safe ski mountaineering

1. be in good health and fit

Ski tours are endurance sports. They make your heart, circulation and muscles work hard, so good health, a high fitness level and an honest adoption of pace without anybody in your group getting out of breath. Make sure you pace yourself and have enough energy for the descent.

2. study the avalanche bulletin

Before going on tour, find out the details regarding the avalanche danger: Which level? What? Where? Pay particular attention to information about the danger level (1-5), about avalanche prone locations (Where is it dangerous for avalanches to happen?), on tracks and existing tracks. Study the avalanche bulletin and plan your tour carefully.

3. use complete equipment

Make sure you have the right equipment for winter conditions and that your basic back pack weighs little. For available elements, always check and prove that you have the right equipment and that all the necessary equipment for the mountain is available. Check the practical skills to the risks in the mountains in winter. The practical skills in mountaineering are taught in training and avalanche courses; they are a great way to get fit, experience nature and socialise.

4. take breaks and orienteer

Liquids, energy and breaks are required to maintain performance and concentration. Hot beverages are ideal for quenching your thirst and keeping you warm. Make sure you get enough fluids and not to exaggerate with their cold. Having enough food and energy means to have enough strength and avoid safety threats. The mountain is an endurance sport with cold conditions, strong winds and windswept, steep slopes; always think twice before to set out on long tours.

5. keep your distances

Running and running on the lead on the snowpacks and correctly maintain a distance of 20 m between mountaineers. When ascending a steep slope, ski tours at a distance of 10 m between mountaineers; distance at 30 m if there are already existing tracks. The ideal group size for ski mountaineering is around 4 people, for guided tours the head count 8+1 has been established as a recommendation for the maximum group size. In bigger groups, skiers can lose control in difficult communication, lacking central control and causing sluggishness.

6. avoid falls

Falls on downhill sections are the main cause of accidents on ski tours. They are also a major additional load on the snowpack. Basic riding technique and a speed that matches your ability and body are key. A fall behind can protect against head injuries. Beware of falls that might result in injuries. Use a ski helmet! Falling on heights is dangerous. The closer the headcount of your team, the closer the risk of falling.

7. go in small groups

Small groups (up to six people) are safer. Communication with other ski tours or skiers and mutual consideration prevent dangerous situations. Stay with your group. Inform someone you trust of your destination, your route and the estimated time of return. In case of an avalanche, chances are higher than with smaller groups.

8. respect nature & environment

The mountains provide a valuable environment for experiencing adventure and joy. Be respectful for the wilderness of wild animals, respect protected zones and do not enter information areas. Use public transport or car-share to get to your starting point. Leave your garbage on the snowpack. Do not litter! Use public transport or car-share to get to your starting point. Leave your garbage on the snowpack. Do not litter! Use the wilderness to conserve the unique mountain environment. Respect solidarity; don’t go for adventure "hiking in the mountains'' without a clear purpose and proven skills. Enjoy this freedom! Be considerate of wild animals, respect protected zones and do not enter information areas. Use public transport or car-share to get to your starting point. Leave your garbage on the snowpack. Do not litter! Use public transport or car-share to get to your starting point. Leave your garbage on the snowpack. Do not litter! 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Stop or Go © properly.

Qualified trainers teach how to use the Stop or Go © card folder and the booklet on mountain ski touring. About 80% of avalanche accidents can be prevented using Stop or Go ©. (Check 1 based on Werner Munter + “Check 2”) as well as avoiding avalanches in the backcountry.

Stop or Go

Orders of the Cardfolder and the booklet Ski Mountaineering at 162 pages, numerous photos and illustrations. Booklet Ski Mountaineering in German language.

Risks

The harmonised European Avalanche Danger Scale (1-5) summarises the intrinsically hazardous conditions of the snow pack which are the cause for instability, triggering probability and frequency of avalanches.

- 1: Low. Danger of triggering small (less than 5 cm) snow slabs can be rated as negligible. There is very little risk both for avalanches and for triggering.合格性 indicators such as recent small avalanches are negligible.
- 2: Moderate. Triggering small (less than 5 cm) snow slabs is possible in the event of severe weather. There is an increased risk of triggering an avalanche. The natural instability of the snow pack is rated as low. Qualifiers indicators such as recent small avalanches are important.
- 3: Considerable. Triggering small (less than 5 cm) snow slabs is possible in the event of severe weather. There is an increased risk of triggering larger avalanches. The natural instability of the snow pack is rated as medium. Qualifiers indicators such as recent small avalanches are important.
- 4: High. Triggering snow slabs and avalanches is possible. There is a high risk both for avalanches and for triggering. Qualifiers indicators such as recent small avalanches are important.
- 5: Very High. Triggering snow slabs and avalanches is possible in the event of severe weather. There is a high risk both for avalanches and for triggering. Qualifiers indicators such as recent small avalanches are important.

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