

Other safety tips

- Always inform someone of where you intend to snowboard, how long you will be gone for and the time you expect to return.
- Children should only snowboard with a responsible adult.
- Do not snowboard under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol and drugs can negatively affect snowboarding performance and contribute to hypothermia.
- Adequate rest, water, nutrition and energy replenishment (ie. regular snacks) will enhance performance and reduce the likelihood of injury.

If an injury occurs

- If you are injured, or come across an injured snowboarder, send someone to alert the ski patrol. If available, one person should stay with the injured snowboarder.
- Ensure all injured snowboarders receive appropriate treatment and rehabilitation before they resume snowboarding.



For further information contact

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Smartplay is supported by VicHealth, Sport and Recreation Victoria and Department of Human Services.

Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit

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Snowsafes

www.snowsafes.org.au

Disabled Wintersport Victoria

www.dwv.org.au

References

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Photos courtesy of the Mt Buller and Mt Stirling Management Board



Preventing Snowboarding Injuries



Facts and Safety Tips for Snowboarders

Photograph provided by Mt Buller and Mt Stirling Resort Management

Facts on Snowboarding injuries

Snowboarding is a popular and growing sport with an estimated 20,000 Australian participants.

The estimated growth rate of 20% per year exceeds that for other snow sports. More than 95% of Australian ski resorts now allow snowboarding and provide excellent facilities.

How many injuries?

- The Australian Snowboard Injury Database study conducted at three major Australian resorts reported an injury rate of 4.2 per 1,000 visits.
- Victorian hospital surveillance data indicates that there were a total of 204 hospital admissions for snowboarding injuries in ski seasons 2002 and 2003. A further 146 snowboarders presented to Victorian hospital emergency departments.
- Three quarters of injured snowboarders were male, mostly in the 15-29 year age group.
- The major cause of injury was falls (87%), followed by collisions with objects or persons (6%).

The causes and types of injuries

- The most common injuries presented to hospitals are fractures (60%), dislocations/sprains/strains (12%) and head injuries (9%).
- Injuries presenting to hospitals are predominantly to the forearm/wrist (31%). Other common injuries are to the head/neck (15%), knee/lower leg (14%), shoulder/upper arm (12%) and trunk (12%).
- The lower extremity is the most frequently injured body site among child and adolescent snowboarders, whereas upper extremity injury is more common among adult snowboarders.
- Emergency department presentations were mostly sprains/strains (41%) and less complex fractures (36%).
- A large proportion of injuries occur in the first week of snowboarding.
- Ankle injuries are more common among snowboarders wearing soft shell boots, which are typically worn by intermediate and advanced riders.
- Knee injuries are more common in snowboarders wearing hard shell boots, which are typically worn by novices.

Safety tips for Snowboarding

Good preparation is important

- Undertake pre-season conditioning and training to build up your fitness, strength and flexibility.
- Warm up and stretch before the day's snowboarding. Don't snowboard to warm up. Cool down for about 10-15 minutes after a snowboarding session and include low-intensity exercise such as walking and stretching.
- Novice snowboarders should undertake lessons to learn correct snowboarding and falling techniques.
- Assess the snow conditions and forecast and take them into consideration before you head out. Don't ride in poor conditions.



Photograph provided by Mt Buller and Mt Stirling Resort Management

Equipment: suitability and maintenance

- Choose equipment to suit your skill level and size.
- Soft shell boots are recommended for novices.
- Keep equipment in good working order.
- Ensure all rental equipment is properly fitted and adjusted.
- Wear clothing, including gloves, that is waterproof and breathes, and head covering to prevent excessive heat loss. Wear layers of clothing and adjust to your body temperature.
- Wear wristguards or gloves with wrist reinforcement.
- Snowboards should be attached to the rider by a leash to prevent injuries to others on the slopes.

Good technique and practices will help prevent injury

- Be aware of, and adhere to, snow courtesy and safety codes.
- Only snowboard on slopes suited to your level of ability.
- Stay on main trails and groomed runs.
- Be cautious if snowboarding in deep powder among trees.
- Never snowboard alone.
- Young or beginner snowboarders should be well supervised.

Additional considerations

- Some medications can make the skin highly susceptible to sunburn. Be aware of the suns damaging effects, even on cloudy days, and wear a high SPF sunscreen, or in some cases zinc cream or a mask.
- Carry a list of all medications that you are on at all times in case of an emergency where medical first aid may be required.