

## The white code - Code of Conduct for Skiers

- 1. Respect for Others** - Everyone on the ski slope must behave in such way so as not to endanger health or life, or cause damage to him or others by dangerous skiing style, defective equipment, incorrectly stored equipment, reduced responsiveness (due to tiredness, illness, alcohol, drugs, etc.)
- 2. Control of speed and skiing style** - A skier must adapt his speed and manner of skiing to his personal ability, to the conditions of the terrain, number of skiers on the slope and weather conditions.
- 3. Choice of route / skiing direction** - A skier coming from behind is responsible for all the skiers skiing in front of him, he must choose his route in such way so as not to endanger skiers ahead. A skier skiing behind another skier must keep sufficient distance leaving the skier in front of him enough space to make his movements freely. This means maintaining a distance and anticipating the intentions of the skier skiing ahead.
- 4. Overtaking** - Overtaking may be done from the right or the left side provided that he leaves enough space for the overtaken skier so as not to endanger him and to leave him enough space to make his movements freely.
- 5. Entering on the slope and starting** - A skier entering a piste or starting again after stopping must look up and down the piste, give way to skiers approaching from above and not endanger skiers in front of him. Unexpected start of a standing skier is very difficult to anticipate and it may cause an unnecessary collision with the approaching skier.
- 6. Stopping and waiting** - A skier is not allowed to stop and wait unreasonably on narrowed places or where the visibility is restricted. Stopping or remaining sitting after a fall under a terrain wave is especially dangerous. A skier who fell must leave such place as soon as possible.
- 7. Climbing and descending on foot** - Person ascending or descending must use the side of the piste.
- 8. Respect for Signals and Markings** - Especially in large resorts with more pistes, the pistes are marked with various signs showing crossings with other pistes, giving warnings of danger or to reduce speed or informing about mountain rescue service or police.

In the Alps, these markings must be respected and their compliance is controlled by the Ski patrol.

9. **Providing assistance** - Every skier is duty-bound to provide first aid to another skier in case of an accident based on his abilities, including anti-shock measures (\*), mark the place of accident above the accident (for example by crossed ski poles) and report the accident to mountain rescue service or to other authorised person and call professional assistance as soon as possible.

10. **Identification** - Each party to an accident (witness, injured party, guilty party) must give their identity upon request. In the Alps, if someone fails to provide help or personal details or runs away from the site of an accident, the person shall be liable to criminal proceedings and subsequent prosecution. If someone causes an accident under the influence of alcohol, the person shall be liable to the same criminal penalty as in the case of a traffic accident. Insurance agencies do not consider accidents under the influence of alcohol as an insured event.

*\*anti-shock measures = silence, warmth, water, relieve pain, transport*

## **Commentary to the Code of Conduct for Skiers**

***The purpose of the Code of Conduct for Skiers, also called "The White Code" or "10 ski commandments" is to improve the safety of skiing.***

1. Skiers and snowboarders are responsible not only for their own behaviour but also for any defective equipment. This also applies to those using newly developed equipment.

Collisions usually happen because skiers or snowboarders are moving too fast. A skier must be able to stop, turn and move within the ability of his own vision. In crowded areas or places where visibility is reduced, skiers must ski slowly, especially at the edge of a steep slope, at the bottom of a piste and within areas surrounding ski lifts and cable cars.

3. Every skier and snowboarder may ski as and where they please, provided that they abide by the rules. The skier or snowboarder in front has priority. The skier or snowboarder skiing behind another in the same direction must keep sufficient distance between himself and the other skier so as to leave the preceding skier enough space to make all his movements freely.

4. A skier or snowboarder who overtakes another is wholly responsible for completing that manoeuvre in such a way as to cause no difficulty to the skier being overtaken. This responsibility rests with him until the overtaking manoeuvre has been completed. This rule applies even when overtaking a stationary skier or snowboarder.

5. Experience proves that joining a piste or starting to ski again after stopping are the sources of accidents. It is absolutely essential that a skier or a snowboarder enters the piste safely and without causing an obstruction or danger to himself or faster skiers and snowboarders coming from behind.

6. Stops must be made at the sufficiently wide side of the piste. One must not stop in narrow places or where it is difficult to be seen from above.

7. Moving against the general direction poses unexpected obstacles for the skiers, therefore, one must be moving at the side of piste. Moreover, footprints damage the piste and can cause danger to skiers.

8. Skiers and snowboarders should be aware that warning signs, bans, restrictions, etc. are posted in their own interest and should be observed, including the indications of the degree of difficulty of a piste as red and black.

9. It is a cardinal principle for all sportsmen that they should render assistance following an accident. Immediate first-aid should be given, the appropriate authorities alerted and the place of the accident marked to warn other skiers and snowboarders.

10. Witnesses are of great importance in establishing a full and proper report of an accident, and therefore witnesses of an accident must provide information and testimony. Reports of the rescue service and of the police as well as photographs are of considerable assistance in determining civil and criminal liability.

## **Safety - Natural factors**

Safety in the mountains is influenced by many natural and human factors and everyone spending time in the mountains must take these factors into account and strictly observe the instructions of mountain rescue service.

Weather in the mountains is one of the major factors. Within moments a nice sunny weather can change to a blizzard with mist, snow and reduced visibility. You must be prepared to these sudden changes (the quality of your clothes will be put to a test) and adjust the manner and speed of your movement.

A skier must choose the terrain appropriately to his abilities; that means choosing a piste with green, blue, red or black marking. Green is meant for learners, blue for beginners, red for advanced and black for proficient skiers. Another thing to consider is that the piste is different in the morning when it is freshly groomed, than it is in the afternoon when moguls are made or the slope is slushy or icy. Even one piste may have different sections; an icy section follows after a slushy one or a deep snow section. You need to be prepared to these changing conditions.

Altitude - at present, it is no problem to ascend in just a few minutes in a cable car a few thousand meters. This is a burden on the body. Lovers of glaciers are moving at altitudes above 3 000 meters where the air is less dense, sun more dangerous and the temperatures are 5 degrees lower for each thousand meters. In sensitive persons, this may cause symptoms of altitude sickness (feeling of malaise, lethargy, headache).

## **Safety - Human factors**

Human factors are to a large extent involved in accidents during skiing, e.g.:

- Alcohol, narcotic drugs
- Negligence of mountain rescue service instructions and markings
- Non-compliance of the White Code
- Lack of fitness
- Overestimating own abilities
- Underestimating natural factors
- Inappropriate clothing and equipment

## **Skiing - with anticipation and safely**

After a short stay on large slopes, you will realize that despite the existence of the White Code, many skiers ignore it or are not aware of it. It is good to know how to ensure safety of yourself and your children in these situations. Described below are several standard situations and signals where you should pay increased attention. Situations are very similar to those in traffic - sometimes it is not enough that you abide by rules if the problem is caused by a ruthless pirate. It is good to anticipate dangerous situation and to respond adequately.

Skiers skiing side by side - if you and other skier are going side by side at approximately the same speed, and suddenly you do opposing turns (in one turn approaching each other and in the other moving away from each other), this poses a dangerous situation. At the moment of approaching, your speed is multiplied and possible collision may have severe consequences. You can avoid it in two ways: You can lengthen your turn when moving away from each other or you can slow down. A tempting response may be to speed up but it is not the right one because the other skier may do the same and the danger is even bigger than before. Another thing is that a sudden change of your manner of skiing may cause problems to someone skiing behind you.

Ski school participants - group of children or beginners wearing reflective jackets moving under the guidance of an instructor in a much slower pace and using a lot of space on the piste. The instructor

explains how to do long turns, or they traverse the slope from one edge to the other in a cluster called a caterpillar (they are moving one behind another on the same route). Such group must always be overtaken as a whole and never between individual learners. If this is not possible and you have to go between them, slow down to a minimum. This rule is problematic to observe by the same individuals who behave ruthlessly to students of driving school.

Ski narcissist - a big man, not too good skier but with a great equipment and good appearance.....can you recognize a narcissist? This person acts arrogantly and ruthlessly towards his surroundings. He shows off and often violates the 2nd rule of the White Code - Control of speed and skiing style. Adding their usual weight around 100 kg, it is clear that the consequences of collision with such person would be borne by the other person. Try to warn him about his dangerous skiing style. Usually, this won't help at all (if he does not recognize your authority), and the narcissist will probably react in the opposite way than you would expect. In such case, report the incident to the Ski patrol, an employee or a mountain rescue service. Luckily, there is often enough decent people who will support your side and the guilty one is pacified.

**Ski with anticipation and safely and enjoy many kilometres on skis without accidents and falls.**