

Preventing injuries for

# TOBOGGANING & SLEDDING



## TOP TIPS

- Wear a helmet. Because of the high incidence of head injuries, everyone should be properly fitted with a helmet: either a ski helmet, snowboard helmet, or hockey helmet.
- Hills should be regularly inspected and closed if conditions are dangerous.
- Hills should be free of obstacles such as rocks, fences, poles and trees. They should be located a safe distance from roads, rivers, lakes, and parking lots.
- Safe hills should have a sufficiently long, clear run-out at the bottom of the hill, free of obstacles
- Children should be supervised.
- Teach children to slide down the middle of the hill, climb up the sides of the hill, and to watch for oncoming sledders while ascending the hill.
- Teach children to move out of the way quickly when they reach the bottom of the hill.
- Don't use hills after dusk unless proper lighting is provided.
- There should be a designated area at the side of the hill for climbing up.
- Use the sitting position when going down hills. Do not go head first.
- Don't go out in icy or excessively cold conditions.
- Ensure that the sled is in good condition and does not have any broken parts.

## RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER

**ALCOHOL:** 7% of the cases studied involved alcohol.

**SUPERVISION:** Where information was available 93% of the cases of catastrophic injury did not involve supervision.

**SLEDDING TERRAIN:** close proximity to roads, icy conditions, and hills with obstacles increase the risk of injury.

**TYPE OF SLED:** some evidence suggests that snow racers increase the risk of injury.

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## TOP TIPS

- Previous research conducted by Dr. Charles Tator and ThinkFirst (now part of Parachute) indicates that there was an average of 37.7 catastrophic injuries per 100 000 sledders.
- This rate of catastrophic injury is the fourth highest rate of injury determined during previous research of catastrophic injury in sport.
- Of the catastrophic injuries recorded during the four year study, 50% were to the head and 22.5% were to the spine.
- Previous research indicates the most common reason for injury was collision with a tree.
- Previous research indicates 59% of respondents reported that the injuries were preventable.

**For more information on this and other sport and recreation injury topics, please refer to the following text:** Tator, C.H. (Ed.) (2008). *Catastrophic Injuries in Sports and Recreation: Causes and Prevention – A Canadian Study*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press Incorporated