

Mountain Etiquette



OCVS organisation cantonale
valaisanne des secours
kantonale walliser
rettungsorganisation **KWRO** 144

**When in doubt, refrain from skiing
off-piste or freeriding!!**

**You are acting
at your own risk!!**

**Abstain if you are not trained
or experienced!!**

**There is always
risk involved!!**

Golden rules

- **Inform yourself:** avalanche and weather forecasts, ski patrollers, mountain guides.
- **Be prepared:** choice of itinerary, difficulty, duration; never ski off-piste **alone**.
- **Choose the right equipment:** appropriate for the difficulty of the trail (backpack, avalanche transceiver (battery capacity), probe, shovel, warm clothes, drink).
- **Choose an appropriate itinerary:** adapted to the least experienced person in the group, with an alternative return route
- **Inform before setting off:** a third party and the participants of the chosen itinerary.
- **Watch the weather conditions:** snowfall (quantity), wind (direction and strength), temperature (rising), fog (visibility).
- **Adhere to the timetable:** set off early and return early.
- **Observe the signage:** danger of avalanche, prohibitions, quiet zones.
- **Respect the environment:** fauna, flora.
- **Dial 144 in case of an accident** (112 in Europe): Never put your life at risk to rescue a victim and always make sure you are safe.
- **If in doubt, don't go,** or make sure you are accompanied by a mountain guide.

1. Checklist

At home:

- Equipment (Avalanche transceiver (battery capacity) - probe pole - shovel)
- Choice of itinerary
- Get up-to-date information before departing
- Inform a third party

At the start:

- Check the itinerary, with alternative options
- Obtain information from ski patrollers and mountain guides
- Switch on and check the avalanche transceiver

En route:

- Verify your information
- Select a safe route for the ascent and descent
- An on-time or earlier return is preferred

2. Information

Useful numbers

Emergency: **144**

Weather report: **162**

Internet

Avalanche report: **www.slf.ch**

Météo: **www.meteosuisse.ch**

Free applications

White Risk : avalanche forecast

Echo 112 : It sends your position to 144

Inform 144 when you call with the application

**Always get up to date information
before choosing an itinerary
or deciding to ski off-piste
or free-ride!**

3. Weather and snow conditions

Fog

abstain if there is poor visibility or a danger of falling or getting lost!

Snow

amount of fresh snow, date of last snowfall
possible risk of avalanche danger

Wind

speed, duration
possible risk of avalanche danger

Sun and heat

temperature, time of day, cloud cover
possible risk of avalanche danger

**After a new snowfall,
wait at least one day
before skiing/riding!**

4 . Check the risk

Avalanche danger scale

1 Low	Generally favorable conditions. Descend one at a time on steep slopes. Avoid pockets of freshly windblown snow in the steeper sections! Be careful not to fall over an edge!
2 Moderate	Predominantly favorable conditions. Avoid extremely steep slopes of aspects and altitudes mentioned in the avalanche forecast as well as pockets of freshly windblown snow! Caution on very steep slopes! Descend one at a time!
3 Considerable	Partially unfavorable conditions. Experience in avalanche risk assessment required! Inexperienced athletes: stay in-bounds or join a group that is led by a professional. Avoid the very steep slopes!
4 High	Unfavorable conditions. Stay on moderately steep slopes. Avoid steep slopes! Watch for avalanche runout zones (remotely or spontaneously triggered avalanches). You are better off staying in-bounds!
5 Very high	Very unfavorable conditions. Tip: you better stay home! Stay safe on groomed pistes in-bounds that are open!

The 5 degrees of danger are valid in all alpine countries.
Steep slopes: > 30 degrees Very steep slopes: > 35 degrees Extremely steep slopes: > 40 degrees

5. Decision

1. At home - Are we going?

- choice of itinerary
- last avalanche and weather forecast prior to departure

2. At the start

- verify the itinerary (ski patrollers and mountain guides)

3. En route, proper route selection

- snow cover
- fresh snow accumulation

4. Descent

- one at a time
- don't stop in the middle of a slope
- always keep the Rider in view
- plan an escape route in case of an avalanche being triggered

Don't follow unknown tracks!
Never go alone!

6. Rescue

If you are caught by an avalanche: Try to escape sideways / try to stay on the surface / protect your respiratory tract / when the avalanche stops, create an air pocket with your arms in front of your face

If you are a witness and survivor: Follow the victim with your eyes and mark the point where you saw him/her the last time / Assess the dangers still present / ALERT 144 / Search for the victims downstream (below) the point where they disappeared / Search with the avalanche transceiver
Observe the area carefully to find any surface clues, leave them in place but expose them.

First aid (victim recovered)

1. Is he/she conscious?

talk, shout, pinch on two sides of the neck; if no response - the person is unconscious

2. Carefully clear the airway

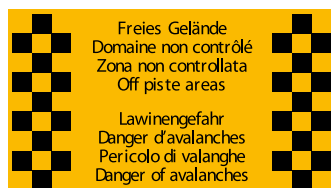
lift the chin if necessary, clear the inside of the mouth (from snow); if s/he is breathing: do not remove from the snow!

 hypothermia, trauma...

3. No breath

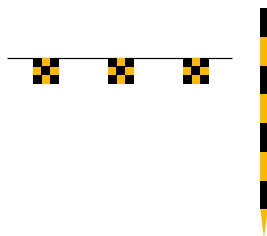
urgent call to **144** : they will help you start resuscitation

Signage of avalanche dangers



Avalanche danger = 3 considerable

End of safe area



Achtung Attenzione
Hier keine markierte und kontrollierte Abfahrt
Ici pas de descente balisée et contrôlée
Qui nessuna discesa demarcata ne controllata
Here no marked and controlled run

Achtung Attenzione
Abfahrt nicht verlassen Gletscherspalten
Ne quittez pas la descente Crevasses
Non abbandonare la discesa Crepacci
Do not leave the run Glacier crevasses

The off-piste and out-of-bounds areas are neither marked nor controlled (avalanches, falls).

International Ski Federation Rules

1. Do not endanger or injure anyone else.
2. Look where you are going. Adjust your behavior and speed to your abilities and to the current conditions.
3. Respect skiers and snowboarders who are ahead of you.
4. Pass at an appropriate distance.
5. Look uphill before moving out or turning on the piste.
6. Stop at the edge of the piste in locations where you are visible.
7. Ascend and descend on foot at the edge of the piste only.
8. Respect ribbons, ropes, and signage.
9. Provide assistance in case of an accident, alert the ski patrol.
10. Parties involved in an accident and witnesses should exchange contact information.

Responsibility!

This brochure is for information purposes only and **you are acting at your own risk**. An enormous amount of experience and good judgment are necessary to ski and ride off-piste. **We highly recommend joining a group led by a mountain guide.**

Leaving the ski area is a personal act, you are therefore entirely responsible for the risks you take.

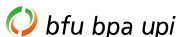
You are moving into an environment in which you are solely responsible for your own safety, with one obligation: **do not create a dangerous situation for anyone else.**

**If an avalanche is triggered on a slope:
you are responsible for it!**

Your Mountain Etiquette partners



Département de la Santé, des affaires sociales et de l'énergie
Département de l'éducation, de la culture et du sport
Département de l'économie et du territoire



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