

The Schools and Groups Safety Management Checklist for visiting Whakapapa and Tūroa ski areas.

Kia Ora,

Use this checklist to ensure you get the most out of your visit to Mt Ruapehu this winter with your school or group.

Prior to arriving:

- ☐ Carry out a **risk assessment** (RAL has supplied a generic one which can be used by schools and groups as a start point, you will need to add to this for your school). It is recommended that this is done as a **team** exercise.
- ☐ Consider using the **Minister of Education (MOE) resources** for Education outside the classrooms (EOTC) trips: <http://eotc.tki.org.nz/EOTC-home/EOTC-Guidelines/Tool-Kit>
- ☐ Familiarise yourself with the **RAL Safety Management System** here: <https://sway.office.com/R2ne2c4XPTkepiRF?ref=Link>
- ☐ Check your **adult to student ratios**, the Schools Safety Policy (RAL) recommends a ratio of **1:5 for primary/intermediate**, and **1:8 for secondary schools**.

Prepare the group or learners by going through some safety material:

- ☐ Watch the international **snow code** video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erqQkSgfJ3U>
- ☐ Read and understand the **RAL's Snow Code of Conduct**: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14oujfRj3KmcvJiL-A-WOSeK6d91QiZL9/view?usp=sharing>
- ☐ Explain ski area **Signage**. Here is a video resource <https://youtu.be/LCruFud1SuM>. The Appendix has a summary.

- ☐ Get familiar with the **ski areas and the different trails**. A map can be found here: <https://www.mtruapehu.com/winter/trail-maps/>
- ☐ Watch the **Volcanic Hazards** Video and discuss what to do in the event of an eruption: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B832VwO0UWE>

Prepare your drivers making sure they have:

- ☐ Read our **winter driving tips** in the Appendix the bottom of this checklist.
- ☐ Been made aware of the **pre-start vehicle checks** your school requires.
- ☐ Confirmed their **licence/s and registrations** are up to date and valid.

Make sure everyone is prepared for an alpine environment, some recommended equipment is:

- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Eye wear - sunglasses and goggles
- ☐ Gloves and or mittens
- ☐ Thermal layers top and bottom – polypro, fleece or wool is best (avoid cotton, it gets wet and cold!)
- ☐ Polypropylene (poly pro) or wool Socks.
- ☐ Winter appropriate footwear – good grip suitable for walking on ice. Over the shoe grips can be bought online.



On the day:

- ☐ Read the daily status report.
 - Tūroa: <https://www.mtruapehu.com/turoa/report>,
 - Whakapapa: <https://www.mtruapehu.com/whakapapa/report>
- ☐ Check the weather forecast:
 - Whakapapa: <http://www.metservice.com/skifields/whakapapa>
 - Tūroa: <http://www.metservice.com/skifields/turoa>
- ☐ Decide on a meeting point for anyone who gets lost, and arrange for a time to meet there
- ☐ Confirm your supervisors / adult helpers all know how to:
 - Contact each other,
 - Call Safety Services (Ski patrol) if assistance is needed.

Qualified Instructors

All our Snowsports Instructors hold a **NZSIA/SBINZ Level 1 qualification or higher** (or international equivalent).

In the event of an injury

- Send someone to the bottom of the **nearest lift or speak to a RAL staff member directly** and ask for **ski patrol** (Safety services) assistance.
- Safety services will assess the injury and may transport the person to the **Urgent Care Clinic** at the base of the ski area.

- To treat any minor (under 16 years old), we need **consent of guardian** (parent or written approval for a teacher or caregiver). **An Adult will need to accompany the minor at the urgent care clinic.**
- **Leave someone in charge** of the rest of the group.
- Be aware that there is a charge to be seen by a medical professional Urgent Care clinic. The clinic has x-ray facilities and casting available.
- After being seen by the medical team the person will be either discharged or referred on for further assessment. Depending on the nature of injury if the person needs further medical treatment, they may get to it via either a private car, ambulance or helicopter.

After your visit:

- ☐ Let RAL know about your experience and give **feedback**: <http://bit.ly/2J6Rpfo>

This will allow RAL to work towards providing a better experience for schools and groups, to learn what went well and what could be done better next time.

Risk Assessment Template – use this as a guide and add to it if need be

Hazard/Task	Location or Hazardous Activity	Risk Pre-controls	Expert Assistance	Controls	Risk Post Controls	Review and Audit
(Injury Type)			(Internal or External)			(who/when)
				Eliminate or Minimise		
Driving to/from ski area	Various			Appropriate vehicles / speed / safety checks / seat belts / vehicle familiarity / distraction management / drive to the conditions / Licensed Drivers / consider use of shuttle from National Park or Ohakune		School / RAL annually
Vehicle / pedestrian accident	Walking from carparks etc			Students are actively supervised during play times, gate and fences.		School / RAL annually
Chairlift / lift related incidents	Lift Stations (top and bottom)		RAL	Lift familiarisation / take lessons / group management / back packs on the front / obey signage / safety of loose items / bar down / Follow RAL Rule – children under 135cm must be accompanied by and adult while riding chairlift		RAL annually
Falling on Ice	Carparks, various		RAL	Be aware of alpine conditions, suitable footwear, use drop off zones.		RAL annually
UV Exposure	All Mountain Locations			Sunscreen / education / protective eye wear /		School
Volcanic Eruption	All Mountain Locations		RAL	Watch 'Staying Safe' video on lahar safety prior to arriving, brief groups on action plan – get to high ground if you hear alarm.		DOC, RAL – annually
Lost Children/students	All Mountain Locations		RAL Safety Services, Police	Group management / uniforms / communication / kids briefing / meeting point / call ski patrol for assistance		School
Abduction/ Child protection risks	All Mountain Locations		Police, MOE	Ensure appropriate supervision is in place at all times when students are on site (hours of school), School Vulnerable Children's Act Policy and Procedure, RAL Ski and Ride School Staff are police vetted annually		School / RAL annually
Skiing/Snowboarding/sliding injury	All Mountain Locations		RAL Safety Services	RAL Safety Services Teams (Ski Patrol) on duty at all times when ski area is operational		RAL – weekly audits
Ski Area Boundaries	All Mountain Locations		RAL Safety Services	Obey all signage – review trail maps with group before you arrive.		RAL – daily trail checks
Poor visibility	All Mountain Locations		RAL Safety Services	Group Management / Terrain familiarisation & choices / Obey all Signage / Stay in open terrain and on marked trails		RAL – weekly audits

Cliffs and other terrain Hazards	All Mountain Locations		RAL Safety Services	Group Management / Terrain familiarisation & choices / Obey all Signage / Stay in open terrain and on marked trails		RAL – weekly audits
Flat Light	All Mountain Locations		RAL Safety Services	Group Management / Terrain familiarisation & choices / Obey all Signage / Stay in open terrain and on marked trails		RAL – weekly audits
Avalanche	All Mountain Locations		RAL Safety Services	Stay in the boundary and open terrain / signage / familiar with the RAL systems / RAL communication		RAL – weekly audits

Appendix 1 – Mt Ruapehu Safety Information

ROAD SAFETY

Conditions on the mountain can change rapidly and without warning, affecting visibility and traction on the roads. Ice and snow build up can be present and extra caution is essential. All the variables that exist on the road normally (wind, wetness, falling rocks) are amplified in the alpine zone. Extra caution is essential.

Recommendations for winter road safety



- ☐ **Plan your trip:** Take a little time to check on **current road conditions** before you leave. Ensure that your **vehicle is in good working order**, an up to date service is recommended. Good wiper blades, antifreeze in your radiator, sufficient tyre tread and adequate brakes will help set you up for success.
- ☐ **Carry an ice scraper to remove any snow or ice build up that could occur during the day**

- ☐ Bring extra gear for unexpected hold ups:
 - **Warm clothing,**
 - **Food and Water.**
- ☐ **Obey Road Signage.** This includes staying off closed roads, they are closed for safety reasons and will open once they have been managed and deemed ok.
- ☐ **Slow Down:** Avoid sudden movements, accelerate and brake smoothly and gently. Use low gears when travelling downhill and let the engine break for you.
- ☐ Be very conservative on the way down at the end of the day, mistakes are not often forgiven in poor winter conditions. Again, use low gears to help maintain a slow speed. Four Wheel Drive (4WDs) although do provide some advantages are still able to lose control in, exercise caution in all vehicles.
- ☐ **Chains:** Occasionally, all vehicles (4WDs included) will be **required** to fit chains in order to drive on the mountain roads. RAL recommends all vehicles carry vehicle specific chains. RAL **does not** offer chain hire at either ski area, an external paid snow **shuttles service** from Ohakune to Tūroa Ski Area, & National Park to the top of the Bruce Road is available. Please do not hesitate to contact customer services on **07 892 4000** for more information.
- ☐ Check the daily ski area status report for updates on road.
- ☐ For **AA 24-hour breakdown** services call – 0800 224 357
- ☐ For **surrounding** areas, a 24-hour road conditions hotline is available call: AA Highway Reports, 090033 222 (calls cost \$1.00 / min) or check the AA Road watch website: <https://www.aa.co.nz/travel/roadwatch/>

PARK & RIDE SHUTTLE TRANSPORT

RAL will not be operating public shuttles during the 2021 season.

If you require shuttle transportation will need to book a shuttle directly with the individual operators. Follow this link to go to Visit Ruapehu link and see the full list, advance booking is advised: <https://bit.ly/35WmgUx>.

- For Whakapapa: A Park and Ride Centre is available with all day free parking in National Park. Most pre-booked shuttles will pick up here: <https://bit.ly/3lYmDUg>
- For Tūroa: Shuttles can be pre-booked from the individual providers and pick up from numerous places throughout Ohakune.
- Note that parking within Whakapapa Village (by The Chateau, Tongariro) is now limited to 3-hour free parking.

MOUNTAIN SIGNAGE

Our goal is to stop as many 'preventable' accidents as we possibly can here at Mt Ruapehu and part of our hazard management strategy includes the use of various safety signs to convey messages to you, our customers.

We have included some of the most common signs you will see while visiting the ski area, we recommend that you become familiar with what they look like and what they mean. It is also a great idea to talk to any children that you are bringing to the snow about these basic signs to ensure they also know what they mean.

Trail Difficulty Indicators

You will find these on ski maps, around the ski areas and online.

Novice Trails

- **Green Circle:** Signifies the easiest terrain more suitable for **beginners**.

Intermediate Trails

- **Blue Square:** Signifies more difficult terrain suitable for **intermediate** skiers and boarders

Advanced Trails

- **Black Diamond:** Signifies difficult terrain which is more suitable for **advanced** skiers and boarders. Beyond this sign are **unmarked obstacles** such as rocks, cliffs, fracture lines and hazardous surface conditions.

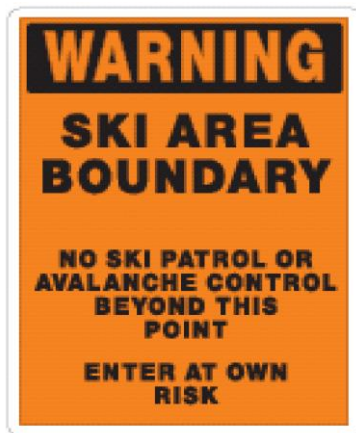
Expert Trails

- **Double Black Diamond:** Suitable for expert skiers and riders due to exceptionally steep slopes and other hazards such as narrow trails, exposure to wind, and the presence of obstacles such as steep drop-offs. Like black diamond trails many hazards are unmarked.

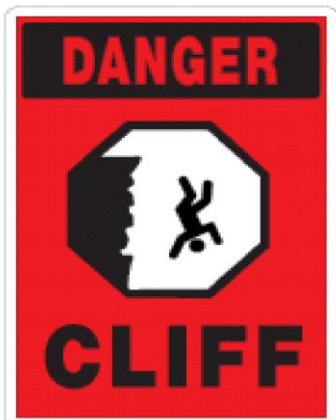
Signage and warnings

This signage provides important information and must be read, understood and followed. Ignoring these signs could result in a lift pass being suspended or cancelled.

Ski Area Boundary: Signifies the edge of the ski area and the services of Safety Services. This means that if you travel past these signs, **no hazard marking, Avalanche control or other risk management system exist**. We recommend that schools stay within the ski area boundary during your visit. Areas outside the ski area boundary require knowledge of snow safety and of backcountry gear.



Danger Cliff: Signifies that a dangerous cliff or drop is in the immediate vicinity.





Keep Out Hazardous Area: You **MUST NOT** enter these areas. These signs are used to mark potential hazards such as waterfall holes and or operational risks where customers are not permitted. Moving machinery for example.



CLOSED: You **MUST NOT** enter a closed area. There are several reasons why RAL need to close parts of the ski area, going into these areas is **not acceptable**, you may lose your pass or be referred to the NZ police. Talk to Safety Services if you have a question about a closed area.



Caution Trails Merge: This sign indicates that ski trails merge near it and to be aware the location of other skiers or boarders.



Caution Marginal Conditions: This sign denotes that the area beyond has marginal access or conditions are **not great for skiing or riding**. Conditions may be icy, have exposed rocks or have limited access back to ski area. You may have to take your ski's or board off and walk for some sections.



Advanced Ability Only: This sign denotes that this lift requires the snow user has an advanced ability level. There may be no trails suitable for beginner or intermediate skiers or snowboarders.



SLOW: These signs are used to inform all customers and staff that the area they are in a **SLOW ZONE**. This means that everyone (even advanced skiers and riders) needs to travel at the same speed they would go as if they were jogging. These areas are checked by the Safety Services team, anyone going too fast risks losing their lift pass.

CHAIRLIFT SAFETY:

Children **less than 135CM** tall **must be accompanied by an Adult** when riding the chairlifts. Read one of the pictures below to help understand what is involved with chair lift safety.

CHAIRLIFT SAFETY

Follow these simple steps to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone

⚠ TO RIDE THE CHAIRLIFT YOU MUST BE PHYSICALLY FIT AND IN GOOD HEALTH ⚠

01

BOARD SAFELY

The chairlift does not slow or stop for boarding. If you require assistance, please ask a member of staff. Stand on the red **WAIT HERE** board and wait for the next chair. Take a seat, **lower the safety bar** and enjoy the ride.





135CM HEIGHT REQUIREMENT

Children less than 135cm must be accompanied by an adult.

02

ON BOARD THE LIFT

Please remain seated at all times with the safety bar down.



03

DISEMBARK SAFELY

The chairlift does not stop or slow down to disembark. **Raise the safety bar when instructed.** Only get off the chair once you are at the unload point in the station. Please **move away from the unload zone** as soon as you can.





Tūroa

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WHAKAPAPA

Information regarding volcanic hazards at Tūroa and Whakapapa:



OPERATING CONDITIONS

The conditions on Mt Ruapehu can **change** from one extreme to another **rapidly**. The website status report shows the conditions at the time the report was written. RAL focuses on making operational decisions based on the safety of customers and staff. Each day decisions are made by trained staff using procedures regarding when a lift can open, go on hold, or close. The mountain itself, due to its sheer size and complex terrain can affect the weather conditions.

WIND CONDITIONS

Wind plays an import role when it comes to opening and closing lifts. Direction, speed, pressure and oscillations affect the Ski Area's ability to operate different lifts. There are comfortable levels to which a chair will be run, forecast trends, wind chill and temperature play a role. If a chairlift needed to be evacuated the conditions people might be exposed to while waiting to be evacuated are also considered.

- **Whakapapa**

At Whakapapa most of the lifts run in a North to South direction. This means a straight Southerly will blow directly down the line of most lifts, which is good because it means we can run them in stronger winds.

A straight **Westerly** will blow directly across the lift lines, which means we would need to **close the lifts or reduce speed**. These speeds are only guides, with wind gusts and lull periods also being taken into consideration to determine operational speeds and viability.

- **Tūroa**

At Tūroa, the lift lines run predominantly from the South-westerly quarter. A forecast for South-westerly winds at Tūroa generally produces very little wind. Tūroa is **affected** far greater by wind from the **Northwest through to the Southeast** and can operate as a general guide in speeds of up to 55km/h.

There are many gullies that funnel the wind, increasing its strength at certain points of different chair lifts. For example, a North-westerly wind may read 55km/h at the top of the Movenpick Chair, but readings of up to 75km/h or more are not uncommon further down the lift line