



Play it Safe Outdoors

The winter season offers many recreational sporting opportunities for you and your family. Careful planning and knowledge of key issues can help ensure that your adventures of skiing, hiking, snowmobiling, or other winter sports result in a safe and enjoyable experience.

In Preparation...

- **Get in shape.**

Make sure you're in appropriate physical condition for the activity-you'll reduce fatigue and chance for injury, plus find it more enjoyable. If you have medical conditions, discuss your plans with your health care provider and get approval before participating. Train for your sport-develop skills with the help of a qualified instructor.

- **Carefully select and maintain equipment.**

Always choose quality equipment and ask for expert advice when purchasing. Make sure equipment is appropriate for your size, weight and ability. Before departing, make sure it's in proper condition-don't use damaged gear. Know how your equipment works and learn how to make basic repairs (pack necessary repair tools/materials for your outing).

- **Learn basic first aid.**

Know how to identify and treat injury and illness such as hypothermia, dehydration, sprains, cuts, abrasions, etc. Pack a first aid kit tailored to your outing.

- **Find a partner.**

Share your sport with friends or family-it's more fun, plus you won't be by yourself in case of an emergency. Stay in sight of one another while you're out.

- **Plan ahead.**

Study a map of your travel course. If the area is unfamiliar to you, bring someone or talk to someone who knows the surroundings. Identify ahead of time the location of the nearest telephone or help station in case of an emergency.

- **Develop an emergency plan.**

Before you leave, make sure everyone knows what to do if they become lost or are involved in a medical emergency. Inform someone about your plans-leave them a copy of your itinerary and the appropriate details of your excursion (description of equipment, anticipated weather, expected return, etc.). Check in with them once you've arrived safely home.

Out The Door...

- **Check the weather.**

Research current and predicted weather conditions. Know the signs for approaching storms or changing climate.

- **Dress properly.**

Wear several layers of loose-fitting clothing to insulate your body and accommodate for constantly changing temperatures. Outerwear should be water- and wind-resistant-make sure your head and neck are covered. Use sunscreen (no matter what the weather) and shield your eyes with UV



protected sunglasses or goggles. Purchase or rent a helmet to provide protection from serious head injuries, when applicable.

- **Pack snacks.**

Drink plenty of water so you're well hydrated. Eat carbohydrate-energy bars, granola, candy, or fruit for an instant lift.

- **Stretch out.**

Stretching before your activity gradually increases your heart rate, temperature and circulation to your muscles. It's an important way to get your body going and increase your flexibility.

- **Start slow.**

The slowest person in the group should set the pace, especially when children are involved. Gradually increase pace and distance traveled. Rest frequently.

- **Be smart.**

Follow marked trails. Don't travel in danger zones, treacherous terrain, or remote locations. Pay close attention to your surroundings and landmarks. Be realistic about your skill level-don't overestimate your ability. If you're tired, stop and rest-fatigue is a risk factor for injuries.

- **Avoid alcohol.**

Judgment, agility, and balance are all reduced by alcohol consumption.

For additional information:

National Ski Areas Association (NSAA), <http://www.nsaa.org>

USDA Forest Service, <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/>

International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA), <http://www.snowmobile.org>

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