

NATIONAL
SKI AREAS
ASSOCIATION



Contact: Dave Byrd
Director of Risk & Regulatory Affairs
dbyrd@nsaa.org
(720) 963-4213 office
(202) 270-3924 mobile

Skier/Snowboarder Catastrophic Injuries from the 2015-16 Season

LAKEWOOD, Colo., Sept. 15, 2016—According to the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA), 45 catastrophic injuries occurred at U.S. ski areas during the 2015-16 season—which is slightly below the ski industry’s 10-year average of catastrophic injuries occurring at ski areas in the United States. Catastrophic injuries include forms of paralysis, broken necks or broken backs, and life-altering severe head injuries.

Based on 52.8 million skier visits tallied last season, the catastrophic injury rate for 2015-16 equates to 0.85 catastrophic injuries per one million skier/snowboarder visits. A skier/snowboarder visit is defined as one person visiting a ski area for all or any part of a day or night. This includes full- and half-day, night, complimentary, adult, child, season passes, and all other ticket types.

NSAA compiles catastrophic and fatality data annually at the end of the season, collected from all ski areas in the United States to provide information to the media and the skiing public that accurately reflects the risks inherent from skiing and snowboarding. The data reflects all incidents of catastrophic injuries and fatalities that occur within ski area boundaries. Backcountry catastrophic injuries and fatalities are not included in these statistics because they do not accurately reflect the true risks of skiing and snowboarding at a U.S. ski area. Moreover, if a fatality or catastrophic injury does not occur at a ski area during normal operating hours (for example, a sledding death after hours), it is not included in this tabulation. Also, NSAA does not include fatalities or catastrophic injuries that are related to an underlying pre-existing medical condition (for example, a heart attack or stroke on a chairlift). Lastly, this data also does not include fatalities or catastrophic injuries suffered by ski area employees while working, because this would not reflect the risk of fatality or catastrophic injury to a guest.

Gender continues to play a significant role in catastrophic injuries, especially this past season. Of those catastrophically injured last season, 42 were male and 3 female. By equipment

type, nearly twice as many of those catastrophically injured were skiers compared to snowboarders (62 percent skiers/38 percent snowboarders). Most of those catastrophically injured were wearing helmets: 29 were wearing helmets while 15 were not helmeted (for one of the catastrophically injured, it was unknown if they were helmeted). While 65 percent of those catastrophically injured wore helmets, the overall percentage of skiers and boarders wearing helmets nationally is 80 percent, according to a separate helmet study annually conducted by NSAA.

Based on the last 10 years, an average of 49 catastrophic injuries occurs each season at U.S. ski resorts. Average skier/snowboarder visits during this same time period averaged 56.4 million. The 10-year catastrophic injury rate equates to 0.87 injuries per one million skier visits, slightly above the 0.85 catastrophic injury rate for the 2015-16 season (based on 52.8 million skier visits this past season). The number of catastrophic injuries and fatalities fluctuates within a small range over the years, which is why NSAA reports a 10-year industry average for a more statistically reliable number. Indeed, the number of fatalities during the 2015-16 season—39 fatalities—was likewise practically identical to the 10-year average rate of 38 fatalities per season.

Safety remains a top priority at ski areas, and the importance of personal responsibility is continually emphasized. Many resorts have developed safety education programs and actively promote the seven points of Your Responsibility Code.

The industry continues to support the Heads Up safety initiative, and each season ski areas across the country observe National Safety Awareness Month in January, a time set aside to place additional emphasis on guest and employee safety. NSAA recently updated its Lids On Kids (www.lidsonkids.org) website dedicated to educating parents and children on the importance and proper use of snowsports helmets, and NSAA reports separately the industry's overall helmet usage data. In 2013, NSAA launched a new website called Kids on Lifts (www.KidsonLifts.org) to educate parents and children about the safety practices for riding, loading, and unloading chairlifts. Meanwhile, NSAA's Freestyle Terrain website (www.freestyleterrain.org) strives to educate guests about the proper use of freestyle terrain features.

For more information on NSAA's safety initiatives designed to reduce the incidence of catastrophic injury and fatality in snowsports, visit the Safety & Education section of www.nsaa.org.

10-Year Catastrophic Injury Rate per Million Skier/Snowboarder Visits

<u>SEASON</u>	<u>CATASTROPHIC INJURIES</u>	<u>SKIER DAYS</u> (in millions)	<u>RATE</u> (per one million skier visits)
2015-16	45	52.8	0.85
2014-15	42	53.6	0.78
2013-14	52	56.5	0.92
2012-13	76	56.9	1.34
2011-12	49	51.0	0.96
2010-11	60	60.5	0.99
2009-10	40	59.7	0.65
2008-09	44	57.5	0.77
2007-08	41	60.5	0.68
2006-07	40	55.1	0.73

THE NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION, LOCATED IN LAKEWOOD, COLO., IS A TRADE ASSOCIATION FORMED IN 1962 FOR SKI AREA OWNERS AND OPERATORS NATIONWIDE.

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