

Snow-Sport

Risk Assessment

Updated: 18 December 2023

Snow-sports are a fun-filled activity and thousands of us head away each year to enjoy our time on the slopes and in the mountains.

However, there is an inherent risk when entering a mountain environment and this risk assessment looks to address some of these risks as follows:

1. Raise awareness of possible risks;
2. Look at ways to mitigate the risk;
3. Pro-active steps we can take ahead of any given activity

Please note that the evaluation of risk is a fluid and ongoing activity and that members of your team should be tasked with its continuous monitoring so that an informed and well-judged decision can be made.

It should also be noted that this risk assessment has been put-together based on the activities planned by Energy Travel. Whilst the premise of the risk assessment can be extended to other activities, if you choose to undertake your own activities and deviate from the planned itinerary, it is your duty to ensure that all risks and hazards are managed effectively and that you take the appropriate steps.

Please ask all members of your group to review this document so that all accompanying members of staff are adequately prepared for their time away.

Alongside the specific activities you undertake please ensure you are monitoring your group's welfare in terms of:

- Fatigue – are you performing an activity after a long day or after a long journey?
- Group dynamic – is everyone focussed on the activity? Are any individuals hanging back or looking not to join in?
- Weather – what is the forecast for the time of the activity?
- Sustenance – has everyone eaten? Have you got access to food and drink for anyone that needs it?
- Access – is it clear how you are getting to the activity and how you are getting back? What will you do if the activity is cut short?
- Safety – are you clear on your course of action should something happen? Do you know where the nearest medical centre is? Do you have access to someone who can speak the local language?
- Physicality – can everyone physically perform the activity?

If you have any indication that something isn't right with any individual members of your group, modify the activity or let them sit out. All activities are meant to be fun so with a prepared team, forward planning and on-site assessment, everyone can have a safe and good time.

Over the following pages, we will expand on the ideas above and identify further things to consider when away and how the risk can be managed.

1. Weather

By their very nature ski resorts are located in high hills and mountains. This means that they often see extreme temperatures and quick changes in weather.

Ahead of your trip, you should provide a full list of recommended clothing including specific ski clothing but also leisurewear as you may also be heading out in the evening for après ski activities.

For a suggested kit-list, please contact info@energy-travel.com

However, despite having to deal with the cold-weather, remember that on a sunny day, members of your group are exposed to the sun as well as the selective glare for the snow and so sunblock and suitable eye-wear is needed by all members of the group.

We recommend that at least one spare pair of key equipment is brought each ski day in case someone loses or breaks it. This equipment includes but is not limited to:

Hat
Goggles
Sun-glasses
Snood
Gloves
Thick Socks
Sunblock

Risks and countermeasures of extreme weather are as follows:

Risk	Countermeasure
Extreme Cold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Forewarn group of cold temperatures ✓ Ensure everyone leaves the hotel wearing adequate clothing* ✓ Have spare essentials with you ✓ Look for signs of hyperthermia
Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advise members of the group to wear sunblock
Glare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wear sunglasses or goggles
Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure everyone consumes water at regular intervals ✓ If students have a long ski lesson, ask instructor to stop half-way through for a drinks break
Altitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure everyone eats and drinks throughout the day ✓ Look for signs of altitude sickness such as dizziness, tiredness, headaches and shortness of breath

- We recommend that you put a checklist of all the key clothing needed each day on the back of every room door that your pupils occupy in the hotel. Make sure you include the items listed above and then everyone should come ready to leave with everything they need.

2. Physicality of Snowsports

Skiing is a fun and active thing to do. However, it's an activity being performed at altitude, in cold conditions and in a foreign environment. It also asks you to use muscle groups that often are used so even the most athletic member of your group needs to pay attention.

Risk	Countermeasure
Dangers of skiing alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pupils should always on the slopes by accompanied by an instructor or qualified adult ✓ Pupils should not look to ski beyond their capabilities ✓ Have one member of staff ski with each group and introduce a buddy system for the pupils
Physical demands of skiing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Get students to warm up ahead of lessons ✓ Tired students should rest as required ✓ One last run isn't always a good idea
Ski equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All equipment should be fitted by a qualified technician ✓ If boots feel loose, return to the ski shop, do not adjust your own equipment

3. Rules of the slopes

Each country has a comprehensive list of do's and don'ts whilst skiing. We recommend that you research these rules ahead of your trip.

However, these rules will include, but are not limited to, the following

Risk	Countermeasure
Speed of skiing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure students adapt their speed in line with their ability ✓ Ensure they are able to stop safely
Busy slopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be mindful of other skiers ✓ Pick your route carefully and proceed away from busy areas
Choosing where to ski	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stop at the top of a large slopes or above intersections to plan your route and tell your fellow skiers which way you are going
Priority on the slopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The person below/ahead you on the mountain has the right of way ✓ If you look to overtake, ensure there is plenty of space to do so
Stopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure you have plenty of space and time to stop ✓ Try and stop on one side of the slope ✓ Do not stop in the middle of a busy junction or over the lip of a hill where you will not be visible
Walking on the slopes or taking off your skis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Try and avoid walking, but if it is necessary, stay close to the side of the slopes and ensure your equipment is out of the way
Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Always obey vital mountain signs
Getting help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If you see or cause an accident, stop and see how you can help. You may have to ski to the nearest lift and raise the alarm – try and note where the incident took place so the mountain rescue can locate the incident as soon as possible

4. Rules of the slopes

Each country has a comprehensive list of do's and don'ts whilst skiing. We recommend that you research these rules ahead of your trip.

However, these rules will include, but are not limited to, the following

Risk	Countermeasure
Speed of skiing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure students adapt their speed in line with their ability ✓ Ensure they are able to stop safely
Busy slopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be mindful of other skiers ✓ Pick your route carefully and proceed away from busy areas
Choosing where to ski	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stop at the top of a large slopes or above intersections to plan your route and tell your fellow skiers which way you are going
Priority on the slopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The person below/ahead you on the mountain has the right of way ✓ If you look to overtake, ensure there is plenty of space to do so
Stopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure you have plenty of space and time to stop ✓ Try and stop on one side of the slope ✓ Do not stop in the middle of a busy junction or over the lip of a hill where you will not be visible
Walking on the slopes or taking off your skis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Try and avoid walking, but if it is necessary, stay close to the side of the slopes and ensure your equipment is out of the way
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4. Chairlifts

New skiers often move from the beginner slopes onto 'magic-carpets', 'pommel lifts' and then onto 'chairlifts'.

Instructors will help supervise this progression and lift operators will be there to assist you onto and off from the lifts. All chairlift companies have their own policies pertaining to lifts and each one will have strict guidelines as to how to use them safely. Please note that chairlifts, in particular, can vary, with some having no bar or footrest, some slow down upon arrival at the top of the mountain whilst others maintain the same speed throughout. If there is a bar then do not lift it until you reach the sign where it is indicated you should do so.

Please note that snowboarders should remove one foot from the board for all forms of lift.

5. Equipment

Unless members of your group have brought their own equipment, it will be provided by a local company and fitted by qualified technicians.

All skiers will be provided with 4 essential pieces of equipment – skis, boots, poles, helmets.

Boots - Well fitted boots are key to an enjoyable week. Look out for the following during skit

- Boots should be tight without hurting your feet
- There should be no pressure points
- Your boot will expand slightly throughout the day as it warms up so being slightly tight at skit is ok but it must still be comfortable
- Try on a few if you're not sure
- You can come back if you think you have boots that are too tight or too loose

Ski - Unless you are an experienced skier, the technicians will allocate you your skis. Typically the length, when stood up against you, should finish between your eyes and chin. If you are unsure, ask the technician

- The technician will allocate you the skis. You should only ask to change them if you have a legitimate reason to want to try something different
- Skis should have some elasticity as they need to bend and flex as you ski on them
- Bindings should hold the ski boot firmly in place
- You will need to know your height and weight
- When asked, tell them your true level of experience as they will choose your equipment and set the ski release level accordingly

Ski Poles – all skiers will be provided with poles, snowboarders will not. Please note:

- When holding your poles, your elbow should form a right-angle

Helmets – these are also essential and in most countries it is a legal requirement for children to wear them. We advise that all members of the group wear a helmet.

- Helmet fitting usually comes last in the skit process, however it is no-less important
- Try on a helmet and ensure it is comfortable and that the chin strap fits and is not too loose/tight
- Ask to try on more sizes if you are unsure

6. Après ski activities

A fun and fantastic part of your time away will involve evening activities. Some of these will be quiz nights or talent shows at your accommodation, others will be risk free activities such as bowling or pizza nights whilst others may involve supervision such as night skiing with your instructors.

All options require advance planning. Here are some considerations for outdoor activities available in the ski resorts.

Sledging / Snow Tubing	
Risk	Countermeasure
Cold weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure pupils are suitably clothed ✓ Check the forecast
High speed activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Demonstration to whole group before starting ✓ Participants should wear helmets ✓ Ensure supervisory staff are in attendance ✓ Are run-off barriers securely fitted? ✓ Are runs free for obstructions?
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Check equipment before use ✓ Listen to guidance on correct technique ✓ Report any damages

Ice Skating	
Risk	Countermeasure
Cold weather (if outdoors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure pupils are suitably clothed including helmet and gloves ✓ Check the forecast
High speed activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make sure everyone skates in the same direction around the rink ✓ Leave space for other skaters ✓ Observe any signs ✓ Skate at a sensible speed ✓ Do not drag beginner skaters ✓ Make sure no other activity such as ice hockey practice is going on at the same time
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure skates are the correct size and can be securely tied

	✓ Skates are sharp, make people aware of this
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Tobogganing*	
Risk	Countermeasure
Cold weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure pupils are suitably clothed including helmet and gloves ✓ Check the forecast
High speed activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make sure everyone pays attention to the safety briefing ✓ Keep hands within the toboggan

- ❖ Tobogganing refers to fixed track events. Any toboggan runs in which there is no fixed path and toboggans are free to head down the mountain without guidance is not covered by this risk assessment.

Please note that any externally operated swimming pool owner will have to complete paperwork in order for Energy Travel to offer their pool. We will insist that pools have an on-duty lifeguard and where this may not be possible, we will endeavour to inform you. We strongly advise that one member of your team is life-guard qualified and first-aid qualified.