

Skiing Safety

According to the National Ski Areas Association, while “less dangerous than other high-energy participation sports,” about 42 people die and about 45 people are seriously injured each year skiing and snowboarding. Excess speed, loss of control and collisions with stationary objects, like a tree or lift tower, are the most common factors associated with fatalities.

National Safety Council advises all skiers and snowboarders take the time to review proper skills and safety techniques.

- Get in shape for the season, and not just the week before a ski trip; a regular exercise routine will help reduce fatigue and injury.
- Beginners should invest in proper instruction, including learning how to fall and get back up; experienced skiers should take a refresher course.
- Always know the weather conditions before heading to the slopes; time of day can also affect visibility and make obstacles difficult to see.
- Give skiers in front of you the right of way; they most likely can't see you.
- If you have to stop, stop on the side of a run, not in the middle.
- Look both ways and uphill before crossing a trail, merging or starting down a hill.
- Use skis with brakes or a snowboard with a leash to prevent runaway equipment
- Never ski on closed runs or out of boundaries because these areas are not monitored and there

is no way to know what the snow conditions are; a rogue skier could even cause an avalanche.

- Skiers and snowboarders, no matter how experienced, should never ski alone. Nor should they ski off the designated trails.

Helmets Can Prevent Injuries

- According to the NSAA, 67 percent of skiers wore helmets regularly during the 2011-12 season. That is an increase of 10% over the previous year. Helmets reduce head injuries between 30% and 50%.
- Even though helmet use has increased, there has not been a corresponding decrease in fatalities over the past decade. Traumatic brain injuries still can occur with helmet use; severe injury and death is prevented by avoiding risk-taking behaviors.

Look Good and Be Safe with Proper Gear

- Skiers and snowboarders also should select quality equipment. Improperly fitted or misadjusted gear can cause injury, so it's best to ask for expert advice when purchasing and fitting boots, bindings and skis.
- While trendy ski apparel looks good on the slopes, clothing should be functional. Wear bright colors, dress in layers and make sure outerwear is made of fabric that is not only water repellent, but slide-resistant.

Following these basic safety tips will go a long way toward ensuring that next powder run isn't your last.

Source: National Safety Council



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www.ndsc.org

The North Dakota Safety Council is a private non-profit organization supported through grants, donations, memberships and training.

