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Don't Let Injury Ruin Your Ski Season!!!

Downhill skiing, cross-country skiing and snowboarding are three of the most popular winter sports, and with the ski season at its peak, Ambulance would like to remind the snow-going community of some important safety tips:

DOWNHILL SKIING

Downhill skiing is the most common of the alpine sports, with a reported 75 percent of all snow-goers participating. Although injuries are more common among novice and less experienced skiers, all participants are at risk. Sprains, lacerations, fractures and bruising are the most common types of injuries, and they often affect knees, wrists and thumbs.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Fewer injuries are associated with cross-country skiing than with downhill, but this can still be a dangerous sport. Sprains/twists, fractures and bruising are most common. Knees, arm/hand and ankle are most frequently affected, as well as thumbs.

Risk factors for injury in both downhill and cross-country skiing include:

- poor condition of ski tracks
- unsuitable/inferior equipment
- poor balance
- inadequate mastery of the cross-country skiing technique.

SNOWBOARDING

Snowboarding is the more "extreme" of the commonly practised alpine sports. Injuries are more common than in skiing, and generally involve sprains, fractures and contusions to the wrists, ankles, knees and head.

Snowboarding injuries often occur as a result of:

- excess speed and loss of control
- colliding with other snowboarders/skiers or objects
- inexperience
- lack of instruction
- fatigue
- unsuitable/inferior/ill-fitting equipment.

The good news is that you can reduce the risk of injury by following a few simple guidelines:



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- get in shape before you go skiing – it is a very physical activity, and pre-season conditioning is very important
- warm - up and stretch before a day out on the slopes
- take lessons before you start – many of the injuries that Ambulance sees affect novice/inexperienced skiers and boarders
- establish the snow conditions before you head out – never go out in conditions in which you are not experienced in
- wear good sun protection – sun reflects strongly off the snow, even in overcast conditions
- do not ski off formal tracks and never ski alone
- ensure that you have the correct equipment for your sport – this includes protective wear (helmet, knee and elbow pads, wrist guards), ski poles, skis, wax, boots, etc. – and that it is in good condition
- ensure rental and/or personal equipment is properly adjusted for you
- ALWAYS tell someone where you are going, and when you will be back
- If you are going outside the boundaries of the Ski fields ALWAYS carry a communication device (such as satellite phone or EPIRB) in case you get into trouble
- carry adequate spare clothing and food, compass, maps and matches if you are ski touring.

If someone is injured in a skiing or snow-boarding accident, you should **call Triple Zero immediately and ask for Ambulance** and apply first aid. If you do not know first aid the Ambulance Triple Zero operator can give you advice over the phone.

The Ambulance Service of NSW has a number of vehicles for use in snowy conditions – an all - terrain vehicle, an oversnow vehicle, two snowmobiles and a number of snow capable 4WD vehicles and trailers. Additionally, extra Ambulance Officers are deployed to the snow fields of NSW during each ski season.

Ambulance wishes all snow-goers a safe, happy and injury-free ski season.

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For further information or local media opportunities please contact Ambulance Media on (02) 9320 7796.