

- Emilio Trampuz -

Safety doesn't have to be boring. We can be safer, while still having lots of fun in a variety of ways. But, safety consists of much more than just wearing a helmet. To see the broader picture, consider the six aspects of safety illustrated in this "safety hexagon". Skills, Transportation, Rules of conduct, Equipment, Snow, and Terrain,

## Skills

**"Don't crash and burn; Learn to turn."**

This is the ability to execute a controlled turn, and to use our edges to control the shape of our turns as well as to check our speed. The number of people on the slopes with poor turning skills is staggering.

Keep practicing your edge control. Your edges are both your steering and your brakes. Learn to use them.

If you think you are already good enough, try to synchronize your turns with someone else, and see how good you really are.

## Equipment

**"Protect your noggin when you go toboggin'."**

**Bindings** should be set properly, preferably by a professional. But you have some input too. You can ask for a lower setting (for easier release) if you tell the technician that you are an intermediate skier, instead of advanced, or that you prefer to ski less aggressively. It's your call whether you prefer the risk of a premature release or the risk of no release at all.

## Helmets

Helmets can protect you in a collision, but remember to ski with your head, not with your helmet. Use good judgement and common sense to avoid potentially dangerous situations. Don't ski beyond your comfort level.

## Transportation

**"4-wheel drive for uphill action - ABS for downhill traction"**

4-wheel drive will help you go up the hill, but it will not help you on an icy downhill.

Use chains. Practice using your ABS brakes. When your car fish-tails, learn how to straighten it by counter-steering into the skid.



## Snow

**"Know your snow!"**

Learn how to ski in different types of snow. Ski more gingerly and defensively on ice; but turn more aggressively in deep powder and crud.

If you venture into ungroomed areas, or even out of bounds, use extra caution and make sure you can always see where you are going.

For out-of-bounds, educate yourself about **avalanche** danger and how to avoid it or minimize it. Also, carry proper equipment (avalanche beacon, probe, shovel, compass, etc.).

## Rules

**"It's up to you to eskew"**

Observe the Code of Responsibility. It's your responsibility to avoid others.

1. Always stay in control.
2. Those ahead of you have the right of way.
3. Stop in a safe, visible place.
4. When starting downhill, look uphill and yield.
5. Use safety devices to prevent runaway equipment.
6. Observe signs, warnings, and closed trails.
7. Know how to use lifts safely.

## Terrain

**"Don't be a dope; adjust to the slope."**  
**"Never ski what you can't see."**

**Terrain parks, Race courses.** Always inspect the course, especially any jumps, and areas of low visibility before you go in.

**Trees.** Don't look at the trees. Concentrate on the spaces between them. Your body will follow your eyes. If you don't know what's behind a tree, slow down or stop.

## Steep slopes.

Always be perpendicular to the ground. The steeper the slopes, the more you need to remind yourself to get your body forward and not sit back.

**Maps.** Always carry a trail map and study it on the chairlift. Know where you are going.

For more details, see our web site's Safety page: [www.mthigh.org/Safety.htm](http://www.mthigh.org/Safety.htm).