

## **Resource document:**

### **Winter**

### **Skiing and snowboarding**

#### **Narrative:**

During the past five years, 175 Soldiers have been injured while skiing or snowboarding. In 2011, the 87 Soldiers were injured.

Like all sports activities, proper warm-up, using the proper gear, having the proper training and not performing risky activities lead to a safer day.

Skiing and snowboarding can be enjoyed in many ways. There may be people using alpine skis, snowboards, telemark skis, cross country skis, and other specialized equipment, such as that used by the disabled.

Regardless of how you decide to enjoy the slopes, always show courtesy to others and be aware that there are elements of risk in skiing that common sense and personal awareness can help reduce.

Skiing and snowboarding can be tiring, and many accidents happen at the end of the day when participants are fatigued. Know when to call it a day.

#### **Key Messages:**

Accidents while skiing or snowboarding represent one of the major categories of injury.

More than 100,000 people are injured each year from skiing or snowboarding.

Experience pays off and the data shows skiers and snowboarders new to the sport suffered injuries at a very different, higher, rate.

#### **Talking points:**

During the past five years, 175 Soldiers have been injured while skiing or snowboarding.

In 2011, 87 Soldiers were injured.

According to the National Ski Areas Association: During the past 10 years, 40.6 people have died skiing or snowboarding per year, on average. During the 2010-21011season,

47 fatalities occurred out of the 60.5 million skier or snowboarder days reported for the season. Thirty-one of the fatalities were skiers (24 male, 7 female) and 16 of the fatalities were snowboarders, (14 male, 2 female). Among the fatalities, 21 of those involved were reported as wearing a helmet at the time of the incident. The rate of fatality converts to .78 per million skier or snowboarder visits.

Serious injuries (paralysis, serious head, and other serious injuries) occur at the rate of 44.6 per year, according to the NSAA. During the 2010-2011 season, there were 60 serious injuries. Thirty-six of the serious injuries occurred with skiers (28 male, 1 female) and 24 were snowboarders, (23 male, 1 female). Among the serious injuries, 30 of those involved were reported as wearing a helmet at the time of the incident. The rate of serious injury in 2010-2011 was .99 per million skier/snowboarder visits.

Don't take anything for granted: The simple act of loading or unloading from a ski lift produced 8 percent of the total injuries, according to published reports from physicians.

The more experience a skier or snowboarder has leads to lower accident rates.

Build experience, take it easy if you're a beginner.

### **Tips:**

Make a deal with yourself to be safe on the snow, it could keep you off the injury list.

Warm up prior to beginning a ski or snowboarding day.

Get proper training from a qualified instructor before undertaking the sports.

Ensure the gear you use is a proper fit and you understand how to use it.

Don't ski or snowboard 'till you drop' because many accidents occur at the end of a full day of skiing or snowboarding, when participants are fatigued.

Avoid alcohol use while on the snow. Don't take unnecessary risks.

If you are skiing in the backcountry, check the avalanche forecast from your local avalanche information center, and always carry a probe, shovel, and avalanche beacon, advises the National Ski Patrol.

### **Historical Reference:**

<https://safety.army.mil/>  
[www.nsp.org](http://www.nsp.org)

### **Statistics:**

More than 100,000 people are injured each year from skiing or snowboarding.

During the past five years, 175 Soldiers have been injured while skiing or snowboarding.

In 2011, the 87 Soldiers injured represented more than a 100 percent jump from the 38 injured in 2010.

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