

Safety

Shots

Safety is no Accident!

Knowing the Code to Ski and Ride Safely

Linda Johnston

Winter sports can be thrilling but also come with inherent risks. Not only is proper training essential for skiers and riders to navigate the slopes safely, but it is also important to follow established rules and safety protocols to reduce the risk of accidents. And don't forget, using well-maintained skis and safety gear is crucial for preventing injuries. Skiing and riding can be safe recreational activities when practiced responsibly. Here are some key points to consider for safety:

1. **Wear Proper Gear:** Always use appropriate safety equipment, such as helmets, pads, and suitable clothing for the conditions.
2. **Know Your Limits:** Be aware of your skill level and choose activities that match your abilities. Don't hesitate to take lessons if you're a beginner.
3. **Stay Informed:** Check weather conditions, avalanche risks, and trail information before heading out.
4. **Follow Rules and Guidelines:** Adhere to posted signs and guidelines at ski resorts or other venues. They are there for your safety.
5. **Stay Hydrated and Energized:** Keep your energy levels up and stay hydrated, especially in cold conditions.
6. **Buddy System:** Whenever possible, participate in winter sports with a friend or group for added safety.
7. **Emergency Preparedness:** Know how to contact ski patrol or emergency services before you head out and carry a basic first aid kit.

These safety guidelines are essential for ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience while participating in winter sports.

1. **Stay in Control:** Always be able to stop or maneuver to avoid obstacles and other people.
2. **Right-of-Way:** Yield to those ahead of you on the slope; they have the right-of-way.
3. **Visible Stopping:** Only stop in areas where you are visible to others and don't block traffic.
4. **Look Uphill:** Check for others before heading downhill or entering a new trail.
5. **Prevent Runaway Equipment:** Secure your gear to prevent it from rolling away.
6. **Obey Signs:** Follow all posted signs and hazard warnings.
7. **Closed Areas:** Stay off trails and areas that are marked as closed.
8. **Lift Safety:** Know how to safely use lifts; ask for help if needed.
9. **Avoid Impairment:** Do not use lifts or participate in activities while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
10. **Incident Protocol:** If an accident occurs, exchange contact information and report it to a ski area employee.

By adhering to these guidelines, you contribute to a safer environment for yourself and others on the slopes.

When practiced responsibly, skiing is generally safe. Here are some key points to consider:

1. **Proper Training:** Skiers who receive instruction and understand the techniques are better equipped to handle the slopes safely.
2. **Adhering to Rules:** Following established guidelines and safety protocols significantly reduces the risk of accidents.
3. **Maintained Equipment:** Using well-maintained skis and safety gear is crucial for preventing injuries.

By focusing on safety and proper practices, skiers can enjoy the sport while minimizing risks.

Linda Johnston is a long-time skier and ski club activist and has led many group trips to ski destinations in North and South America. She raised her two sons on Arizona and Colorado ski hills. Linda is a doctor of physical therapy, practicing in orthopedics for over 40 years in Phoenix, Arizona.