

# Outdoor Education Standard Operating Procedures

## Downhill Snowsports



## **Standard Operating Procedures: Downhill Snowsports on Prepared Surfaces – Natural and Manmade**

### **Definition and Scope of Activities**

The activities involved use ski or snowboard equipment of various types to descend inclines on a prepared surface usually designated by fences, poles or markers.

Uplift is usually by mechanical means or skins fitted to the underneath surface of skis.

The prepared surface can be snow (piste), sand or a proprietary artificial slope matting.

Locations vary from indoor artificial ski slopes to mountain based locations or low level forest trails (below 600m) where pre cut Nordic tracks can be prepared. Most activity on the mountains operates from an alpine ski designated centre where pistes are designated by fencing and signage and uplift is provided mechanically.

The major activities covered within this section are as follows:

- Alpine skiing
- Free heel skiing
- Nordic skiing
- Ski blading
- Snowboarding

### **Precautions to Minimise Hazards**

It is essential that the Standard Operating Procedures are followed and that personnel leading the Group fully brief the group to pay attention to hazard warning information, remain in control of the activity and follow accredited tuition and activity progression.

The specific hazards identified not exhaustive and additional hazards or combinations may arise during the course of an activity necessitating ongoing attention to minimise or control the risk(s) to a manageable level.

### **Seasonal Constraints**

There are no seasonal constraints involved with the operation of indoor/outdoor artificial ski slopes out with inclement weather or maintenance shut down.

All snow skiing outside is dependent on sufficient snow depth on piste and takes place in Scotland usually during the period January-April annually but may occur outwith these margins as a result of weather patterns.

## Location Constraints

Use of prepared pistes or ski surfaces are usually commercially controlled and used for a set fee. There are some pre cut way marked Nordic trails managed in Scotland by Forest Enterprise and operated when snow conditions allow.

## Tuition Ratios

The tuition ratios are:

- Alpine skiing 1 instructor to 10 participants maximum Artificial Ski Slope
- Alpine skiing 1 instructor to 8 participants maximum snow
- Snow Boarding instructor to 6 participants maximum Artificial Ski Slope
- Snow Boarding instructor to 6 participants maximum snow

Participants requiring increased leader supervision or possessing certain disabilities may require additional staffing or reduced participant ratios.

A second adult should be present at the group location with participants under 18 years of age.

## Tuition Leader Qualifications

Please see the following grid:

| Activity                                                     | Minimum Leading Qualification                                       | National Governing Body                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All                                                          | First Aid Accreditation<br>(minimum 16 hour status)                 | Accredited first aid agencies.                                                                             |
| PLUS                                                         |                                                                     |                                                                                                            |
| Alpine Skiing / Ski Blading<br>(Snow / Artificial Ski Slope) | Alpine Ski Leader<br>or<br>Alpine Ski Instructor level 2            | Snowsport Scotland<br><br>British Association of Snowsport Ski Instructors or another ISIA recognised body |
| Alpine Skiing / Ski Blading<br>(Artificial Slope only)       | Artificial Ski Slope Instructor or<br>Alpine Ski Instructor level 1 | Snowsport Scotland<br><br>British Association of Snowsport Instructors<br>or another ISIA recognised body  |
| Nordic Skiing                                                | Nordic Ski Leader<br>or<br>Nordic Ski Instructor                    | SnowsportScotland<br><br>British Association of Snowsport Instructors<br>or another ISIA recognised body   |
| Telemark Skiing                                              | Mountain Ski Leader (Telemark)<br>or                                | Snowsport Scotland                                                                                         |

| Activity                       | Minimum Leading Qualification                  | National Governing Body                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                | Telemark Ski Instructor                        | British Association of Snowsport Instructors<br>or another ISIA recognised body                           |
| Snowboarding                   | Snowboard Leader<br>or<br>Snowboard Instructor | Snowsport Scotland<br>British Association of Snowsport Instructors<br>or another ISIA recognised body     |
| <b>PLUS (FOR DISABILITIES)</b> |                                                |                                                                                                           |
| Alpine Skiing                  | Adaptive Ski Module                            | Snowsport Scotland<br><br>British Association of Snowsport Instructors<br>or another ISIA recognised body |

The National Governing Bodies contact data relevant to this section are as follows:

- British Association of Snowsport Instructors – [www.basi.org.uk](http://www.basi.org.uk)
- Snowsport Scotland - [www.snowsportscotland.org](http://www.snowsportscotland.org)
- British Association of Ski Patrollers - [www.basp.org.uk](http://www.basp.org.uk) (recommended First Aid Accreditation)

## Equipment - Participants

Participants must be adequately equipped for the activity and location in use.

The equipment must be well maintained, serviced and set to the individual operational needs of the participant by experienced accredited personnel e.g. ski bindings.

Participants under 16 years of age must be helmeted on piste, Snowsport, ski activities and all participants helmeted on snowboard activities.

All participants must have access to

- Appropriate windproof/waterproof/protective clothing
- Gloves / mitts
- Head gear
- Helmets are compulsory for under 18s. They are advised for all participants and should be made available.

In bright sunshine / adverse weather access to sunglasses / ski goggles is essential.

## Equipment – Group Safety

Additional equipment depending location:

- Watch
- First aid supplies

- Piste map / maps relevant to Nordic route / compass
- Whistle
- Hot drink or means of making one
- Emergency rations
- Exposure kit / emergency shelter
- Torch
- Means of communicating base

Binding repair or setting should be referred to accredited technicians located at ski centres.

## **Access / Environment**

Other than private pre cut Nordic way marked trails there is usually no access restrictions within designated skiseason periods.

The use of skis on areas of thin snow cover can be damaging to underlying frail vegetation and mosses. Care should be taken to avoid such erosion especially early / late in the ski season.

# RISK ASSESSMENT

**ASSESSMENT REF NO: Skiing 1**

**Activity: Generic Skiing/Snowboarding**

**Location: Various**

**Assessor: LJ**

| Hazard              | Who might be harmed? |        |        | Existing controls<br>What makes the hazard less risky?<br>What makes these controls effective?                                                                                                           | Risk        |          |        | Further actions<br>Avoid<br>Control at source<br>Take advantage of technology<br>Protect all<br>Make what you have more effective | Target date dd-mm-yy | Responsibility | Completion Date | New Residual Risk Score |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
|                     | Public               | Client | Leader |                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Probability | Severity | Rating |                                                                                                                                   |                      |                |                 |                         |
| Injury from falling | x                    | x      | x      | Participants should be given the appropriate equipment, staff to teach progressive session.                                                                                                              | 2           | 5        | 10     | None                                                                                                                              |                      |                |                 |                         |
| Collisions          | x                    | x      | x      | Robust safety brief and progressive sessions, staff to monitor non-participants locations, leaders to be aware of other slope users and manage the group accordingly paying to heed to the Ski Way code. | 2           | 5        | 10     | None                                                                                                                              |                      |                |                 |                         |
| Equipment failure   | x                    | x      | x      | Regular equipment checks and staff to perform visual checks before and during session                                                                                                                    | 1           | 4        | 4      | None                                                                                                                              |                      |                |                 |                         |
| Extremes of weather |                      | x      | x      | Staff to check forecast and provide clients with appropriate equipment. Conditions observed during day and activity adjusted as needed.                                                                  | 2           | 4        | 8      | None                                                                                                                              |                      |                |                 |                         |
| Avalanche           | x                    | x      | x      | Staff to check SAIS and avoid avalanche prone slopes, do not ski on closed runs,                                                                                                                         | 1           | 5        | 5      | Instructors/ groups should follow ski patrol advice.                                                                              |                      |                |                 |                         |

|                                       |   |   |   |                                                                                                                                        |   |   |    |      |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|----|------|--|--|--|--|
| Getting lost, white out etc           |   | x | x | Staff to work within remit of qualifications, leaders to be vigilant to changing weather conditions and adapt the session accordingly. | 1 | 5 | 5  | None |  |  |  |  |
| Ski tow failure                       | x | x | x | Ski lift company to carry out regular checks                                                                                           | 1 | 5 | 5  | None |  |  |  |  |
| Driving issues                        | x | x | x | Follow instructions from police etc drive according to road condition                                                                  | 1 | 5 | 5  | None |  |  |  |  |
| Environmental injuries                |   | x | x | Appropriate equipment worn/carried for the conditions instructors trained to recognise potential problems                              | 2 | 5 | 10 | None |  |  |  |  |
| Hand injuries from dry slope surfaces |   | x | x | Appropriate equipment                                                                                                                  | 3 | 3 | 6  | None |  |  |  |  |

|                                                  |                            |                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Further actions approved by: Derek Napier</b> | <b>Signature: D Napier</b> | <b>Date: 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2026</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|

**Urgency of Action** = (20> *Very High*) (16-20 *High*) (9-15 *Moderate*) (4-8 *Low*) (1-3 *Very Low*)

**Severity** = 1. Damage 2. Minor Injury 3. +3 Days/Hospitalised 4. Major Injury/Permanent Disability 5. Fatality

**Probability** = 1. Very Unlikely 2. Unlikely 3. Fairly Likely 4. Likely 5. Very Likely

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