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Ski touring on the slopes

Tips and rules of conduct

Ski touring is booming. A growing number of ski tourers also use ski slopes, both during the day and at night. They do this because they enjoy moving around outdoors in the wintertime and, increasingly, as a means of training for ski mountaineering competitions.

During the day, the 'oncoming traffic' of ski tourers making their way up the ski slope can create conflicts and accidents with downhill skiers. Outside of operating hours, the ski slopes are closed to the public. The night is particularly dangerous because, during this time, the ski slopes are made ready for the next day of downhill skiing. Ski slope vehicles often move around on steel cables extending several hundred metres across the terrain. These cables are barely visible and can be quite fatal to anyone who happens to collide into one on the ski slope at night. In addition, the night is also used to trigger controlled avalanches to protect the ski area, which creates yet another life-threatening risk to anyone using ski slopes outside of operating hours!

The Swiss Alpine Club (SAC), Swiss Cableways (SCW) and the Swiss Council for Accident Prevention (BFU) have prepared a list of tips and rules of conduct for ski tourers on ski slopes. The aim is to ensure that all winter sports enthusiasts are able to enjoy their hobby free of conflicts and accidents.



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Five rules

- 1 Outside of operating hours** of transport facilities, ski slopes are closed and are therefore off limits. Ski tourers must also respect operating hours. Risk of death! Only ski slopes that are explicitly open outside of operating hours may be used for ski touring.
- 2 During operating hours** of transport facilities, FIS rules apply to all users of ski slopes. The following rules apply specifically to ski tourers:
 - Keep to the side of the ski slope when climbing.
 - Only climb in single file, not side-by-side.
 - Do not cross in places where visibility is restricted.
 - Take particular care in the vicinity of mounds, in narrow passages, on steep slopes and in the presence of ice.
 - Respect downhill skiers; they have priority.
- 3** You must follow instructions given to you by ski slope and rescue workers. If the ski-lift operator charges a fee for use of ski slopes, then this fee must be paid in full.
- 4** When particular circumstances require, the ski-lift operator may prohibit ski tourers from accessing its ski slopes, even during operating hours.
- 5** Quiet zones and conservation areas must be respected at all times. Forest areas must be avoided at dusk and at night (particularly with headlamps).



For all users of ski slopes, including ski tourers:
climb and descend at your own risk and responsibility.

Special training courses

Anyone wishing to use ski slopes outside of operating hours must first find out what is permissible and what is not. The SAC website [D: www.sac-cas.ch/skitourengehenaufpisten](http://www.sac-cas.ch/skitourengehenaufpisten) [F: www.sac-cas.ch/randonneesurpistes](http://www.sac-cas.ch/randonneesurpistes) provides an overview of special training courses for ski tourers; the aim of these

courses is to provide pointers, without going into excessive detail. In all cases, each ski resort operator's up-to-date rules on the use of ski slopes should be used as the primary frame of reference.