

Winter sports resorts and COVID-19

Recommendations for the 2021–2022 winter season

I. General protective measures in ski resorts

As with everywhere else in France, and due to the latest wave of the epidemic, it is important to inform the public of the need to respect the following protective measures:

- regularly wash your hands with water and soap (which should be easy-to-access along with paper towels) or rub your hands with hydro-alcoholic hand sanitizer (which should also be easily accessible);
- always cough and sneeze into your elbow, covering your nose and mouth;
- blow your nose with a single-use tissue and dispose of the tissue immediately in a bin;
- avoid touching your face, especially your nose, mouth and eyes; and
- practice social distancing as much as possible.

The regulations in force should also be applied in the ski resorts, for example with regard to:

- rules about mask-wearing;
- implementing COVID certificate requirements for people aged 12 years and over, in the places currently referred to in the modified decree of 1 June 2021 which prescribes the general measures necessary for exiting the health crisis, particularly for bars and restaurants (including at ski resorts), night clubs and communal sports facilities (swimming pools, skating rinks, etc.). Information about COVID certificate requirements is available on the government website: <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/pass-sanitaire>. Special attention will be paid to the enforcement of COVID certificate requirements in these sites, in order to protect ski resorts from the spread of the epidemic.

II. Recommendations concerning ski lifts

- General recommendations

- The application of the national protocol of the Ministry responsible for transport, and the guides published by professional organizations and transport operators.
- The following recommendations are applicable to gondola lifts, cable cars, funiculars, chairlifts, drag lifts and travellers that fall under the Tourism Code.
- The boarding areas leading to enclosed means of transport (gondola lifts, cable cars, funiculars) require strict application of the recommendations listed here below, as soon as users are waiting in line.

- Mask-wearing

- Where people gather to queue for a ski lift, wearing a mask is mandatory for persons above 11 years of age, under the same conditions as other public means of transport. It is also mandatory when using chairlifts and gondola lifts where social distancing cannot be guaranteed, especially in the enclosed spaces of gondola lifts. Mask wearing is recommended for children between 6 and 11 years of age.

- Masks are, however, not mandatory on travellers and drag lifts that are only used by one person at a time, nor are they mandatory during downhill skiing, cross-country skiing or Nordic skiing.
- The operator must verify that users are wearing a mask and ask those who are not to do so. Information on the types of masks authorized will be communicated via the terms and conditions of sale and any other relevant method.
- Managers of ski lift areas should facilitate access to hydro-alcoholic hand sanitizer for users by ensuring the availability and number of sanitizing stations is adapted to user traffic.
- Unless otherwise specified by legal or regulatory provisions, boarding capacities of ski lifts will not be limited, taking into account the constraints for each lift type. This is in order to reduce waiting times before boarding, while encouraging as much social distancing as possible.

- Social distancing

Managers of ski lifts should ensure that social distancing is observed to the greatest extent possible between users or groups of users travelling together, while taking into account the constraints of each type of transport. Social distancing equally applies to the queuing area for boarding.

- Information for users

Ski lift operators must regularly remind users of the hygiene and social distancing recommendations and mask-wearing rules that they must observe. This should be done via voice announcements or signage displayed in public areas and those used for transport.

- Other recommendations

Operators should regularly disinfect points of contact in enclosed vehicles (gondola lifts, funiculars, cable cars, etc.) using a suitable method (such as antiviral sprays or mists, antiviral wipes, permanent disinfection systems, etc.).

☒ Conditions for implementing COVID certificate requirements in the event that the epidemic situation worsens

Should the national incidence rate exceed 200 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, the winter sports sector and the government have agreed to implement COVID certificate requirements for all ski lifts for persons aged 12 years and over.

In this event, COVID certificate requirements will begin on a Saturday, and announced no later than the preceding Tuesday to ensure time for users to be informed and for stations to make arrangements.

COVID certificates will be checked in the following situations:

- to allow access to areas where transport tickets are sold, including online whenever possible¹; in any case, professionals will be encouraged to systematically remind purchasers that tickets sold will only provide access to ski lifts upon presentation of a valid COVID certificate;

¹ In particular through the application TousAntiCovid Vérif, via API or SDK (see https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/kit-deploiement-api-sdk_2909_0.pdf)

- checks will be carried out in ski lift boarding areas by the operator or any other person authorized to do so under the conditions set out by the regulations in force; in the absence of a valid COVID certificate, access to the lift will be refused;

- students' COVID certificates will be checked by ski instructors at the beginning of class; in the absence of a valid COVID certificate, access to the class will be refused. Users should be provided with clear information in advance.

Enforcement of these checks will fall under the authority of the Prefect, who will define a plan for checking procedures, in cooperation with mayors in their role as municipal police authorities. The Prefect is supported by internal security forces.

IV. Recommendations specifically concerning seasonal workers

- General recommendations

Employers may offer lodging under the employment contract (as a benefit in kind), or reserve accommodation for their employees. In this case, the employer should opt for individual accommodation. If this is impossible, spacing must be increased between each bed (at least two metres), and screens installed between beds whenever possible.

In the case of rooms with multiple beds, the employer should limit occupancy to two people whenever possible (with the exception of families), and in any event, provide spaces to isolate persons suspected of having been infected.

In accommodation, common areas and/or shared parts of buildings, recommendations for protective measures and practices to follow should be displayed, in particular concerning the cleaning (several times per day) and ventilation of lodgings.

Any common areas must be cleaned and disinfected daily.

- Procedure to follow as soon as a first potential or confirmed case is identified within collective housing

The regional public health authorities must be immediately informed of the first possible or confirmed case by the on-site physician or the healthcare professional and testing centre supervisor in charge of contact tracing. With the prior consent of the person concerned, the information will be communicated to the head of the establishment and to the employer [and to the monitoring unit set up by the resort mayor].

This information concerns:

- the type of accommodation; and
- the number of persons in the accommodation.

Without waiting for the results of the test, a list should be drawn up of the names and contact information of the persons identified as "contacts", who have been in contact with the potential case.

A person exhibiting symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 should immediately go to a local medical centre or to a pharmacy to be tested. Employers' occupational health services can be mobilized as necessary to organize testing.

- Conditions for implementing COVID certificate requirements in the event that the epidemic situation worsens

In accordance with the regulations in force, the implementation of COVID certificate requirements in the event of a national incidence rate exceeding 200 cases per 100,000 inhabitants will lead to requiring this certificate from the list of professionals in contact with the public, as defined by ski lift operators.

As employers, the operators will be responsible for making sure that their employees concerned by this rule have a valid COVID certificate.