

8 Essentials of Defensive Skiing & Snowboarding

1. Stay Alert

Being alert allows you to react quickly – like when another skier stops suddenly or moves into your lane, or when conditions suddenly change

2. Stay Focused

Skiing and snowboarding involve physical and mental tasks and deserve your full attention. You have lots to consider: snow/ weather conditions, speed and position, and awareness of others' movements. The key is to focus on skiing and riding intentionally – distractions make you less able to see potential problems and properly react.

3. Scan Your Surroundings

Pay attention – check your corners and blind spots frequently and scan conditions ahead of you. Keep your eyes moving.

4. Watch out for Others

Anticipate the worst-case scenario of what another person might do and adjust your movements and routes in advance to reduce risk.

5. Leave Space

Establish and maintain a safe following distance of 3 to 4 seconds to allow adequate time to react, change directions, or stop.

6. Have an Escape Route

In all situations, your safest position is where you can see and be seen. Whether you're moving or stopped, always leave an out – a place to move if your immediate path becomes blocked or an out-of-control skier approaches.

7. Own the Zone

It's your responsibility to ensure your speed matches conditions and traffic – especially in slow zones. Higher speeds make sudden stops or direction changes more difficult and dramatically increase severity of injuries.

8. Heads Up to Change Up

Look ahead and double-check your blind spots before changing your maneuver, task, direction, or speed.