

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)

This Risk Alert contains valuable information. Please share it with your Wright Specialty Clients and any other interested educational institutions.



February 2014

## Safety Planning for Young Skiers



According to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, more than 310,000 people received medical treatment in 2012 for injuries related to sledding, snowboarding, skiing and ice skating. Children, whose bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments are still growing and have not matured, are more susceptible to injury. A child's growth plate is a natural "soft-spot," an area of developing cartilage where bone growth is weaker than the nearby ligaments and tendons.

The purpose of this Risk Alert is to provide information to help our policyholders to reduce the risk of injury to young skiers.

**Are children more likely to be injured while skiing than adults?** Yes, according to ski-injury.com, an organization dedicated to alpine ski safety and injury prevention. While children made up 21% of their study's control population, they represented nearly 35% of the injured population. Additionally, injuries per 1,000 skier days were double for children as compared to adults: 5.28 vs. 2.64.

### **What can educational institutions do to lower the risk of injuries to young skiers?**

There are several measures that can be taken to prevent ski-related accidents during school-sponsored activities:

- Assess each child's skiing ability. Assume the child is inexperienced unless otherwise proven. Identify each child's ability level and group them accordingly with inexperienced skiers on the easier trails.
- Have them take lessons given by qualified instructors.
- Require the use of safety equipment - such as helmets, goggles, sunglasses and mittens. Skiing is a helmeted sport and the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons recommends all skiers wear helmets while skiing and snowboarding. To set

an example, require adults to wear them as well.

- Bindings need to be set for the height, weight and ability of the students. Skis, boots and poles should be of the right size and type for the child. Parental notification of ski trips should occur as far in advance as possible so that students can get their equipment serviced and checked prior to the trip.
- Dress properly - clothing should be sufficient to keep skiers warm and comfortable. Provide parents and guardians with a list of necessary clothing and gear beforehand, including a change of clothes. Neck-ups, waterproof pants (not jeans), and waterproof base layers should be on the list.
- Explain and require adherence to rules. Both the skier's responsibility code and whatever rules (such as off-limit areas and skiing conditions) are posted at the resort or facility should be explained. Make it clear that skiing in a reckless manner or racing will not be tolerated and can result in disciplinary action.
- Instruct children how to properly use the different types of lifts.
- Provide proper supervision. The level of supervision varies depending on the age and skill of the students. If children are permitted to ski independently, require a buddy-system so no one is alone. Check on the skiers during the day, such as during rest periods. Chaperones must be good skiers so they can supervise the students on the slopes. At times, chaperones may think that once the students are on the slopes their responsibilities diminish which is not the case.
- Provide a map of the facility. Young skiers should be able to identify the different gradations of the slopes. Instruct them to ski only on the slopes that are appropriate for their skill level. They should also be aware of the daily grooming report.
- Prepare for emergencies - distribute contact cellphone numbers for the local ski patrol, teachers and other supervisors. Children should know what to do in the event they are separated from the group. Listening to music while skiing limits a skier's ability to hear others around them. This increases the likelihood of a collision. While ski resorts usually do not prohibit the use of personal music devices, it should be dissuaded for younger skiers. Listening to music is an added risk factor.



Many educational institutions require parents or guardians to sign a waiver and release before their child can participate. We agree. A waiver and release form could help the school in the event of litigation.

Parental permission forms must explain all aspects of the trip. Direct parents and guardians to the venue's website. Include any material provided by the venue or trip operator.

## Resources

### **American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons**

*Position Statement on Helmet use for Skiing and Snowboarding Safety*

[www.aaos.org/about/papers/position/1152.asp](http://www.aaos.org/about/papers/position/1152.asp)

### **National Safety Council Fact Sheet on Sledding**

[http://www.nsc.org/news\\_resources/Resources/Documents/Ski\\_and\\_Snowboard\\_Safely.pdf](http://www.nsc.org/news_resources/Resources/Documents/Ski_and_Snowboard_Safely.pdf)

### **National Ski Areas Association (NSAA)**

*Ski Tips for Kids*

<http://www.nsaa.org/safety-programs/safety-facts-tips/ski-tips-for-kids/>

## National Ski Patrol

Slope Safety

<http://www.nsp.org/slopesafety/respcode.aspx>

## Ski-injury.com

*Children on the Slopes*

<http://www.ski-injury.com/specific-risk-groups/kids>



Wright Specialty Insurance | 1-877-976-2111 | [ssims@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:ssims@wrightinsurance.com) | <http://www.wrightspecialty.com>  
333 Earle Ovington Blvd., Suite 505  
Uniondale, NY 11553

[Forward this email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to [lcicciari@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:lcicciari@wrightinsurance.com) by [ssims@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:ssims@wrightinsurance.com) |  
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Wright Specialty Insurance | 333 Earle Ovington Blvd., Suite 505 | Uniondale | NY | 11553