

Chapter 99C.

Actions Relating to Winter Sports Safety and Accidents.

§ 99C-1. Definitions.

When used in this Chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) Competitor. – A skier actually engaged in competition or in practice therefor with the permission of the ski area operator on any slope or trail or portion thereof designated by the ski area operator for the purpose of competition.
- (1a) Freestyle terrain. – Constructed and natural features in ski areas intended for winter sports including, but not limited to, terrain parks and terrain park features such as jumps, rails, fun boxes, half-pipes, quarter-pipes, and freestyle-bump terrain.
- (2) Passenger. – Any person who is being transported or is awaiting transportation, or being conveyed on a passenger tramway or is moving from the disembarkation point of a passenger tramway or is in the act of embarking upon or disembarking from a passenger tramway.
- (3) Passenger tramway. – Any device used to transport passengers uphill on skis or other winter sports devices, or in cars on tracks, or suspended in the air, by the use of steel cables, chains, belts or ropes. Such definition shall include such devices as a chair lift, J Bar, or platter pull, rope tow, and wire tow.
- (4) Ski area. – All winter sports slopes, alpine and Nordic ski trails, freestyle terrain and passenger tramways, that are administered or operated as a ski area enterprise within this State.
- (5) Ski area operator. – A person, corporation, or organization that is responsible for the safe operation and maintenance of the ski area.
- (6) Skier. – Any person who is wearing skis or other winter sports devices or any person who for the purpose of skiing or other winter sports is on a designated and clearly marked winter sports slope, alpine or Nordic ski trail or freestyle terrain that is located at a ski area, or any person who is a passenger or spectator at a ski area.
- (7) Winter sports. – Any use of skis, snowboards, snowshoes, or any other device for skiing, sliding, jumping, or traveling on snow or ice. (1981, c. 939, s. 1; 2009-353, s. 1.)

§ 99C-2. Duties of ski area operators and skiers.

(a) A ski area operator shall be responsible for the maintenance and safe operation of any passenger tramway in his ski area and insure that such is in conformity with the rules and regulations prescribed and adopted by the North Carolina Department of Labor pursuant to G.S. 95-120(1) as such appear in the North Carolina Administrative Procedures Act. The North Carolina Department of Labor shall conduct certifications and inspections of passenger tramways.

A ski area operator's responsibility regarding passenger tramways shall include, but is not limited to, insuring operating personnel are adequately trained and are adequate in number; meeting all standards set forth for terminals, stations, line structures, and line equipment; meeting all rules and regulations regarding the safe operation and maintenance of all passenger lifts and tramways, including all necessary inspections and record keeping.

(b) A skier shall have the following responsibilities:

- (1) To know the range of the skier's abilities to negotiate any ski slope or trail and to ski within the limits of such ability;
 - (2) To maintain control of the skier's speed and course at all times when skiing and to maintain a proper lookout so as to be able to avoid other skiers and obvious hazards and inherent risks, including variations in terrain, snow, or ice conditions, bare spots and rocks, trees and other forms of forest growth or forest debris;
 - (3) To stay clear of snow grooming equipment, all vehicles, pole lines, lift towers, signs, snowmaking equipment, and any other equipment on the ski slopes and trails;
 - (4) To heed all posted information and other warnings and to refrain from acting in a manner which may cause or contribute to the injury of the skier or others;
 - (5) To wear retention straps, ski brakes, or other devices to prevent runaway skis or snowboards;
 - (6) Before beginning to ski from a stationary position or before entering a ski slope or trail from the side, to avoid moving skiers already on the ski slope or trail;
 - (7) To not move uphill on any passenger tramway or use any ski slope or trail while such person's ability to do so is impaired by the consumption of alcohol or by the use of any narcotic or other drug or while such person is under the influence of alcohol or any narcotic or any drug;
 - (8) If involved in a collision with another skier or person, to not leave the vicinity of the collision before giving his name and current address to an employee of the ski area operator, a member of the ski patrol, or the other skier or person with whom the skier collided, except in those cases when medical treatment is required; in which case, said information shall be provided as soon as practical after the medical treatment has been obtained. If the other person involved in the collision is unknown, the skier shall leave the personal identification required by this subsection with the ski area operator;
 - (9) Not to embark upon or disembark from a passenger tramway except at an area that is designated for such purpose;
 - (10) Not to throw or expel any object from a passenger tramway;
 - (11) Not to perform any action that interferes with the operation or running of a passenger tramway;
 - (12) Not to use such tramway unless the skier has the ability to use it with reasonable safety;
 - (13) Not to engage willfully or negligently in any type conduct that contributes to or causes injury to another person or his properties;
 - (14) Not to embark upon a passenger tramway without the authority of the ski area operator;
 - (15) If using freestyle terrain, to know the range of the skier's abilities to negotiate the terrain and to avoid conditions and obstacles beyond the limits of such ability that a visible inspection should have revealed.
- (c) A ski area operator shall have the following responsibilities:
- (1) To mark all trails and maintenance vehicles and to furnish such vehicles with flashing or rotating lights that shall be in operation whenever the vehicles are working or moving in the ski area;

- (2) To mark with a visible sign or other warning implement the location of any hydrant or similar equipment that is used in snowmaking operations and located anywhere in the ski area;
- (3) To indicate the relative degree of difficulty of a slope or trail by appropriate signs. Such signs are to be prominently displayed at the base of a slope where skiers embark on a passenger tramway serving the slope or trail, or at the top of a slope or trail. The signs must be of the type that have been approved by the National Ski Areas Association and are in current use by the industry;
- (4) To post at or near the top of or entrance to, any designated slope or trail, signs giving reasonable notice of unusual conditions on the slope or trail;
- (5) To provide adequate ski patrols;
- (6) To mark clearly any hidden rock, hidden stump, or any other hidden hazard known by the ski area operator to exist;
- (6a) To inspect the winter sports slopes, alpine and Nordic ski trails, and freestyle terrains that are open to the public at least twice daily and maintain a log recording: (i) the time of the inspection and the name of the inspector(s); and (ii) the general surface conditions, based on industry standards, for the entire ski area at the time of the inspections;
- (6b) To post, in a conspicuous manner, the general surface conditions for the entire ski area twice daily; and
- (7) Not to engage willfully or negligently in any type conduct that contributes to or causes injury to another person or his properties. (1981, c. 939, s. 1; 2009-353, s. 1.)

§ 99C-3. Violation constitutes negligence.

A violation of any responsibility placed on the skier, passenger or ski area operator as set forth in G.S. 99C-2, to the extent such violation proximately causes injury to any person or damage to any property, shall constitute negligence on the part of the person violating the provisions of that section. (1981, c. 939, s. 1.)

§ 99C-4. Competition.

The ski area operator shall, prior to the beginning of a competition, allow each competitor a reasonable visual inspection of the course or area where the competition is to be held. The competitor shall be held to assume risk of all course conditions including, but not limited to, weather and snow conditions, course construction or layout, and obstacles which a visual inspection should have revealed. No liability shall attach to a ski area operator for injury or death of any competitor proximately caused by such assumed risk. (1981, c. 939, s. 1.)

§ 99C-5. Operation of passenger tramway.

The operation of a passenger tramway shall not constitute the operation of a common carrier. (1981, c. 939, s. 1.)