

SKI INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES

Reducing Staff Skiing & Snowboarding Injuries

Scope: Pertains to all employees who may ski or snowboard during their workday, including those that ski or snowboard to their worksite. This may include but is not limited to snow school instructors, patrol, trail/park crews, lift operations, food & beverage (ie mountain top operations), events/marketing (fam tours).

This Guide is intended as a resource in your efforts to create a safe and enjoyable work environment. It is a compilation of information from ski area personnel and other industry professionals.

This document is not intended to be dictate requirements and should not be interpreted as a standard. It contains “informational” resources and examples that may be updated, revised or withdrawn at any time. While thought to be accurate and functional, it is provided without warranty of any kind.

Operations will vary from area to area. Deviation from the information presented may be dictated by the circumstances of each unique situation and by the policies, procedures and protocols of each individual ski area. Laws, regulations and policies may also vary in different jurisdictions.

This document is for internal ski area use only and not for external circulation.

SUPERVISOR AND MANAGER BEST PRACTICES:

- Ensure **hazard assessment** is done on each role, to develop controls specific to your ski area.
- **Employee ski/snowboard level assessments** – are you employees competent to be skiing or snowboarding in their role? Do you have measures to assess their ability? Do they have appropriate equipment? Is their equipment in good working order?
- Develop **designated routes**, and ensure that all employees have received your policy for skiing and snowboarding during their workday.
- Conduct ‘**Safety Talk**’ meetings on a regular basis to discuss ways to reduce skiing and snowboarding injuries. Review the tips in the “Reducing Skiing and Snowboarding Injuries” Safety Talk. Discuss with the employees the most common injuries experienced at your Ski Area, case studies and ways everyone can contribute to reducing injuries.
- Support your employees to **live healthy lives** - Build and maintain a program for (or culture of) fitness, nutrition and wellness.
 - Do you have water available at each job site, is there a healthy staff meal that employees can purchase?
 - What pre-shift warm up practices are in place. Is there a team warm up and stretch? Are there tools available for self-directed warm-ups?
- Have **alternative work options**.
 - Employees working in physical environments may need recovery from fatigue and minor strains. Providing options for alternative work (or a different work site or travel method) will support employees to voluntarily choose an “alternate work” day, rather than develop an injury.
 - If a minor medical claim occurs, if the employee is able to complete his shift with alternate work, be sure that first-aid and supervisors are aware of the process and alternate work options so that the employee can be immediately assigned alternate work.

INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES

Considerations for Ski Area Employee Handbooks

Considerations for All workers:

- All workers must use modern ski or snowboard **equipment** which fits properly and is free from defect or fault. Workers must keep their equipment in a well-tuned condition.
- All workers must know and adhere to the [Alpine Responsibility Code](#), skiing or boarding in a safe and controlled manner.
- **Terrain / Rail Park** – Access to the terrain/rail park by non-authorized staff is prohibited while on duty. Contact your supervisor prior to entering the terrain park for clarification.
- All workers (must/should – *edit based on Province/resort policy*) wear a **helmet**. In BC, [OHS Guideline G8.11\(2\)-2](#) requires all employees wear a helmet when skiing or snowboarding.
- Any other skiing or riding done during a worker’s workday that is beyond the scope of required travel for the position, is not under the supervision of a Supervisor or Manager, and is at the employee’s own risk.

Considerations for workers who ski or ride to or from their ‘job post’ or for other job purposes, where skiing or snowboarding is not the primary part of their job (ie this does not pertain to patrol and snow school):

- All travel is to be done on **designated routes** unless asked for and authorized by the supervisor or lead hand. If there is any doubt as to the designated route at any time, it is the employee’s responsibility to clarify this with their Supervisor or Manager.
- Workers must be **capable of skiing or snowboarding** the designated routes. Note: *Many ski areas do ski/snowboard ability tests at the start of season. The ski school could perform these tests, and make record for employee file.*
- Workers should **travel via their strongest discipline** (ski or board) and must not learn a new discipline while traveling at the worksite.
- All workers must ski at a **reasonable speed** and not partake in jumps, man-made or natural and must not do tricks of any kind. **Equipment must stay on the ground at all times.**
- Workers are not permitted to venture off the designated route, including into the adjacent trees or natural “hits” on the side of the ski run.
- Workers should descend in small groups after hours.
- **Downloading** (when and where available) is the recommended method of travel to and from the work site and is considered a part of the designated route. Lift operators must/should ride up and down to their workstation, unless where unavailable.

IF there is an injury or incident:

- Employees are required to **immediately report** all workplace injuries/incidents to their immediate Supervisor/Manager. Under no circumstances shall an employee leave the site without reporting an injury.
- Employees must report to First-Aid from the employer, prior to seeking alternate medical attention.

Other considerations for your staff policy:

- Any skiing or snowboarding done outside of your work-time (ie during breaks, on days off), must not be done while wearing a company **uniform**.

MORE RESOURCES

- Your ski areas policies, procedures and employee manual
- Ski Area Safety Talk: Snowsports Injury Reduction (download from go2hr.ca/skisafety)
- Ski Area Safety Talk: Knee Injury Reduction(download from go2hr.ca/skisafety)
- [The Alpine Responsibility Code](#)
- [SkiRad](#) –Ski exercises. An app can also be downloaded from the app store.
- [Fit for Snow](#) – Health & Wellness program for the ski industry.
- WorkSafe BC – Helmets [OHS Guidelines G8.11 \(2\)-2](#)
- Poster: “Before you hit the slopes” (download from go2hr.ca/skisafety)
- Videos: The story of Mike Shaw, injured ski coach. WorkSafeBC Listen to your gut: <https://youtu.be/yruBXg5k-EU>
- More Ski Area Safety Resources: www.go2hr.ca/skisafety