

Ruapehu Alpine Lifts – Ski Area Access Guidelines

Revision: 14/5/24

Purpose: To ensure the safety of Whakapapa employees, customers and public Tongariro National Park users when accessing the ski area after hours or on the way into the back country.

- Whakapapa and Ski Area is an operational zone and multiple hazards exist within the Ski Area Boundaries, 24 hours a day.
- Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and in line with Ski Area Licences held with the Department of Conservation, Whakapapa is obligated to manage risks within the (workplace) ski area boundaries.
- These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) [Backcountry touring access guidelines](#)

Risks: The following table outlines the typical risks found within the ski area operational zones (ski area boundary):

Hazard:	Risk (pre-controls)	Control:	Risk (post controls)
Heavy Road Vehicles - clearing snow in and around carparks - serious injury, death	Significant	Stay well clear of all operating machinery. Obey all signage. In poor light conditions groups should use clearly visible indicators (e.g. lights, reflectors).	Medium
Snow Groomer movements - serious injury, death	High	Stay together as a group and travel on the side of the trails where possible. In poor light conditions groups should use clearly visible indicators (e.g. lights, reflectors).	Medium
Avalanche control activities - serious injury, death - from explosives use and or involvement with avalanche.	High	Obey signs at all times, check conditions prior to leaving, if in doubt check with Whakapapa Guest Services or Ski Patrol teams.	Medium
Winch Cables - serious injury, death.	High	Observe flashing beacons and do not proceed past signs unless an operator has given you the ok to do so.	Medium
Snowmobiles - serious injury, death	Significant	Travel on side of trail, be observant of vehicles moving up and down trail.	Low
Snow making operations - high pressure water and electricity	Significant	Do not approach operating machines or equipment (high pressure water hoses, electrical cables).	Low
Falling ice from structures	Significant	Stay clear of all de-icing operations, avoid travelling directly underneath lift lines.	Medium
Helicopter operations	High	Stay well clear of any helicopter operations, landing zones, never approach a helicopter.	Medium
Downhill Traffic	High	Choose appropriate route, avoid uphill travel through key congestion points. Travel well to the side of trails where possible. Ensure you are visible to oncoming traffic.	Medium

Ski Area Access Guidelines:

1. Park vehicles only in approved overnight carpark locations.
2. Always tell someone where you are going (for example <https://www.adventuresmart.nz/outdoor-intentions-form/>)
3. At any stage during the winter months, avalanche control and or de-icing operations may be undertaken within the ski area boundary - observe all signage and directions of Whakapapa staff.
4. Know your route, the weather and the current avalanche conditions (www.avalanche.net.nz).
5. Be aware of unmarked hazards and observe all signs and closures.
6. Walk/skin on side of trails – refer to google map links below for suggested routes.
 - a. [Whakapapa](#)
7. Avoid travel on snowmobile routes – refer to google maps above.
8. At night, all members of party should be equipped and wearing a headlamp with a rear facing light (so you are visible from behind) and reflective/hi visibility clothing.
9. Call 111 (ask for police) in an emergency.

Definitions:

Access - Refers to any member of the public who is accessing the Ski Area Boundary for the purposes of travelling uphill or downhill not using Whakapapa provided facilities. Includes ski tourers skinning, snowboarders on split boards, snowshoes, climbers walking etc.

After Hours - Refers to any time outside of 8:00am – 5:00pm (between June and November).

Ski Area Boundaries – Area of the Tongariro National Park which is allocated to ski area activities (as per Ski Area Licences) and, within which, multiple hazards such as snow grooming, avalanche control and snowmaking can exist.