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# TOUR MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK SNOWSPORTS

A practical guide for teachers to manage safety on tour

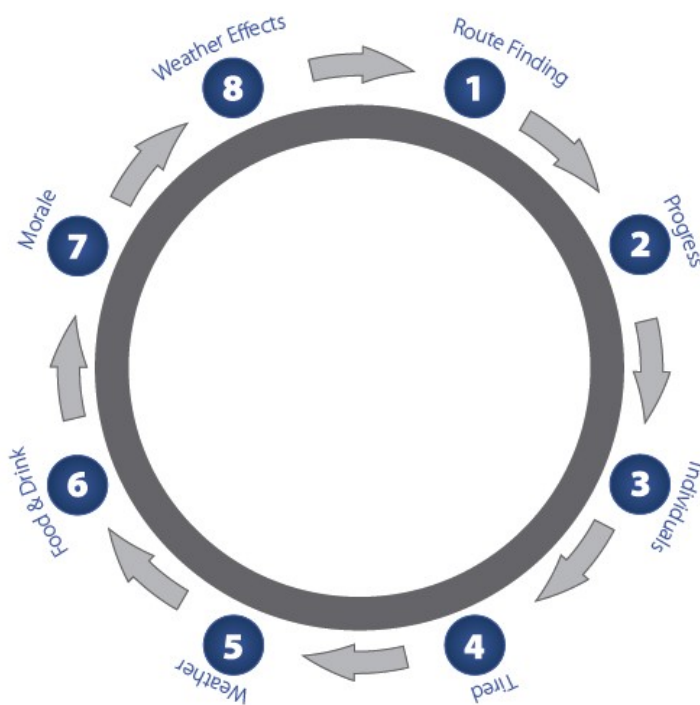


# INTRODUCTION

Snowsports are great fun, any activity inevitably carries some inherent risk therefore it is important that we work together to alleviate these potential risks and concentrate on enjoying the slopes. The aim of this Handbook is to provide all group leaders with suggestions to:

- Help raise awareness to risk;
- To suggest guidance to help mitigate the risk; and
- To manage risk pro-actively.

This handbook takes many of the component parts of a Snowsport Trip, identifies potential risks and suggests guidance to manage them. The handbook is effectively a lot of “handy hints”. It is important to note that risk assessments are subjective and ongoing, during an activity, continuous monitoring is required – see below the cycle of a risk assessment:



## KEY TO NUMBERS

- 1) Is it as easy to find the route as anticipated?
- 2) Is progress in accordance with the itinerary?
- 3) Is everyone keeping up?
- 4) Is everyone coping with the physical demands?
- 5) Have changes in the weather allowed you to keep within the itinerary times?
- 6) Is there enough food/drink remaining?
- 7) Is everyone happy?
- 8) Is everyone comfortable and unaffected by weather conditions (not too hot/too cold)?

If the answer to any question is NO, then it is time to consider your plans for the activity and modify accordingly.

Please allow all members of staff and adults who are accompanying your tour to read and absorb the contents of this Handbook. The suggestions made in this handbook are intended to be helpful, realistic and practical and may be a useful addition to your own risk assessments.

All these aspects of risk are the responsibility of everyone. Being alert to risk and thinking and looking ahead are crucial for all participants on your tour.

The format of this handbook is as follows:

- A list of excursions and/or destinations has been identified (see contents on page 2);
- For each excursion/destination identified, a synopsis has been written about it;
- Following which, a list of hazards and control measures are offered for consideration.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

Our risk assessments relate solely to the activities, services and facilities we plan and provide for you as part of your tour. They will not apply in respect of any alternative arrangements you may make or if you deviate from the planned itinerary. You must carry out your own risk assessments in respect of any such alternative arrangements and ensure that any risks and/or hazards specific to your group are identified and managed appropriately.

Our risk assessments are based on our knowledge and experience, however we cannot, guarantee that our risk assessments identify every possible risk and eventuality which may arise. Whilst our risk management handbook may minimise the risks or hazards on tour, it is important to remember that factors can and do change and it is therefore imperative to continually monitor the situation.

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## Weather

Naturally all Ski resorts are in a mountain environment in winter conditions. This brings exposure to extremes of climate, e.g. cold temperature, strong sun.

The cold temperatures need to be addressed and adequate and appropriate clothing worn by all members of the group at all times to protect against the cold.

Despite the cold weather conditions due to the altitude, skiers are prone to sunburn. The Party Leader should remind all party members to wear sun block and to take sun protection with them on the slopes.

Hazard	Guidance
Cold Temperatures / risk of Hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise group of likelihood of cold temperatures</li> <li>• Ensure they wear adequate and appropriate clothing in resort to protect them against extreme cold temperatures (thermals, gloves, hat etc.)</li> <li>• Alert them to the signs of Hypothermia in advance so that these can be spotted early. (See <a href="#">Signs of Hypothermia</a> page)</li> </ul>
Strong Sun / risk of sunburn (due to height of slopes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise group to wear sun block and re apply as necessary (note, that the sun's reflection off the snow is strong even on cloudy days)</li> </ul>
Sun rays / glare may affect vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear sunglasses or goggles so that you can see clearly down the slopes and around you at all times</li> </ul>
Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure water is consumed at regular intervals</li> </ul>
Altitude – lower oxygen content in the air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure food and water is consumed at regular intervals</li> </ul>

## Signs of Hypothermia

Hypothermia is when your normal (average) body temperature of 37°C (98.6F) drops below 35°C (95F). Hypothermia usually occurs gradually, and often you may not even be aware that you need help. The signs of hypothermia depend on two factors:

- 1) How cold the environment is; and
- 2) How long you have been exposed to it for.

The symptoms of **mild hypothermia** include:

- Shivering;
- Feeling cold;
- Feeling that you have no energy;
- Feeling that you are less able to tolerate the cold than normal; and
- Having cold and pale skin.

The symptoms of **moderate hypothermia** include:

- Uncontrollable (often violent) shivering;
- Problems thinking clearly or paying attention to events around you;
- Loss of judgment and reasoning, feeling confused;
- Difficulty moving around or stumbling;
- Shaking hands;
- Feeling fearful, memory loss, slurred speech;
- Drowsiness; and
- Slow, shallow breathing with a weak pulse.

The symptoms of **severe hypothermia** include:

- Losing control of your hands, feet, and limbs, stiff muscles;
- Unconsciousness;
- Shallow or no breathing, weak, irregular or no pulse; and
- Dilated (enlarged) pupils.

## General Participation in Snowsports

Hazard	Guidance
Physically demanding activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that students do not ski unsupervised</li><li>• Ensure that students remain within their capabilities</li><li>• Consider a buddy system and encourage students to look out for one another</li></ul>
Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure students recognise when they need a rest and that they do so in a safe place</li></ul>
Ski boots are difficult to walk in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that students listen to instructions from ski instructors</li><li>• Ensure that students practice walking in ski boots and feel comfortable and confident in them prior to entering the slopes</li></ul>
Injury through lack of warm up/cool down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Warm up and down thoroughly</li><li>• Spend a few minutes gently stretching hamstrings, thigh muscles, hips and calves before and after going on the slopes.</li></ul>

## Rules of the Slope

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Guidance</b>
Control of speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure students adapt their speed to their personal capabilities as well as to general conditions of the slope</li> <li>• Ensure that you can always stop safely</li> </ul>
Crowds on the slope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants must be mindful of other skiers on the slopes and respond accordingly (i.e. do not stop suddenly)</li> <li>• Pick routes carefully, be prepared for changing situations with skiers, snowboarders and the mountain itself</li> </ul>
Direction on the slopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher slope users are in a position to see below and choose the appropriate path/trajectory to avoid others</li> </ul>
Overtaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow sufficient space to overtake</li> <li>• Leave the slope user you are overtaking ample space</li> <li>• Remember that skiers or snowboarders ahead of you have the right of way</li> </ul>
Entering the slopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slope users must always visually check up and down the slopes prior to entering the slope</li> </ul>
Stopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All slope users must avoid stopping at narrow points on the slope or in areas with restricted visibility</li> <li>• Users should remove themselves from the slopes as quickly as possible to avoid becoming a hazard</li> <li>• Always stop at the side of the piste</li> <li>• After a fall, move quickly to the side</li> </ul>
Walking up or downhill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If this is necessary, stay close to the piste markers, ensuring you/your equipment does not endanger others</li> </ul>
Taking heed of information/respect for signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always obey signs for vital mountain safety information</li> </ul>
Assistance/Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any person who witnesses or is the instigator of an accident must raise the alarm, offer assistance, follow instructions of the mountain rescue team and identify themselves to piste control.</li> </ul>



## Chairlifts

All chairlift companies have their own operating license as a result of adhering to strict safety and procedural guidelines. Chairlifts are a safe mode of transport up the slopes as long as they are used properly at all times, groups should not encounter problems. For chairlifts without bars and footrests please ensure that you take extra care. Please consider the below guidance when mounting/dismounting the chairlifts.

### SKIERS

Step 1	Approach the lift line slowly. Watch for other skiers merging into line.
Step 2	Join the queue and approach the departure point, depending on the capacity of the lift chair, you will ride with up to five other skiers. Make sure your lift pass is easily accessible to pass through the gate.
Step 3	Use your poles to propel yourself to the loading line and wait for the next chair. Put your ski poles in your inside hand and look over your outside shoulder. Keep your knees bent slightly. Sit down as the chair touches the back of your legs.
Step 4	<b>Reach above your head and pull down the safety bar once you are seated.</b> Use the ski rests if you are uncomfortable with your legs dangling.
Step 5	<b>Remain seated</b> as the lift moves uphill. Avoid bouncing or moving about.
Step 6	Talk to your co-riders on the chairlift as you approach the landing area so you can get ready to dismount at the same time. <b>When the signs tell you to, raise the safety bar.</b> Prepare to dismount as you approach the top. Make sure you have all of your belongings and that there are no loose items of clothing that may snag on the chair as you dismount.
Step 7	Raise the safety bar and place your ski poles in your inside hand.
Step 8	Point the tips of your skis up as you approach the ramp.
Step 9	As your skis touch the ground, come to a standing position, with the ski poles in one hand push away from the chair with the other (free) hand. Do not lean forward. Simply wait for the landing to make good contact with your skis.
Step 10	Ski down the ramp, turning to the outside.
Step 11	Clear away from the lift area immediately to avoid collision with others.

## SNOWBOARDERS

Step 1	If you're using a leash, secure that to your ankle or boot.
Step 2	Line your board up so that it's pointed forward and the front is resting on the loading line. Keep the board straight and turn your head to watch for the chair coming up behind you.
Step 3	Gently sit down as the chair comes near enough and quickly shift your weight to the back of the seat. Get comfortable.
Step 4	<b>Lower the bar. Reach above your head and pull down the safety bar once you are seated.</b> Use the ski rests if you are uncomfortable with your legs dangling. Note it can be less comfortable with a snowboard because of the footrests designed for forward-facing skis.
Step 5	Situate your feet. If there's a footrest, you can twist your body so that you're able to rest the board on it. Another option that might be more natural is to swing the board out in front of the footrest, place your free foot underneath the heel-side edge to take some weight off your front foot and rest whichever leg is in front of the footrest. This will keep the board parallel with your shoulders and won't require twisting. Experiment with positions to find the one that feels most comfortable.
Step 6	<b>Remain seated</b> as the lift moves uphill. Avoid bouncing or moving about.
Step 7	Talk to your co-riders on the chairlift as you approach the landing area so you can get ready to dismount at the same time. <b>When the signs tell you to, raise the safety bar.</b> Prepare to dismount as you approach the top. Make sure you have all of your belongings and that there are not any loose items of clothing that may snag on the chair as you dismount.
Step 8	As you approach the unloading area, turn and straighten the board so that it's pointing forward. If you're unsure of where the person next to you is going, don't hesitate to ask. Keep the tail of the board raised as much as you can so it doesn't get caught in the snow.
Step 9	Let the lift guide you forward so that the board meets the ground on the flat area prior to the dismount slope. As you approach the lip of the slope, put your back foot on your stomp pad in front of the rear binding, stand up off the lift seat, balance your weight and ride down. Carve away from the unloading area to prevent getting hit by the next rider, or stop and then skate over to the side.

## Equipment

### SKI BOOTS



What should you look for in a ski boot?

- Think of it as an extension of your foot. Your boot is the link between you foot, the ski and the snow.
- Your ski boots should fit tightly or snugly without hurting your feet (and have enough 'wiggle room' for your toes). There should be no pressure points or sore spots when your feet are in your boots.
- It must be comfortable: you will be wearing it for sustained periods of time when you are skiing
- The boot must form an effective link between you and the snow. It must be sufficiently rigid laterally to transmit movements of your legs into ski movements, but must still allow some forward flex at the ankle.
- It must hold your foot – especially your heel – firmly in place.
- Boots vary, so make sure you try on a few.

### SKI BINDING



Bindings need to hold the foot firmly to the ski and yet be sensitive enough to release should a fall put excessive strain on your leg.

They need to retain enough elasticity to pull your boot back to the centre of the ski in the event of a near-release.

Most makes of binding consist of three components: a heel-piece, a toe-piece and a brake. Sometimes the heel and toe are mounted separately; sometimes they are attached on one plate.

**Heel-piece:** This releases upwards, opening in a forward fall. Some models offer a diagonal or sideways heel release

**Toe-piece:** This allows sideways release in the event of a twisting fall. A Teflon anti-friction pad under the toe allows the boot to slide easily even when your weight is pushing down on it during a fall.

**Brakes:** When you step in, the brake lifts out of the snow. If your binding releases, the brake springs back down, preventing the ski from escaping down the mountain and causing injury to other skiers.

## SKI POLES



- Ski poles consist of a shaft, a handle and a basket.
- Length: To test the length of your pole, hold it upside down and grip it beneath the basket. Your forearm should be horizontal when you stand with your knees slightly flexed.
- Handle: The most common is the strap type, with a loop of leather or webbing to attach the pole to your wrist. Almost all rental poles are this type.
- The sword-grip type consists of a moulded guard, which extends round the back of the hand. It is intended to make life easier, but in effect means that you have to trek back uphill to retrieve dropped poles after almost every fall.
- Basket: For skiing on piste, the size of basket is irrelevant and many skiers prefer small baskets. In powder, a larger basket prevents the pole from sinking.
- Shaft: This is usually made of a light metal such as aluminium, although composite materials offer an expensive, lighter and currently trendier alternative.
- Straight poles are adequate for most skiers.
- Corrective angles (a slight, forward bend below each handle) may help you to plant your pole correctly. A forward and a backward bend, on the other hand, cancel each other out and make little difference.

## HELMETS



As of the 1st January 2005, the wearing of helmets, whilst skiing or snowboarding in Italy, became compulsory for all students aged 14 years and under. Additionally since 2011 several Italian resorts now require helmets for pupils up to the age of 18 years. Whilst not yet compulsory in every ski destination, Rayburn Ski recommends helmets for all pupils. Naturally helmets will help to protect the head in the event of a fall on the slopes.

### Measuring Head Sizes

Measure head sizes with a tape measure placed around the forehead, over the top of the ears and round the back of the head, at an angle of around 20 degrees from the horizontal. The resultant value in centimetres should be somewhere between 45 and 62.

## SLEDGING/SNOW TUBING

Hazard	Risk	Guidance
Weather conditions	Wind burn  Hypothermia  Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear appropriate clothing</li> <li>• Check the weather forecast in advance for the entire duration of the activity</li> <li>• Carry drinking water</li> </ul>
During activity	Slips, trips, falls, entanglements, traps and collision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check weather conditions before activity</li> <li>• All participants are to wear safety helmets, safety goggles and gloves</li> <li>• Supervisory staff to manage the run and control the session (Await clearance of slope run before next sledges are released. Walk back up the side of slope)</li> <li>• Ensure location is free of obstructions/ pedestrians, especially at bottom of run</li> <li>• Ensure clothing and hair is secure and not loose</li> <li>• Ensure safe lifting techniques are used when transporting sledges</li> <li>• Clear trip hazards from area beforehand</li> <li>• All users must keep hands inside the sledge when riding</li> <li>• Ensure the slope is not too steep to safely return sledge up to top of run.</li> <li>• Ensure equipment is stored appropriately</li> </ul>
Equipment	Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check equipment is fit for purpose before use</li> <li>• Observe the correct technique</li> <li>• Listen to all instructions</li> <li>• Report any damages</li> </ul>

## SKATING

Hazard	Risk	Guidance
<b>Skates</b>	Slips and trips  Injury to self (cut fingers, bumps/bruises) or others  Discomfort/blisters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of differing shoe sizes for different countries</li> <li>• Supervise fitting and check that each skater is happy and comfortable</li> <li>• Walk in them in a safe area before entering the rink</li> </ul>
<b>Ice</b>	Falling/injury to self or others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a sensible speed for the number of skaters, don't stop suddenly or skate against the flow of other skaters</li> <li>• Wear suitable and warm clothing to provide extra padding</li> <li>• Wear provided PPE if required (Helmet)</li> <li>• Use support bar if required</li> <li>• Wear gloves</li> </ul>
<b>Direction and speed</b>	Collisions  Injury to self or others  Falling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the direction of the rink</li> <li>• Observe and safety signage and/or rink staff instructions</li> <li>• Maintain a sensible speed for the number of skaters, don't stop suddenly or skate against the flow of others</li> <li>• Don't attempt to drag or skate with less confident skaters</li> <li>• Wear suitable clothing to provide extra padding</li> <li>• To decelerate, slow down gradually, do not skid or crash in toward barriers to stop</li> <li>• Only enter the rink at designated areas, do not clamber over barriers</li> </ul>
<b>Temperature</b>	Hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear warm clothing and gloves</li> <li>• Change into dry clothing should you become wet</li> <li>• Drink warm drinks</li> <li>• Stop the activity if too cold</li> </ul>
<b>Inappropriate activities ie. hockey</b>	Equipment  Collisions  Falls  Slips and trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider group experience</li> <li>• The activity should not be competitive or be anything other than simple forward motions</li> <li>• Outline rules and expectations of acceptable activity on the ice rink</li> </ul>

## SWIMMING POOLS

Hazard	Risk	Guidance
<b>Pool surround</b>	Slips and trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't run</li> <li>• Explain rules at the beginning</li> </ul>
<b>Ladder</b>	Slips and trips  Injury to other participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one user to enter/exit the pool at a time</li> <li>• Use the handrails provided</li> <li>• No pushing/pulling</li> </ul>
<b>Water</b>	Drowning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check swimming competencies in advance</li> <li>• Ensure constant supervision even if lifeguards are present</li> <li>• Take note of water depth and any variations ie. Deep end</li> <li>• Encourage a buddy system with participants looking out for one another</li> </ul>
<b>Fatigue</b>	Injury  Drowning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor energy levels</li> <li>• Carry high energy foods with you</li> <li>• Stop the activity if necessary</li> </ul>
<b>Air temperature</b>	Exposure/hypo thermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear appropriate clothing</li> <li>• Change into dry clothing if feeling cold</li> </ul>
<b>Diving boards</b>	Slips and trips  Injury to self or others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one user at a time</li> <li>• Only participate in a designated area</li> <li>• Exit the diving area immediately after entering the water</li> <li>• Warn others to avoid the area</li> <li>• Ensure constant supervision even if lifeguards are present</li> </ul>
	Fatigue  Drowsiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not allow participants under 15 years to use</li> <li>• Restrict the amount of time participants can use them</li> </ul>
<b>Water Shutes</b>	Injury to self or others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe all signage and/or lifeguard instructions</li> <li>• Ensure constant supervision even if lifeguards are present</li> <li>• Only one user at a time</li> <li>• Exit the diving area immediately after entering the water</li> </ul>

## TOBOGGANING

Hazard	Risk	Guidance
<b>Steps/climb up to the toboggan run</b>	Breathlessness /fatigue  Trips and slips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control group pace to match slowest member</li> <li>• Exercise caution, do not run or push past each other</li> </ul>
<b>Chairlift up to the toboggan run</b>	Falling out  Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief participants to sit far back within the chair and use safety guards</li> <li>• Position adults/leaders at the front and back of the queue to assist at both ends</li> <li>• Age range is 3 and above (under 8 yrs only ride with an adult)</li> </ul>
<b>Before and during the toboggan run</b>	Falling out  Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to and adhere to the safety instructions provided</li> <li>• Wear suitable clothing to ensure it does not become entangled with the toboggan and track.</li> <li>• Only set off when staff permit it</li> <li>• Wear the seat belts provided throughout the whole circuit for you safety</li> <li>• Control speed so as not to endanger themselves or others</li> <li>• Maintain a safe distance of 25 metres between participants</li> <li>• Sit upright in the toboggan with feet facing forward and facing the direction of travel at all times. Do not kneel.</li> <li>• Keep both hands on the brake leavers</li> <li>• Do not lean or reach outside of the toboggan</li> </ul>
<b>At the end of the run</b>	Collisions/pile up  Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the end of the track, approach the brake belt at walking speed</li> <li>• Move from the bottom of the run immediately</li> </ul>