



Planning a Ski Trip during COVID-19

During these unprecedented times, the PSC Council faces new challenges as we work to plan ski trips for the coming winter. There is so much uncertainty on so many levels. The PSC Council wants to be transparent with our members on the planning of our trips and how we will manage the risks.

Prior to the pandemic, the club had signed contracts for 2021 trips to Vail (Jan 3-10) and Telluride (Feb 6-13; the Blue Ridge Ski Council's Western Carnival). Without concessions from the contract terms, the club faces significant financial risks if we are unable to operate either of these trips. Our hope is that these two trips in particular will run if the environment is safe for travel.

We signed most of our other contracts subsequent to the pandemic, and have more favorable cancellation terms. Most trips have a Go/No-Go decision date in September or later in the fall. If a trip has too few sign-ups to operate successfully, the Council could decide to cancel the trip before additional penalties kick in.

In prior years, we might have had a trip or two in our schedule with low sign-ups. We would work to manage the financial risks, and would continue to operate the trips in the hopes that additional sign-ups would materialize to help make the trip a success. The club could afford the risk of losing a small amount of money, but it is unreasonable for us to attempt to operate multiple trips that have the potential for significant losses due to low participation.

Through the planning process for our 2021 trips, the Council has made several changes to our previously announced tentative schedule:

- For a number of reasons, we decided not to pursue a contract for the Steamboat trip over the New Year's holiday.
- We had already made a substantial deposit with the hotel for the Zermatt trip, but were able to negotiate a shift of the trip to 2022.

Below are a few FAQ's that the Council thought could help our members as they determine their travel plans for the coming ski season.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How has the club organized ski trips for next winter?

The Council has cautiously moved forward with planning ski trips. We have paid particular attention to cancellation policies for lodging and airlines. We will work to actively manage the financial risks of each trip, and may need to make Go/No-Go decisions during the fall.

2. What if I'm unsure about going. Should I sign up for a trip?

You can register for a trip and delay making the deposit payment. According to our Trip Sign-up Payment Policy, you are not confirmed on a trip until the club receives your deposit payment. But by registering for a trip, you let the trip leader know of your interest in the trip, and then you can make the required trip payments once you are certain that you want to go on the trip.

The trip leader would contact those who had registered but not paid, to determine whether they wanted to secure their spot on the trip by making the required payments, in specific circumstances:

- If the trip is approaching a Go/No-Go decision. Additional paid participants may be needed to allow the trip to move forward and avoid being cancelled.
- If the trip nears reaching capacity. Once the trip reaches capacity, anyone registered but not paid would be moved to a waitlist for the trip.

3. How does the club manage the financial risk associated with the trips?

Managing financial risks is more challenging than ever. Prior to the eruption of COVID-19, the club had executed a few contracts for 2021 ski trips. In some cases, we have successfully negotiated to move the trip out a year to 2022, like the Zermatt trip. In other instances, we have received more lenient cancellation policies. But the club does face some substantial financial risks if trips end up cancelling due to lack of participation.

4. What happens to my trip deposit and other trip payments if a trip gets cancelled?

For a number of our planned trips, the club will have an opportunity to make Go/No-Go decisions in September or later. If sign-ups are strong, then a trip will move forward. If sign-ups are too low, the club may need to cancel a trip. In this situation, participants would receive full refunds for any trip payments, because the trip would be cancelled before lodging and airline penalties kick in.

If a trip gets cancelled because a ski resort and/or lodging property is closed, the club would do its best to secure any refunds from lodging properties, airlines, and ski resorts. Airlines may issue credits towards future travel rather than refunds.

5. What happens to my trip deposit and other trip payments if I decide to cancel from a trip before departure?

If you were to cancel before the club's Go/No-Go Decision Date, you would receive a full refund for any trip payments.

If you were to cancel after the club's Go/No-Go Decision Date, you may risk some financial loss. The club would take all available steps to fill your spot and minimize your potential loss. This is our common practice, even before the COVID-19 crisis. You may wish to consider purchasing cancellation insurance to provide relief in anticipation of this circumstance.

6. Should I purchase trip insurance?

The decision to purchase trip insurance is a personal choice. Our [Trip Insurance Page](#) conveys our basic guidance. We normally include emergency medical & evacuation/repatriation insurance coverage, for all participants, as part of the basic trip cost for our skiing and non-skiing trips heading outside the U.S. This coverage is also available, at your own cost, for domestic trips. Note that this is emergency medical coverage only. It is not cancellation coverage and will not provide any relief if you cancel from a trip before it begins, whether for medical or other reasons. Optional cancellation coverage upgrades are available at extra cost; the typical levels of coverage include:

- Standard trip cancellation insurance provides benefits if you cancel from your trip due to illness, injury, or death of you or your traveling companion/ roommate, or illness, injury or death of an immediate family member.
- Cancel for any Reason (CFAR) insurance provides the benefits of the Standard cancellation insurance, but also provides benefits (at 75%) if you cancel for any non-standard reason such as No Snow, Pandemics, Epidemics, War, Civil Unrest, Hurricane Warnings, Tornado Warnings, or if you just don't want to go, but **you must purchase it within 14 days of paying your initial deposit towards the trip.**

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