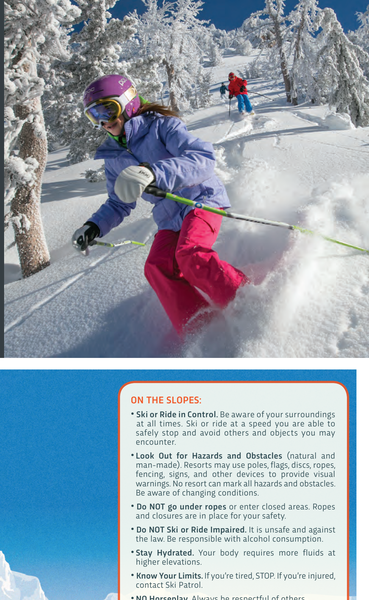
MOUNTAIN SAFETY GUIDE



Ski California and its member resorts in California and Nevada designed this guide to educate our guests on how to ski and snowboard responsibly and safely. Please review the information provided and follow these guidelines on and off the slopes to enhance both the fun and safety of all guests.

BEFORE YOU SKI OR RIDE:

- Know YOUR RESPONSIBILITY CODE.
- Wear a properly fitted helmet with the chin strap securely tightened to help prevent or minimize injuries.
- Use properly maintained equipment. Have bindings inspected and correctly adjusted by a certified technician.
- Dress in water– and wind-resistant outerwear and layers to accommodate changing conditions.
- Use sunscreen and wear goggles or sunglasses. The sun at altitude is intense, even on cloudy days.
- Skiing and snowboarding are active sports. Know your physical limits.
- Take a lesson. Every experience level can benefit from professional instruction.

ON THE SLOPES:

- **Ski or Ride in Control.** Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Ski or ride at a speed you are able to safely stop and avoid others and objects you may encounter.
- **Look Out for Hazards and Obstacles** (natural and man-made). Resorts may use poles, flags, discs, ropes, fencing, signs, and other devices to provide visual warnings. No resort can mark all hazards and obstacles. Be aware of changing conditions.
- **Do NOT go under ropes** or enter closed areas. Ropes and closures are in place for your safety.
- **Do NOT Ski or Ride Impaired.** It is unsafe and against the law. Be responsible with alcohol consumption.
- **Stay Hydrated.** Your body requires more fluids at higher elevations.
- **Know Your Limits.** If you're tired, STOP. If you're injured, contact Ski Patrol.
- **NO Horseplay.** Always be respectful of others.
- **Look Out for Over-Snow Vehicles.** They may be on the slopes heading uphill or downhill, so stay clear of them at all times.

AVALANCHE AWARENESS:

- Many ski resorts have avalanche-prone terrain, and the risk of avalanches cannot be completely eliminated.
- Ski Patrols use a variety of techniques and equipment for avalanche mitigation, including explosives. Avalanche mitigation may require terrain closures and delay opening. For your safety, never enter a closed area.
- Snow conditions constantly change as a result of wind, temperature, new snowfall, and skier/snowboarder use. Snow movement – from small sloughs to larger avalanches – can occur both in and out of bounds, particularly when skiing or riding in or near steeper terrain.
- If you leave the ski area boundary, which is illegal at some resorts, you do so at your own risk. Areas outside the boundary are neither controlled nor patrolled, and ski patrol is under no obligation to conduct a rescue. Avalanche education, proper equipment, and a partner are essential if you choose to enter the backcountry. Contact your local avalanche center or visit the Ski California website for more information.

DEEP SNOW SAFETY:

Fresh snow is fun, but it also creates additional risks.

- **Avoid Tree Wells.** These are voids or depressions in the snow that form around the base of a tree and are often hidden by low branches. Skiers and riders can fall into these wells and die. To avoid tree wells, steer clear of trees and stay in control.
- **Stay With a Buddy.** Always maintain visual contact and stay close enough that you can pull or dig each other out of deep snow.
- **Carry Information.** Have ski patrol phone numbers so you can quickly call for help (but be aware of areas without cell coverage).

TRAIL SIGNAGE:

Trail maps contain a wealth of information, including trail and lift locations, trail difficulty rating symbols, and where to find information, ski patrol, and other mountain services. Trail difficulty ratings are relative to each resort's specific terrain. A blue square trail at one resort may be easier or more difficult than a blue square trail at another resort. Work your way up from easier to more difficult trails. When in doubt about a trail or what type of terrain a particular lift serves, ask resort staff for guidance.

Trail rating symbols indicate the difficulty level of terrain. Here's what they mean:

- **Green Circle:** Easier
- **Blue Square:** More Difficult
- **Black Diamond:** Most Difficult
- **Double-Black Diamond:** Experts Only
- **Orange Oval:** Freestyle Terrain

LIFT SAFETY

LOADING

- Remove pole straps from wrists and hold in one hand. Remove backpacks and hold in your lap. Remove back foot from snowboard binding.
- Be lined up with other guests and prepared to load before moving forward from the "Wait Here" area.
- After the chair in front passes, move from the "Wait Here" area to the "Load Here" area.
- At the "Load Here" area, look back and grab the part of the chair that is easiest for you, typically a side bar or backrest.

RIDING

- When a restraint bar is available, tell others and lower the bar when you can do so safely.
- SIT BACK and remain seated.
- NO HORSEPLAY.
- Do not turn around, or otherwise move on the chair, even if the lift slows or stops. Never jump from the chair.

UNLOADING

- Check for loose clothing or equipment (such as backpacks) to make sure it will not get caught.
- If a restraint bar is lowered, tell others and then raise the bar before the "Unload Here" area.
- Keep your ski tips or the front of your board up and straight ahead.
- After unloading, move away from the unload ramp.
- If you fail to unload at the "Unload Here" area, remain completely seated and wait for further assistance. DO NOT JUMP.

If you need assistance or there is a problem, SPEAK UP, and tell a lift operator.

MOUNTAIN SAFETY IS A PARTNERSHIP

This Mountain Safety Guide is designed to help you – our valued guests and partners in safety – ski or snowboard safely and responsibly while having a fun experience with your family and friends. We are committed to addressing safety every day and in every facet of our operations. This guide is part of that commitment. Learning and practicing what is contained in this guide, using common sense, and making good decisions will contribute to your safety and the safety of all guests.

Skiing and snowboarding are active and exciting outdoor sports with inherent risks that cannot be eliminated, including the risk of serious injury and death. Because of these risks, it is YOUR responsibility to be aware of your surroundings, the conditions, and your ability.

Most skiing and snowboarding incidents result from skiers or riders traveling too fast or beyond their ability. The most common serious injuries result from colliding with objects or other people at a high speed. You can reduce the likelihood of injury on the slopes if you slow down and are able to stop to safely avoid objects and people at all times.

For more information on all aspects of safety, please visit: skicalifornia.org/safety and nsaa.org/safety-programs

PARK SMART

Start Small
Work your way up. Build your skills.

Make a Plan
Every feature. Every time.

Always Look
Before you drop.

Respect
The features and other users.

Take it Easy
Know your limits. Land on your feet.

Terrain parks offer unique challenges and risks. Every park is different and it is important to use features that meet your ability. All users should educate themselves on Park SMART.

Parents, make sure you understand Park SMART and ensure your kids are educated on the proper use of terrain parks and their features.

IT'S THE LAW:

It is illegal to ski or ride in a CLOSED area. (Cal. Penal Code 602(r); NRS 455.100(8))

It is illegal to leave the incident scene if involved in a collision, except to notify and obtain ski patrol assistance. (Cal. Penal Code 653i; NRS 455.170)

SKI CALIFORNIA
www.skicalifornia.org

Ski California is the Official Home of California & Nevada Winter Sports

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY CODE

- Always stay in control, and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
- People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
- You must not stop where you obstruct a trail, or are not visible from above.
- Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others.
- Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.
- Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
- Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely.

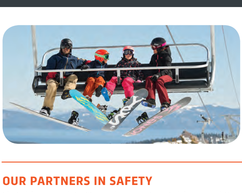
View video

KNOW THE CODE

OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

- We provide guest education on how to ski and snowboard responsibly.
- We offer ski and snowboard lessons from qualified instructors.
- We staff a trained ski patrol to provide first aid, assess mountain safety, post warnings, close trails, and conduct avalanche mitigation (when necessary).
- We conduct ongoing lift inspections and maintenance, work with regulatory agencies, and staff trained lift operations personnel to operate lifts.
- We monitor weather and mountain conditions and modify operations when appropriate.
- We provide trail difficulty rating symbols relative to a resort's specific terrain.
- We use required and industry approved signage to help direct and educate guests.

MOUNTAIN SAFETY GUIDE



"Your Responsibility Code" requires that "Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely." If you are unsure of your knowledge or ability, please ask for assistance before using a lift. Lift incidents are almost always avoidable. The best way to avoid a lift incident is to pay attention to loading, riding, and unloading. Be prepared to load and ride before you get to the "Load Here" area. Focus only on the lift and the loading process, not on your mobile device or any other distractions.

Make sure you are properly seated with your back against the seatback when you load, lower the restraint bar when available, remain properly seated during your entire ride, unload at the "Unload Here" area, and move to an area where you are clear from other guests unloading.

VIEW THE MAP FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LIFT SAFETY

OUR PARTNERS IN SAFETY

Ski California and its 32 member resorts in California and Nevada would like to thank our partners for their effort and dedication to support snow sport safety:

If you would like a print copy of the Mountain Safety Guide, please send an email to info@skicalifornia.org with your shipping address.