

MAKE SURE YOUR WINTER SPORTS HOLIDAY DOESN'T GO DOWNHILL



If you're planning a winter ski or snowboarding holiday, don't miss out on the fun! Avoid injury and expensive medical costs by following our winter guidance.



INSURANCE

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Make sure your insurance covers the activities you want to do. Medical costs and returning to the UK unexpectedly can be very expensive. Many policies will not cover damage to rental equipment or skiing off-piste without a guide, and many policies require you to wear a helmet at all times. So it's worth checking your policy before you go!



EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD (EHIC)



Travelling in Europe? It's essential that you take a valid EHIC with you. If you have an accident or become ill it will allow you to receive state-provided medical healthcare at the same rate as a citizen of that country.

Check your EHIC is in date - it needs renewing every 5 years, so if it has expired apply for a new card prior to travel. The EHIC is valid in the European Economic Area and Switzerland. But you still need to take out travel insurance, as an EHIC won't cover all your medical costs, private treatment or return to the UK. Some insurers now insist that you hold an EHIC, and many will waive the excess if you have one.

Apply for your free EHIC now at: www.nhs.uk/ehic

HEALTH

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Alcohol affects your resistance and awareness of the cold, and also impairs your judgment, co-ordination and reaction time. Drinking alcohol at altitude will affect you more quickly and your insurance cover may not be valid if you injure yourself or others whilst intoxicated.



USE OF HELMETS

Wearing a helmet is a personal choice but more and more people are choosing to wear them. In some resorts it is a legal requirement for children to wear helmets. Remember, many insurance policies require you to wear a helmet on the slopes regardless of the local legal requirements.

Visit www.skiclub.co.uk/infoandadvice and search 'Helmets' for more information, advice and tips.



GOGGLES & SUN CREAM

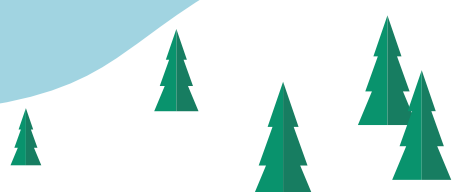
The sun is much stronger at altitude so appropriate strength sun cream should be worn. When it comes to eye protection there are two main options; ski goggles or sunglasses. Always ensure goggles or glasses offer 100% UV protection.

A comprehensive guide on appropriate eye wear, ski and snowboard clothing and equipment can be found at www.skiclub.co.uk/infoandadvice and search 'Ski goggles'.

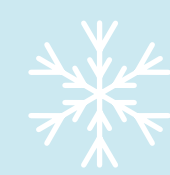
BE AT YOUR PEAK

Get fit so you can enjoy your holiday; if you're not physically prepared you're more likely to injure yourself. Warm up and do stretches before and after any activities.

For ski fit exercises visit www.skiclub.co.uk/infoandadvice and search 'Get fit for skiing'.



SAFETY ON THE PISTE



CHOOSE THE RIGHT ROUTE/PISTES

It is important to be aware of how pistes are classified to indicate their difficulty. This will make sure you don't overstretch yourself and get into a tricky situation. Know your limits and don't attempt slopes beyond your level of ability.

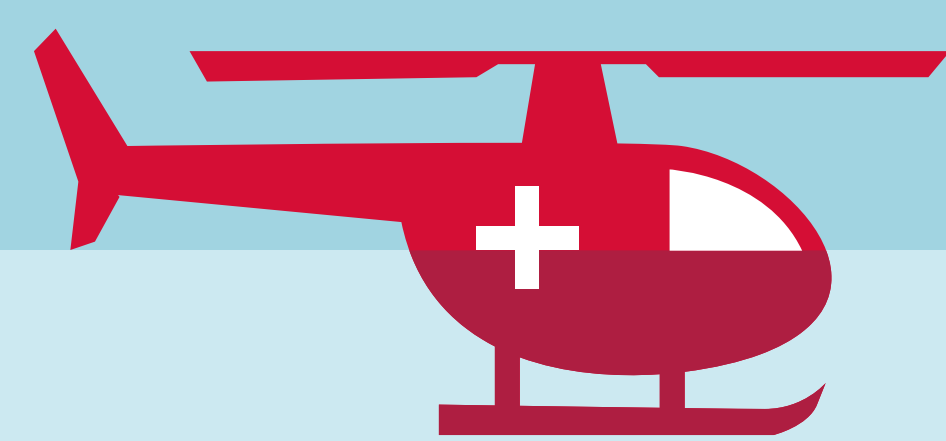
Green is the easiest, followed by **Blue** then **Red** and then **Black**.

Itineraries are runs marked on the piste map but they are not groomed or patrolled and are therefore for the more experienced skiers.

Be aware that piste classifications vary in different ski resorts and countries. Piste conditions change during the day; what was a cruising blue run mid morning could be difficult, and more like a hard red by 4pm. Note that this also works in reverse, and sometimes a quiet red at the end of the day may be a lot easier than an icy and crowded blue.

ASSISTING IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT

1. Secure the accident area - Protect with crossed skis or planted snowboard well above the injured person. If necessary post someone to give warning.
2. Report to a Pisteur or lift operator and alert the rescue service:
 - Place of accident (piste name and nearest piste marker)
 - Number of people injured
 - Type of injury
 - If serious report to the police as soon as possible

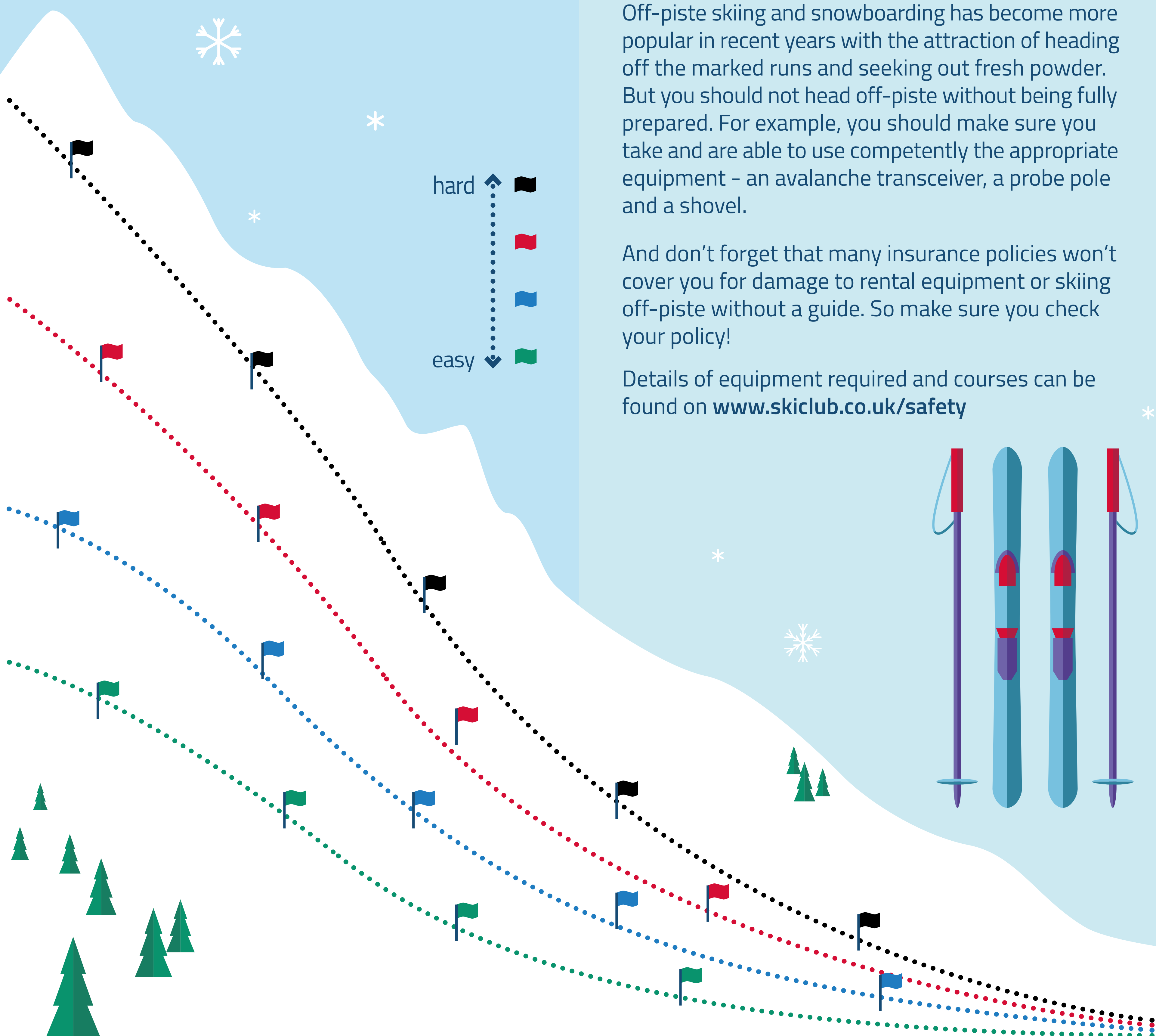
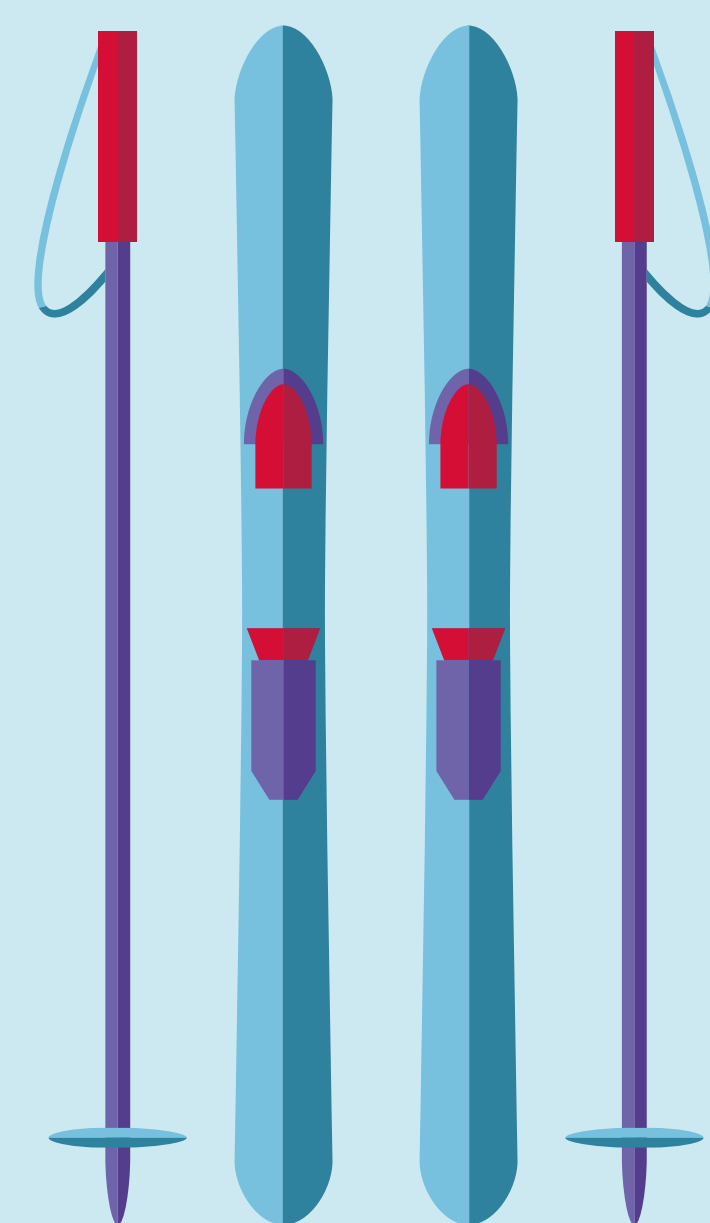


OFF-PISTE SAFETY

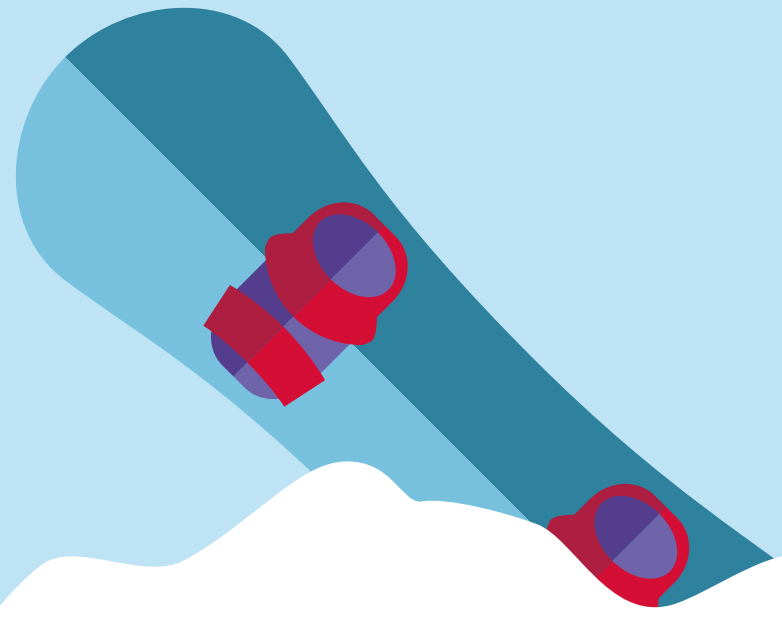
Off-piste skiing and snowboarding has become more popular in recent years with the attraction of heading off the marked runs and seeking out fresh powder. But you should not head off-piste without being fully prepared. For example, you should make sure you take and are able to use competently the appropriate equipment - an avalanche transceiver, a probe pole and a shovel.

And don't forget that many insurance policies won't cover you for damage to rental equipment or skiing off-piste without a guide. So make sure you check your policy!

Details of equipment required and courses can be found on www.skiclub.co.uk/safety



SAFETY ON THE PISTE



BE AVALANCHE AWARE

Snow reports, weather forecasts and avalanche risk levels are available in resort at the lift stations. Snow and weather reports, and information on avalanches are available at: www.skiclub.co.uk/safety

THE INTERNATIONAL SKI FEDERATION'S RULES OF CONDUCT

For all mountain users, the International Ski Federation (FIS) has ten rules for skiers and snowboarders to help everyone stay safe on the slopes. They must be followed at all times:

1. **Respect:** Do not endanger others.
2. **Control:** Adapt the manner and speed of your skiing to your ability and to the general conditions on the mountain.
3. **Choice of route:** The skier/snowboarder in front has priority - leave enough space.
4. **Overtaking:** Leave plenty of space when overtaking a slower skier/snowboarder.
5. **Entering and starting:** Look up and down the mountain each time before starting or entering a marked run.
6. **Stopping:** Only stop at the edge of the piste or where you can easily be seen.
7. **Climbing:** When climbing up or down, always keep to the side of the piste.
8. **Signs:** Obey all signs and markings - they are there for your safety.
9. **Assistance:** In case of accidents provide help and alert the rescue service.
10. **Identification:** All those involved in an accident, including witnesses, should exchange names and addresses.

For further information visit www.skiclub.co.uk/infoandadvice and search 'Safety on the slopes'.

USEFUL INFORMATION

For the latest country travel advice, tips and winter sports information, visit:

www.gov.uk/travelaware

 FCOTravel  @FCOTravel

 Foreign Office Travel Advice

Emergency services telephone numbers:

