

RESORT TO BACKCOUNTRY

10 TIPS FOR BEING SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE IN AND OUT OF BOUNDS

With recent advances in touring gear, the allure of untracked powder and the prolific buzz about all things backcountry, more and more skiers and riders these days are crossing over from resorts to the out-of-bounds. Heading into the backcountry opens a whole new world of adventure and fun. It also brings added responsibility, both for yourself and for fellow backcountry travelers. Here are a few tips to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience as you make the transition from skiing in-area to in the backcountry.



Winter Wildlands Alliance
is a national nonprofit
organization promoting and
preserving winter wildlands
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experience on public lands.
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AT THE SKI AREA

Know and follow the rules for uphill travel. Uphill policies vary widely from one resort to the next.

Be courteous and safe going uphill. Keep to the edge of trails, ascend single file, yield to downhill traffic, control your dog (if allowed), wear a headlamp for visibility, avoid grooming machines and other ski area machinery.

Observe closures & backcountry access rules - some areas have open boundaries, others are closed, and most have certain locations (conditions permitting) where you are allowed to leave and reenter the ski area. Never duck ropes or ski into closed areas. On powder days check the ski area website as regular up-hill routes may be closed for avalanche control work.

Practice. Ski areas offer a more controlled environment than the backcountry so they can be a great place to hone your skills - practice with your avalanche transceiver at a beacon park, work on your skinning (and skiing) technique, build fitness and test out your gear.

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While the transition into the backcountry starts as soon as you cross the ski area boundary, planning and education should start well before then. Below are a few tips to consider to help ensure a safe, fun experience that will keep you headed into the backcountry for more.



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INTO THE BACKCOUNTRY

Get educated. If you really want to get into the backcountry, you need to take a class. Avalanche centers, guides, avtraining.org and avalanche.org are all good places to seek education.

Check the weather and avalanche forecast for the area you will be in and plan accordingly.

Do your trip planning in advance, and let somebody know where your group is headed.

Prepare to be self-reliant - bring the equipment, and skills, you need to take care of yourself and your party in the event of gear malfunction, accident or an emergency.

Be courteous - don't boot in the skin track, pack out your trash, control your dog, and think about where you go to the bathroom.

Above all, be safe - follow safe backcountry travel protocol, do a beacon check before you enter avalanche terrain, dig pits to assess conditions, know your group's limits, and be prepared to adjust your expectations and plans for the day when conditions change.

