### **Trail safety**

- Maintain control of your skis and keep a safe distance from others. Yield the track to downhill skiers to avoid collisions.
- Plan your trip carefully so you know exactly where you are going. Trail maps are available for most areas. Check the weather report, trail conditions, trail difficulty and distance you intend to cover. Be sure someone at home knows where you are and when you expect to return.
- Always ski with a companion and be prepared for the unexpected. Avoid avalanche areas. Carry extra clothing and basic survival gear, even on short day trips.
- Hypothermia is caused by the lowering of body temperature. Even the loss of a few degrees can be incapacitating and should be guarded against whenever you are outdoors. Protect yourself by remembering a few basic tips:
  - 1. Maintain your energy supply by eating highcalorie foods frequently during your trip. Exercise then maintains heat production. Avoid becoming overly fatigued.
  - 2. Wear appropriate, layered clothing. Wool is the best protection if you become wet. Certain new synthetics also are good protection. Avoid wearing cotton next to your skin; when cotton becomes wet, it draws heat from your body. Down is good in dry conditions but becomes ineffective when wet.
  - 3. Seek shelter from wind and rain if you are lost. Try to stay dry and warm. Set up your tent or dig a snow cave. Build a fire if dry wood is available. Take care to stay dry. Use any extra clothing.
  - 4. Carry food, clothing, some sort of shelter and matches. Extra dry clothing might save your life.

### **Trail maneuvering**

- Every skier is responsible for the trail. Don't walk on it. And fill in sitzmarks or holes you create. If you fall, move immediately to the side.
- When you are being passed, yield the track to the overtaking skier. He or she may call "Track!" Yield by stepping out of the track to the right, if possible.
- It is dangerous to pass while going downhill, so wait until you reach a level place. When ascending and descending skiers meet on a hill, the descending skier has the right of way. Before descending a hill, be sure the track is clear.

For further information about the Sno-Park Program, contact the Winter Recreation Program, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, 7219 Cleanwater Lane, Olympia, WA 98504, (360) 586-6643.

#### Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

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All Washington state parks are developed and maintained for the enjoyment of all people.

To request this brochure in an alternative format, please call (360) 902-8844 or the Washington Telecommunications
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# **Cross Country Ski Sense**



## Cross-country skiing

is enjoyed by people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Situations occur that require simple rules of conduct to ensure safe and pleasant ski tours. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission has prepared the following suggestions to make your outing safe and enjoyable.

### TRAIL ETIQUETTE

- When setting a new track after a snowfall, make it wide so skiing is easier for those who follow you. Experts try to leave six to seven inches between the inside edges of their skis.
- Before venturing onto private property, obtain the owner's permission. Never leave a gate open.
- If you share a trail with snowmobilers, curves and hills may obscure you from view. Always be alert and move to the side of the trail so they can pass.
- When you use a Sno-Park area, display your permit inside your vehicle on the lower left corner (driver's side) of the windshield. Funds obtained through permit sales pay for the plowing of parking areas and trail grooming. If you ski in private ski areas, you may be required to pay a daily fee for the use of the trails.
- Take care not to drop sandwich wrappers or other leftovers. Remember, all buried litter emerges when the snow melts. Conscientious skiers pack out whatever they pack in, as well as any litter left by others.
- If you stop to wax your skis or rest, step off the trail but stay visible to oncoming skiers.
- Cross-country skiers are encouraged to leave their dogs at home. Dogs punch holes in tracks with their paws, so following them can be difficult or dangerous. Pets can become fatigued or lost as they try to go through soft snow and can be hit unintentionally by downhill skiers. Most private ski areas prohibit pets on trails or slopes. Washington State Parks prohibits dogs on groomed trails in state parks. Dogs used by the visually impaired are allowed.

### TRAIL SYMBOLS

Certain symbols may be posted at trailheads. Called "difficulty symbols," they classify the trail according to the ability required of skiers.

Common trail markers also include a trailhead sign, trailblazer and directional marker.



Easiest

**✓** 











More difficult

Most difficult

Closed

Directional marker

Trailhead Trailblazer