



SKI WELL, BE WELL

SKI AREA OPERATING BEST PRACTICES

WINTER 2020-21

FOUNDED IN 1962, THE NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION

serves as the trade association for over 320 alpine resorts that account for more than 90 percent of skier/snowboarder visits nationwide. NSAA is responsible for promoting foundational best practices for the ski industry, including the nationally-accepted Your Responsibility Code, which defines the basic tenets of slope safety. The ski industry's stable of experts develops best practices for ski, snowboard, and lift safety.

OUR COMMITMENT

The ski and snowboard industry values and prioritizes the health and safety of its guests, staff and local communities. We demonstrate this commitment to our stakeholders by implementing the following operating best practices for the 2020-21 winter season, or for as long as needed, scaled appropriately in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ski industry leaders from across the country established these foundational best practices according to scientific guidelines put forth by infectious disease experts, including the CDC and WHO. Ski areas will comply with additional federal, state and local regulations as they are implemented.

Snowsports are a way for people to play in wide-open spaces, and to take advantage of the mental and physical health benefits of outdoor recreation. For decades, ski area owners and operators have managed skier numbers and safety in daily operations, collaborating with fellow industry experts to offer safe and memorable experiences. The National Ski Areas Association, state and regional ski associations, and ski areas commit to providing outdoor recreation in ways that promote health and safety, and reduce the risk of infection.

“The ski industry led the business community last spring with our responses to the Covid outbreak and intends to lead again with providing responsible and safe outdoor winter recreation for millions of people this next winter.”

*Stephen Kircher, CEO/President,
Boyne Resorts*

Ski areas are committed to supporting healthy and thriving local communities. We will continue to partner with local agencies to maintain the success and character of the places in which we operate.



THE SNOWSPORTS INDUSTRY

generates \$55 billion annually toward the U.S. economy, and supports 533,000 jobs nationwide. There are 470 ski areas across 37 states, many of which are the primary drivers of their rural economies. 89% of revenues are generated during the winter season; for the average ski area, that season is 114 days (81 days for small ski areas).



A LETTER FROM NSAA'S PRESIDENT

In March, the ski industry led by example in its response to COVID-19, ceasing operations during one of the most profitable times of the season. That leadership continues in our summer operations as we practice responsible recreation, guided by science. As ski season approaches, resorts are incorporating virus prevention into their winter operating plans, again turning to science and also learning from summer operations in the U.S. and from our peers in the southern hemisphere.

Ski areas provide acres upon acres of wide-open natural space for recreation, allowing guests to enjoy the mental and physical health benefits of outdoor recreation while maintaining physical distance. As operators committed to the health and safety of our stakeholders, we will implement the following best practices, and take additional guidance from local public health and municipal authorities.

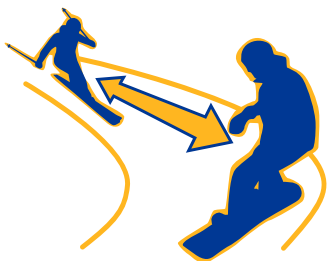
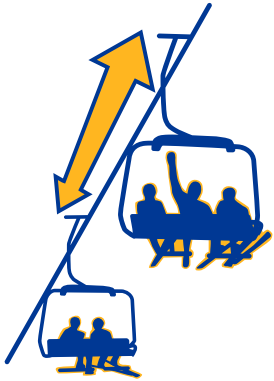
I am confident that the ski industry will continue to lead by example during these incredibly dynamic times. Everything has changed – except for our industry's guiding principle: We always have, and always will, put the health and safety of our staff, guests and communities first.

*Kelly Pawlak
President and CEO
National Ski Areas Association*



BENEFITS AND ADVANTAGES OF SKI AREAS

Ski areas provide low-risk outdoor recreation opportunities for millions of Americans. Here's what makes the ski industry uniquely positioned to do so:



Space

U.S. ski areas provide hundreds of acres of land for outdoor recreation. Ski area operators are experts at monitoring and managing the flow and volume of traffic in their outdoor spaces.

Natural Outdoor Environment

The majority of time spent at a ski area is spent outside in the fresh air, cruising down runs.

Standard Gear

Face coverings, including neck gaiters, goggles, gloves or mittens, and helmets are standard pieces of skiing or snowboarding gear.

Slope Safety Etiquette

Long-standing skiing and snowboarding etiquette requires guests to respect one another and give space between themselves and other skiers and riders. Safe skiers leave space between other skiers.

“The ski industry plays an important part of the overall travel and tourism sector. Nationwide, alpine resorts provide a great opportunity for travelers to get outside and recreate in a mountain environment with wide open spaces.”

Roger Dow, President and CEO of U.S. Travel Association

“Research is showing that being outside in a mountain environment can boost our immune systems as well as our mental health and well-being,” says Florence Williams, author of *The Nature Fix: How Being in Nature Can Make us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative*.



Health Benefits

Snowsports provide numerous proven health and wellness benefits to participants. According to the WHO, “regular physical activity benefits both the body and mind.” The organization says that physical activity increases strength and fitness, reduces the risk of cardiovascular and other physical ailments and improves mental health, specifically reducing the risk of depression.¹

¹World Health Organization, Q&A: Be Active During COVID-19 (accessed August 2020)



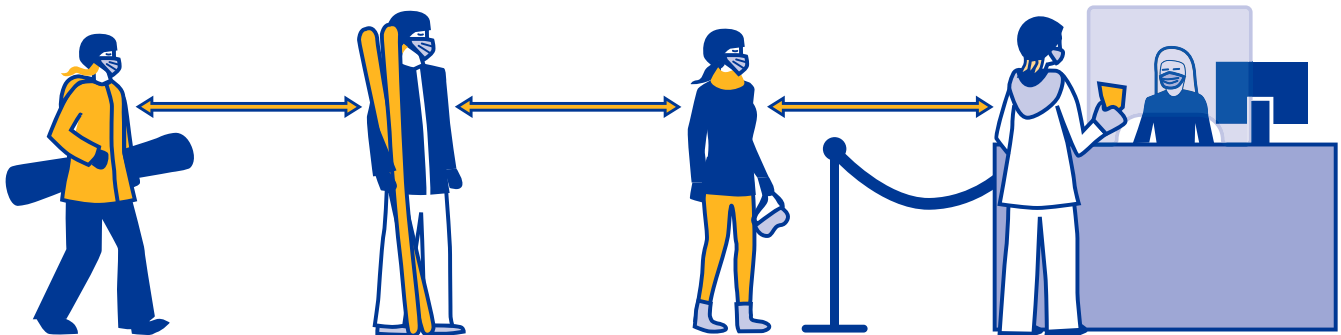
Shared Responsibility for Safety

It is up to every individual, both ski area employee and guest, to do their part to help protect the health and safety of our skiing and snowboarding community. Following requirements to mitigate the risk of infection is part of the social contract between ski area operator and guest.



Touchless Transactions

Many ski areas have adopted technologies to reduce personal contact between employees and guests. These include touchless payment and access technologies, such as advance online purchase and RF (radio frequency) scanning of tickets and passes.



SAFE WORKING, SAFE RECREATING

Here is how ski areas are helping to keep their employees, guests and communities healthy:

Face Coverings are Required

Ski areas will require face coverings that align with CDC recommendations whenever physical distancing cannot be achieved. This includes both indoor and outdoor spaces, except when eating or drinking.



Physical Distancing

Ski areas will create operational plans that allow for appropriate spacing between parties. This includes but is not limited to the following parts of the operation: lift queues, ticket queues, ski and snowboard lessons, employee spaces, and food and beverage outlets.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Ski areas will adopt cleaning and disinfection strategies for all areas of their operation, including high-touch areas such as restrooms, restaurants, dining facilities, ticket offices, and rental shops. All cleaning products used will follow CDC and EPA guidance on agents which are effective against COVID-19.



Operating Plans

Ski areas will review and amend both their overall and individual departmental operating plans to: comply with local regulations; maintain physical distancing requirements; and adhere to cleaning and disinfection best practices.

INDOOR SPACES: Ski areas will comply with local regulations regarding the management of indoor spaces.

OUTDOOR SPACES: Ski areas will create detailed, scalable operating plans for the management of outdoor spaces including base areas, lifts and ski terrain.

“Protocols that promote social distancing and the health of all will ensure the viability of a great ski and ride experience, provide economic certainty for our mountain communities, and enable our guests and teams to safely do the things they love with the ones they love.” *Wade Martin, Co-President, POWDR*



Communication

Ski areas will communicate their plans and requirements to guests prior to their arrival at the ski area, stressing the shared responsibility in keeping our slopes safe. Guests will be made aware of their obligations, including the requirement to wear a face covering whenever physical distancing cannot be achieved. Ski areas will also post on-site signage notifying guests and employees of required best practices to help stop the spread.



Reporting and Notification

Ski areas will comply with state and local public health orders and follow CDC best practices when reporting a positive case of COVID-19 at their resort. Employees will be trained in these practices by ski area leadership.

OUR INDUSTRY’S GOAL IS TO KEEP OUR GUESTS SAFE AND HEALTHY WHILE SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING.

Skiing is a weather-based business requiring the daily scaling of operations to respond to current conditions. As such, our industry is uniquely prepared to pivot its operations.

We are confident in our expertise of managing outdoor recreation spaces. Skiing and snowboarding

offer low-risk, high-value recreation and it is our goal to provide that to our guests, even if some indoor or close-contact activities have to be scaled back or put on hold. The ski industry is committed to a collaborative relationship with state and local authorities to work together for solutions to keep ski areas open, and to keep guests and staff safe.

Employee Training

Ski area employees will be trained in COVID-19 safety and disinfection protocols, consistent with recommendations from the CDC.

Employee Wellness Checks



Stay home or go home when experiencing the following symptoms:

Ski areas will perform daily wellness checks of all employees prior to the start of their shifts. Employees will be sent home or asked to stay home if they have come into contact with a positive COVID-19 case and/or exhibit relevant symptoms.

- muscle aches
- headache
- loss of smell or taste
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea
- fever or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- fatigue

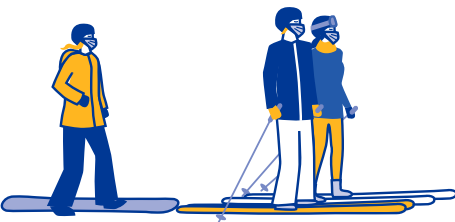
LIFTS

There are thousands of outdoor recreation options but what makes the ski industry different is its uphill transport: aerial ropeways like chairlifts, trams and gondolas, and surface conveyors. Of these, chairlifts are the most common.

NSAA serves as the secretariat of the American National Standards Institute Accredited Standards Committee B77, which develops design requirements, specifications for training, and operation and maintenance requirements for aerial ropeways.

NSAA believes that ski areas can effectively operate their ropeways without additional risk of infection by setting forth these best practices.

Face coverings will be mandatory on all lifts.



Lift Queues

Physical distancing in lift queues occurs organically due to the length of skis and snowboards. Ski area employees have vast experience managing queues and the expertise to ensure a consistent flow of appropriately-spaced traffic.

Loading the Chair

Guests will be asked to self-group and load the chair with their traveling party. Lift attendants will not require guests to ride a chairlift with people they do not know. High capacity chairlifts and closed cabin carriers may be the exception, and may be loaded in a way that allows for physical distancing.

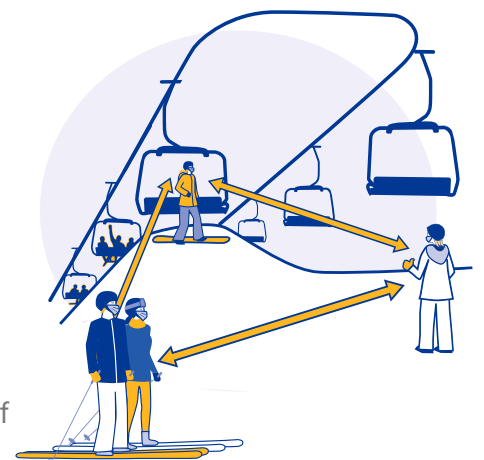


Riding the Chair

The average chairlift ride is 7 minutes, considerably shorter than most transportation activities such as riding a bus or taking a trip in an airplane. The average chairlift travels at approximately 5 mph, 7 feet every second, providing constant directional air flow. Chairs are spaced approximately 50 feet apart. Express lifts, found at many ski areas and resorts, travel at nearly 17 mph, with chairs spaced over 100 feet apart.

Unloading the Lift

Standard ski area safety rules and on-mountain signage require that people clear the unload area quickly after disembarking. Once clear of the chair, skiers and riders have wide open spaces on which to slide.



“At Wachusett, we opened with limited summer operations. The goal was to provide additional staff training, observe guest behaviors, enhance our cleaning protocols and basically up our game - all to better prepare for Fall/Winter.”

Carolyn Crowley Stimpson, NSAA board member, COO, Wachusett, MA

Open Air Chairlifts

The majority of our lifts are open air chairs where the rider experiences a constant flow of fresh, clean air. Closed cabins like those on a gondola or tram have windows and vents that allow for the exchange of air.



Chairlifts check the boxes for low-risk transportation and recreation.

- Face coverings required
- Outdoor environment
- Skiers and snowboarders will ride the lift with their traveling party
- Lift rides are generally 5-10 minutes, and almost always under 15 minutes
- Lifts travel between 5 and 17mph, creating constant one-way directional airflow
- Chairs are typically spaced 50 or more feet apart

The ski industry is committed to providing outdoor recreation in ways that reduce the risk of infection.



ENDORSEMENTS

The following associations and businesses have advised the creation of this document and endorse its contents:

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* NSAA Board of Directors

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- Jon Rucker, Head/Tyrolia
- Kent Sharp, SE Group

* Alterra Mountain Company

* Boyne Resorts

* POWDR

* Vail Resorts, Inc.

* Colorado Ski Country USA

* Connecticut Ski Areas Association

* Idaho Ski Areas Association

* Intermountain Ski Areas Association

* Massachusetts Ski Areas Association

* Midwest Ski Areas Association

* Montana Ski Areas Association

* Michigan Snowsports Industries Association

* Minnesota Ski Areas Association

* North Carolina Ski Areas Association

* Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Association

* Pennsylvania Ski Areas Association

* Ski Areas of New York

* Ski California

* Ski Maine

* Ski New Hampshire

* Ski New Mexico

* Ski Utah

* Southeastern Ski Areas Association

* Vermont Ski Areas Association

* West Virginia Ski Areas Association

* Wisconsin Ski Areas Association

* Professional Ski Instructors of America

* American Association of Snowboard Instructors

* National Ski Patrol

* Snowsports Industries America

* U.S. Ski and Snowboard

“The expertise within NSAA and the industry around managing risk is very evolved and an integral part of our DNA. Collaboration amongst competitors is our strength as we work together to adapt to the evolving circumstances brought on by this pandemic.”

David Perry, Executive Vice President, ESG (Environment, Social, Governance), Alterra Mountain Company

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