SNOWSPORT SCOTLAND   Code of Ethics

Appendix 6   Safety& Protective Equipment

Snowsport Scotland recognises that all snowsports can include degrees of inherent risk and expects all participants to take account of this and adapt their activity accordingly with regard to factors such as prevailing snow, terrain, and weather conditions.

The FIS Code of Conduct and any additional rules imposed by individual resorts must be obeyed at all times.

Bindings should be appropriately adjusted for the individual so as to give the maximum possible protection through their release facilities. Each person should also be properly clothed for their activity.

It is the view of Snowsport Scotland that adults engaged in recreational activities within developed and pisted areas should not normally be exposed to such a level of risk or danger that the wearing of protective headgear would be required. Those engaged in competitive sport, of whatever form, must take account of current rules and any other regulations that the relevant governing body and competition organiser may impose. All persons should also take account of any requirements imposed under insurance policies that they have subscribed to.

Other than in competition situations, the wearing of protective equipment must be a matter for the individual. However SNSC advises that all children under the age of 8 should wear protective headgear of an appropriate standard and properly sized for the child. Chinstraps/buckles must always be correctly fastened.

SNSC recommends that persons between the ages of 8 and 16 years, i.e. those who the law would not consider to have attained adult status, should wear protective headgear whenever snow conditions are described by resort reports to be hard-packed or icy and when snow cover is reduced to a level where resort reports describe runs or pistes as other than complete. SNSC also recommends that persons in this age group should wear protective headgear when engaged in pre-competition activities or what might be recognised as race training where young people may well be expected to travel at high speed or in a manner approaching, or in line with their uppermost level of technical ability.

SNSC suggests that adults give careful consideration to wearing protective headgear whenever snow conditions are described by resort reports to be hard-packed or icy and when snow cover is reduced to a level where resort reports describe runs or pistes as other than complete.

SNSC wishes to emphasise that there are negative elements to wearing of protective headgear; persons so equipped may tend to feel free from risk and may be encouraged to ski or ride at speeds or on terrain that could place them beyond their ability to remain in control. Such tendencies might lead to individuals becoming more at risk and, very importantly, could put others in danger. In addition, students under instruction may have their hearing impaired by the presence of a helmet. Since 1997 there has been a European and British Standards Specification entitled "Helmets for Alpine Skiers" (BS/EN 1077/1996). In future you should look out for helmets that meet this standard. This standard also applies to snowboarders and snowbladers.

SNSC policy states that all persons engaged in off-piste activities should carry, and know how to use, avalanche transceivers that meet current ISO standards. SNSC recommends that persons engaged in ski-mountaineering or extreme sport should wear protective headgear.

SNSC wishes to emphasise that any form of device designed to aid location/recovery of avalanche victims, which does not include transceiver capability, gives substantially reduced protection by failing to provide for self-rescue. Such other devices rely on the speedy arrival of suitably equipped rescue or patrol services and are therefore not recommended.

SNSC reminds snowsport enthusiasts that the most important factor for safety is to follow the International Code of Conduct, especially the rule that every person must at all times be in control. Failure to do so is the primary cause of serious and fatal accidents on the slopes.