yield.
- Use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.
- Observe signs and warnings and keep off closed trails.
- Know how to use the lifts safely.

## **Skiers/Snowboarders Guide to Avalanche Safety**

Each person in your group should wear an avalanche beacon and know how to use it. Probes used in conjunction with beacons can be extremely helpful in locating a buried skier. Remember, a beacon will be of little help without a shovel. Be sure you carry a shovel as part of your gear. First and foremost, practice using your beacon. Time is of the essence in an avalanche rescue. The average victim has less than 30 minutes to be recovered alive. This means finding the victim and then digging through the snow to recover the victim. Practice by playing "hide and go peep" before each trip. One person hides a transceiver, says, "whoops, I lost my transceiver in the snow somewhere over there." Then see how long it takes to recover it.

It is the responsibility of backcountry skiers to be prepared for any emergency. The ski patrol won't be there to rescue you. This means you must carry extra food, water, clothing, first aid supplies and any medications you might need.

Backcountry skiers also become lost. Always carry a map and compass. Pay attention to your surroundings, don't ski yourself into oblivion.

Of course the best way to survive an avalanche is to avoid one in the first place. Before you go out check your local avalanche conditions. The National Weather Service is clearly a skier's best friend.