

School Ski Trips and Clubs

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Risk Alert

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Skiing is a wintertime sport enjoyed by many, but it is also a high-risk activity that can result in serious injury. If a school district sponsors a skiing club, or plans to organize a skiing event, they should keep the following in mind:

- A school district has liability for any auxiliary organizations, booster groups, parent teacher organizations, and student body organizations for activities or work that they conduct or perform at the district's direction and within the scope of their duties to the district. In other words, if a school district gives a group permission for an activity, or for any work being done by volunteers, it is included under the district's coverage. However, a district can choose to exclude an activity from coverage by withholding permission.
- Ski slope operators are protected by the "Open Space Recreational Use" statute, which in essence, says that they are not liable for skiers' accidents unless the accident is the result of an unknown or should-have-known hazard.

Because the risk of ski accidents are so severe and a school district's liability can be inclusive, we advise that school districts do not sponsor ski trips or clubs. If your district does have ski trips or clubs, we recommend the following:

- Encourage the group that is coordinating the event to obtain its own special event policy, or verify that the club obtains its own separate coverage.
- Require that all participants in the trip or club sign participation waivers that include hold harmless language and a parent signature before the event.

