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Snowboarding Safety

Clover Safe notes are intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and members nine years and older.



Information available from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission indicates more than 34,000 youth aged eight to 19 years were treated in hospitals for snowboarding injuries during 2006. The most frequent injuries were to wrists followed by arms, shoulders, and heads. Broken bones, sprains/strains, bruises, and concussions were the most common types of injuries. Many of these injuries could have been prevented by being aware of potential hazards and using safe snowboarding practices.

Snowboarding Safety

- Before using, always inspect the snowboard for damage or disrepair, including board separation, sharp board edges, bindings, and binding screws.
- If a snowboard fails your pre-use inspection, notify your group leader, parent, or guardian. Do not use the snowboard until it has been repaired.
- Always wear personal protective equipment, including a helmet, goggles that absorb ultraviolet radiation, wrist guards, and elbow, knee, and tailbone pads. Use sunscreen under both cloudy and sunny conditions.
- Be prepared to adjust your body temperature by dressing in removable layers that are warm and waterproof. Wear close-fitting clothing to prevent entanglement with slope obstacles such as trees or bushes.
- Beginning snowboarders should take lessons from an experienced snowboard instructor.
- Consume an adequate amount of water to prevent dehydration.
- Obey all posted signs and warning markers, including those that provide information about snow or avalanche conditions.
- Stay on marked runs and trails. Do not enter closed areas, runs, or trails and stay out of unmarked areas or woods.
- Before using a ski lift, learn the techniques for safely mounting, riding, and unmounting the lift.
- Always snowboard with a partner or as part of a group and be able to identify ski patrol members.
- Stay in control of your snowboard and do not try maneuvers beyond your capabilities.
- People on the slope ahead of you have the right of way. You are responsible for avoiding them.
- Never stop at a location where you are not visible from those above you or at a point where you are obstructing a trail or run.
- As you start downhill or merge into a trail or run, look uphill and yield to others that are approaching you.
- Snowboarders should always pay attention to what they are doing and remain alert to their surroundings. Maintain a safe distance from trees, bushes, and other obstacles.
- If you are injured while snowboarding, notify your project leader, parent, or guardian. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.