

Whakapapa – Snow Kiting Policy

Version: 17/4/25



Introduction:

Snow kiting is a form of 'traction' kiting where the user controls the kite using handles or a control bar and can ski or snowboard in any direction depending on the wind strength. This activity is unlikely to become widespread in the ski area but even one can present some risks to the user and others if not appropriately controlled.

Purpose:

To maintain the safety of guests and visitors within the ski area boundaries whilst allowing for snow kiting activities to be undertaken in and around specified locations of Whakapapa Ski Area boundary.

- This policy must be read in conjunction with the [Whakapapa Uphill and After Hours Access Policy](#).



Risks:

The following table outlines the typical risks associated with snow kiting.

Hazard:	Risk (pre-controls)	Control:	Risk (post controls)
Gusty wind causing 'lofting' or unpredictable kite behaviour, bursts of power etc.		Be aware of weather conditions prior to setting up, aim for upslope wind directions rather than downslope (lee) which can be gusty.	
Interaction/collision with aerial ropeway or other ski area infrastructure		Kite in allocated zones only. Always be aware of what is down wind of you if there is an emergency.	
Collision with skier or snowboarder		Kite in allocated zones only. Give way to skiing/snowboard traffic. Choose your days and locations wisely – ensure you have enough clear space.	
Lost kite		Always ride with a leash and check your safety release system prior to launching – EVERY TIME. Kite in allocated zones only. Be aware of downwind hazards, stay within your limits.	

Responsibilities:

The following list of criteria applies to all snow kites to ensure the safety of the user and of other guests using the ski areas:

- Check the weather forecast prior to heading out. The best winds on Ruapehu tend to be lower strength (5-10 knots) and upslope in direction.
- Kiting is ONLY permitted within the allocated zones during winter operational times (8:00am – 4:30pm) - [Whakapapa Snowkiting Zones Map](#)
- Whakapapa risk management plans are designed for the downhill skier/snowboarder and do not account for risks associated with snowkiting.
- All kites must utilise a redundant safety leash system so that they can retain control of the kite if/when they need to activate their primary release.
- Failure to adhere to this policy will result in loss of snowkiting access within the ski area boundaries.
- Whakapapa reserves the right to prohibit any activity, including snowkiting, that presents serious risks to its customers and or visitors as per the HSWA 2015.