

## EMPLOYEE HANDOUT

### Preventing Injuries during Lift Operations

The goal of this Safety Talk is to reduce Lift Operations worker injuries. Nearly 20% of all employee injuries on ski hills are in lift operations. The most common injuries occur when lift operators are struck by moving machinery, equipment or people around the load/unload zones of the lifts. Lift operators must be properly trained on all equipment and machines prior to use and be familiar with all hazards related to lift operations.

Skiing and snowboarding to, from and between lift stations is also a significant cause of injuries for lift operators. Employees should familiarize themselves with the Reducing Skiing and Snowboarding Injuries Safety Talk.

Please note, this safety talk focuses on the safety and reduction of injuries to the lift operator (employee). Please ensure you review your procedure manuals for other operating guidelines and guest safety best practices.

### Examples of Risk Factors

- Hit by carrier (chair, gondola cabin, t-bar)
- Contact with guest (hit by person or their gear)
- Slips, trips, falls, falls from height (e.g. ladder)
- Repetitive injuries, over-exertion, cold or sun exposure
- Overhead hazards (falling snow/ice, wires)

### Safety Tips

Ensure you are Fit for Duty. Maintain your **health and wellness** at all times. Come to work **well rested, hydrated** and **fed**. Staying physically **fit for the job, warming up** your muscles prior to work, and taking a **short break** when you become fatigued will go a long way towards preventing strains.

Follow your ski area's policies for **opening lifts** and ensure communication systems are working (e.g. with other lift station, dispatch).

Follow the **safe work procedures** for the job. Ask if you are unsure. Report any concerns regarding unsafe work practices or environments to a supervisor immediately.

Only trained and **authorized** individuals are permitted to perform lift maintenance, including working at heights.

**Be aware of changing weather** including wind and snow conditions.

**Rotate your eyes** and ears between the 3 main spots: wait line, load line and up to the first tower.

Know where the closest **stop button** is. Stay within range of all controls, at all times while the chair is operating.

Determine the **timing between carriers**, spacing and the stopping distance so you know how much time you have between carriers to work on the ramp, help guests, etc. before the next carrier swings around.

Never go on to or around any **moving lift component** without informing the drive station operator and ensuring the lift is secure. Refer to applicable area-specific procedures.

If a staff member is working in the head trap, **slow or stop the lift**. When possible, **shovel head traps** while the lift is not in motion, or is at least slowed with a spotter. Helmets are mandatory in many head-traps, (check your ski area policy). When **retrieving a dropped item**, it is recommended to enter the head trap from the side while a coworker stops the lift. Retrieve the item then exit at the side so the coworker can restart the lift immediately.

**Stay behind or to the side of the carrier** – not in the pathway. Never turn your back to the lift.

When **flipping seats** up or down, if they resist, leave it or stop the lift. Make a note on the lift log. Ensure you have no loose clothing that could be caught in a chair.

# SKI AREA SAFETY TALK

## BE AWARE, PREPARED AND ALERT FOR THE JOB

**Dress in layers** appropriate for the weather and job. Wear **personal protective equipment (PPE)** including well-fitting footwear with non-skid soles, eye protection and gloves. Avoid loose clothing, jewelry or hairstyles that can catch in lifts, machinery or be grabbed by a guest. Long hair should be tied back. Items such as suspenders around the waist or loose/exposed ties on gloves can put operators at risk. Lift operators should not wear ski boots in mazes or at lift stations.

**Keep your station clean.** Store equipment properly in the designated tool spots, out of your way, to ensure operators and guests do not step/trip on them.

**Maintain snow conditions on load/unload ramps.** Call your supervisor before ramp conditions deteriorate beyond your control. During changeover of operators, spend additional time on ramp work while the other operator acts as a spotter.

Be aware of snow and ice loads on buildings and lift terminal and the **risk of falling objects**. Remove if appropriate/possible. Report concerns and hazards to your supervisor.

Avoid **repetitive strain** injuries by varying the work being performed. Take breaks, ask for help when required, and use proper posture to prevent injuries. Consider switching to your less dominant hand for brief periods of time until proficient in both.

**Always stay alert.** Do not listen to personal music devices while operating a lift (e.g. iPods and cell phones) or while on duty. No horseplay, practical jokes, or throwing things.

## Additional Resources

- Your ski area policy and procedures.
- Safety Talk: [Reducing ski & snowboard injuries](#)
- CWSAA Minimum Lift Operations Procedures
- More Ski Area Safety Resources: [go2hr.ca/skisafety](http://go2hr.ca/skisafety)

## ASSISTING GUESTS

**Be proactive.** Identify guests who may have trouble loading the lift, and ask them if they need assistance to prevent mis-loads. **Communicate** to the top operator regarding guests who may have difficulty unloading. When guests are loading efficiently, there is little need to be in the carriers' travel path.

**Communication with guests** is key to reduce the need for lift operators' physical interaction with passengers. Be vocal and adopt the use of clear hand gestures as instructions (especially for noisy lifts). Slow the lift if necessary.

**Instructional signage** for guests can help reduce confusion and loading issues that require lift operator interactions. Ensure lift lineup cues are well defined (how many people per chair), and provide instructional signage (remove backpacks and pole straps) and "load here" signs and lines.

If a **guest falls while unloading**, slow or stop the lift before you attempt to help. Always stop the lift if the guest is in danger of being hit by the carrier or the persons unloading from the next chair. Assist the fallen guest by instructing them to (or help them) remove their equipment. Never try to help an adult up with their skis/board still on. Ask another staff member for assistance to help larger guests to their feet if required.

Until the operator is proficient at **assisting small guests**, slow/stop the lift. Be cautious to not twist your body while lifting children onto a chair. Be aware that many kids "deadweight" as soon as you begin to lift them and this may pose extra challenges. **Communication** with the children helps to ensure they are ready for the chair.

- Lifting from behind the carrier is a good option for taller children on many lifts (not all).
- Another option is to load children on the outside of the chair closest to the operator.