

Alpine sports and the risks involved

Alpine sports support health and increase the quality of life.

Alpine sports are always associated with risks and uncertainties

Alpine sports are done almost exclusively in natural areas and are therefore not free from danger. Risk and uncertainty¹ are part of the essence of Alpine sports. Therefore it is important to recognise and communicate the great opportunities of alpine sports for health, experience and personal development.

People exploring natural areas can develop and experience their skills in dealing with risks and uncertainties on their own responsibility. It is in the interests of those taking part in Alpine sports to prepare themselves carefully for any activities they embark on, to equip themselves appropriately and to act responsibly on tour. In particular, this duty applies when others could be affected by their actions.

As a representative of Alpine sportspeople, the CAA insists on the following:

1. Strengthen personal responsibility

Society as a whole benefits when its members learn to deal with risks independently and in a responsible way. Alpine sports provide the perfect conditions to do this.

2. Training creates competence

The more competent the mountain sports person, the safer alpine sports become. Training courses offered by Alpine associations teach the practical skills and theoretical knowledge. CAA and Alpine clubs focus on prevention through education, training and strengthening personal responsibility. Accident research confirms this approach.

3. Caution when developing further regulations

The mountains are not exempt from laws and regulations. The CAA and other Alpine associations are convinced that the existing regulations are sufficient. New laws or stricter regulations are not necessary and, in fact, counter-productive. The existing laws and regulations for the legal assessment of mountain accidents must be applied with expert knowledge and a sense of proportion.

4. Free access to the mountains

In the future, the Alpine region must remain freely accessible and free of charge to responsible people seeking recreation. Restrictions must be objectively justified and defined in terms of time and space. Alpine clubs contribute to the sensitisation and responsible handling of this freedom.

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¹ The term *uncertainty* is becoming increasingly important in safety discourse than the term *risk*, as it better describes the situation on the mountain. Risk is mathematically charged (risk = probability of occurrence x extent of damage) and risk managers can indicate probabilities of occurrence for results or environmental conditions. This is exactly what we cannot do with mountaineering in most cases.