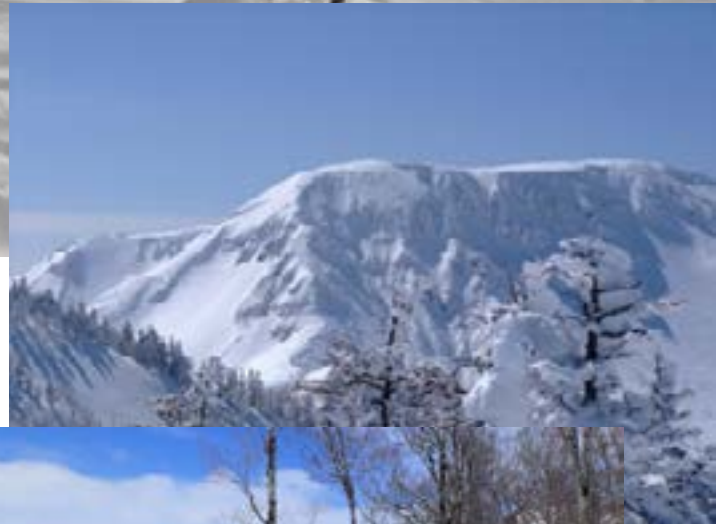


* To Backcountry Users *



《Do you know...?》

The area beyond the controlled ski area boundary is hazardous mountain terrain. Out of the ski area boundary, you are at your own risk and responsible for everything by yourself like an independent mountain climber, regardless any reason. In order to avoid potential risks and to come back safely, this leaflet shows the important rules you should follow.

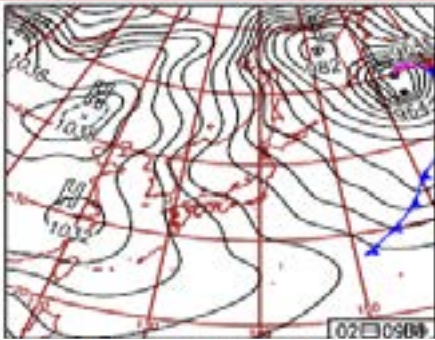


* Important Rules *

《Rule #1》 Research the terrains and the route you are planning to go in, and

Evaluate your party' skill level properly.

- Is the leader of your party experienced enough?
- Do you have enough stamina, skills and knowledge to ski/ snowboard in the hazardous mountain area?
- Is the route appropriate to your party' s level?
- Do all members of your party understand the route the party is planning to go in as well as the hazardous places in the route?



Strong winter weather map (Quotation from Japan Meteorological Agency HP)

《Rule #3》 Carry appropriate equipment.

You should carry all the necessary equipment for the backcountry area; such as the following:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm clothes (back up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Avalanche beacon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shovel | <input type="checkbox"/> Probes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Head light |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lighter | <input type="checkbox"/> Map etc. |



《Rule #2》 Check the weather, snow conditions, and avalanche advisory.

- Have you checked the current weather and the latest forecast at the route?
- Do you understand the changing snow conditions and avalanche risks at the area you are planning to go in?



《Rule #4》 Submit a “Climbing Plan Report” to a local mountain police office.

- Have you made a “Climbing Plan” ?
- Is the “Climbing Plan” shared with all the members of your party and their families?
- Have you submitted the “Climbing Plan Report” to a local police in order to mitigate the potential risk in the backcountry area?

※ You can find the official notification sheet of backcountry ski tour in each ski resorts

《How does “Climbing Plan Report” work?》

“Climbing Plan Report” is neither a permit nor an application for a permit.

It is the way to recognize the risks by yourself and to show your will to go in the backcountry area at your own risk and under your sole responsibility.

“Climbing Plan Report” can play an important role for search and rescue in a case you have an emergency situation.

Keep the above rules in your mind.

Communicate with your family and friends regularly, and

Enjoy the beautiful nature!

Backcountry Warning

1. Introduction

Skiing began in 2500 B.C. in Northern Europe as a mode of transportation for hunting in winter mountains. It was gradually adopted for military transportation in snow mountains, and finally became leisure and sports as well. Subsequently, slopes on the mountains were started to be developed for skiing practice. This is the history of how skiing has developed.

These days, much more skiers/snowboarders are getting interested in backcountry skiing/snowboarding than before. Powder snow and untouched nature fascinate skiers/snowboarders. Although backcountry skiers/snowboarders in the past had to climb a mountain on their own foot with skies and snowboards, skiers/snowboarders today can use ski lifts and gondolas to reach uncontrolled backcountry areas more easily.

As skiing has been originally developed in natural environment, backcountry skiing/snowboarding itself should not be banned; however, skiers/snowboarders should know the risks of natural snow mountains, have sufficient knowledge and be well experienced. Without those, backcountry skiing/snowboarding should be restricted.

To enjoy backcountry skiing/snowboarding with avoiding risks, skiers/snowboarders should know inherent risks of natural snow mountain, carry appropriate equipment, and submit a "Climbing Plan Report" .

2. Backcountry Skiing

"Backcountry" is skiing/snowboarding in the uncontrolled and unpatrolled mountain area beyond the controlled ski area boundary at their own risk and under their own responsibility.

In this leaflet, "Backcountry" is defined as skiing/boarding outside a controlled ski area boundaries by using ski lifts/gondolas access.

3. Risks of "Backcountry"

"Backcountry" faces various hidden risks such as:

- ① Avalanche,
- ② Slipping down or tumbling from cliff, steep slope, or cornice,
- ③ Falling from snow covered top of deep valley,
- ④ Missing the route due to sudden weather change,
- ⑤ Missing the route due to the wrong judgment, and
- ⑥ Losing alternative return route other than climbing us the original slopes

4. Risk Management

Before entering into the hazardous winter mountain area, proper knowledge and judgment are required for example like the following:

- ① What kind of snow condition, weather, temperature and other climate conditions cause avalanche,
- ② How frequent avalanche occurs on the planned route,
- ③ What are important points to forecast local weather changes,
- ④ How suitable the planned route is according to the terrain of the mountain, and
- ⑤ Whether the enough equipment is prepared and all necessary information is collected

It is important to avoid being alone in the backcountry area and to stop the tour by facing sudden weather changes and/or the party' s health bad condition.

5. To Survive

To survive through an emergency situation in the backcountry area, the party should be equipped at least with the following items:

- ① Avalanche beacon
- ② Probes
- ③ Shovel
- ④ Fully charged cell phone (ideally with extra batteries)

Besides, the backcountry users must carry necessary food to survive for a few days just waiting for a rescue team in a terrible weather situation.

6. “Climbing Plan Report”

It is the best for backcountry skiers/snowboarders just to enjoy the natural mountain without any accident. On the other hand, in the case of an accident, submitting a “Climbing Plan Report” is very important in order to insure prompt rescue actions.

“Climbing Plan Report” enables a rescue team to narrow down their search area from a huge snow mountain area and makes the rescue effort smoother and faster. Consequently, the probability of survival will be significantly improved. Also, you can obtain local update information from the professionals when you submit the report.

※ You can find the official notification sheet of backcountry ski tour in each ski resorts

7. Others

Certain areas are classified as off-limits due to the reasons like the following:

- ① Skiing/snowboarding in the area may cause avalanches,
- ② Skiing/snowboarding straight across the ski trails may cause collisions with others,
- ③ Skiers/snowboarders may run into trees or towers in the area,
- ④ Skiers/snowboarders may slide down or fall due to the area’s complex terrain, and
- ⑤ Other dangers expected in the area.

Skiers/snowboarders should be careful about the risks by coming back to the regular skiing area from the uncontrolled backcountry area. Also, skiers/snowboarders should pay careful attention to the speed in order to avoid potential risk of any collision with others.

8. Conclusion

Keep in mind again that you should be extremely careful to enjoy “Backcountry”.

For example, the party should not ski/snowboard simultaneously at once in the uncontrolled backcountry area. It would be highly dangerous if an avalanche occurs and everyone is swallowed by the avalanche. In such case, nobody would be left to rescue others and contacting outside itself would become impossible.

Other important thing is that you should not change the route from the one reported in the “Climbing Plan Report” because it makes very hard to search the party in an accident.

If a ski area has its special local rules due to its terrains and environment, the party should also follow the special local rules. There is no way to avoid 100% risks in severe nature of winter mountains even following all the rules. Enjoying skiing/snowboarding in the backcountry is at your own risk. Act diligently, judge wisely and submit your “Climbing Plan Report”. Also, stay on the route as reported in the “Climbing Plan Report” because it would be the only way to lead to a fast search and a timely rescue in case of an accident in the backcountry area.

《Glossary》

“Backcountry” …Skiing/snowboarding in an uncontrolled and unpatrolled natural snow mountain area beyond the ski area boundaries.

“(Controlled) Ski area” …Ski courses, ski slopes, and other areas maintained and controlled for skiing and snowboarding by a ski resort company. It is also referred just as “ski area” in this leaflet. The area beyond the ski area is called “uncontrolled area”. Skiers/snowboarders should follow the instructions by ski patrol and the rules defined by the resort.

“Off-limits areas” …Areas banned for skiers/snowboarders from entering. The area is usually marked with special ropes and signs. Off-limits areas are prohibited due to collision risks, risk to cause avalanches, dangerous terrains and other reasons.

【 Support group 】

Nagano Prefecture
Nagano Regional Development Bureau



Ski Association of Japan

