AT YOUR OWN RISK & MOUNTAIN SAFETY

ORGANISED DAYS OUT

WINTER WALKS, SNOWSHOEING & SKIING
In Badia we organise at least one winter walk/snowshoe itinerary and one ski itinerary every day - apart from Thursday or Sunday. Usually, our winter walk/snowshoe itinerary will be of moderate difficulty and our ski day will be for those comfortable on red runs. In addition we usually offer another walk/snowshoe itinerary or a cross-country skiing day. We hope to be able to offer something to suit everyone for most days of your stay.

In Arabba we offer the choice of two downhill skiing itineraries each day - apart from Thursday and Saturday.

In Corvara we organise two ski itineraries each day as well as one other activity from Chalet Verena. We tend to vary this during the week and it is usually a mix of snowshoeing, winter walking and cross-country skiing - apart from Thursday and Sunday.

You do not pay to join an organised walk, snowshoe itinerary or ski day. They are organised on a goodwill basis and in the event of our organiser being ill, we cannot guarantee the excursion will take place. Our walk and ski organisers are not qualified guides and you join them entirely at your own risk. Indeed, our organised winter walks and ski days are specifically so-called because they are not ‘guided.’ All our excursions take place in a sociable and informal atmosphere and, whilst you are encouraged not to join one unless you are certain it is within your physical capabilities, we always walk or ski at the pace of the slowest person and pause regularly so that the scenery can be appreciated. The organised winter walk and ski programme is put together in advance by our resort staff and we would ask you to accept their discretion with regard to the routes that are offered. Children are welcome on all our outdoor excursions but they must be accompanied by a guardian, who takes full responsibility for their safety and behavior.

BEING INDEPENDENT
For people who want to walk or ski independently, the Dolomites offer an extensive network of ‘way-marked’ trails for walking and marked pistes for skiing. For those interested in getting a little more off the beaten track on snowshoes we propose a number of itineraries that are easy to follow and have been walked by ourselves or are recommendations from guide books and the tourist offices. We reproduce these route proposals for winter walkers and snowshoers on laminated sheets, which you can borrow from us and use in conjunction with a map at your own risk and on the assumption you have studied the route independently to establish that it is suitable for you and your party.

PROCEDURES AT THE START OF ORGANISED WALKS & HOSTED SKI DAYS
Before departing our organiser will run through the equipment checklist, which represents a minimum basic personal safety requirement. At the start of the route, the Organiser will announce the headcount and address the group again, reiterating:

• That they are not qualified guides and everyone joins them at their own risk.
• That the party is walking this route (or following a set ski itinerary) as a group of non-qualified individuals and the organiser, as somebody who knows the route, is a nominal leader only.
• That they will generally walk/ski at the speed of the slowest person in the party.
• That those at the head of the walking party (or ski group) should keep the main party in sight as much as possible and that anyone wishing to go ahead more quickly is asked to announce this to the organiser and is therefore relinquishing their position as part of the ‘organised’ party.
• That everyone is encouraged to follow the course and progress of the route on the relevant map checking that the organiser is not going the wrong way.
• That everybody should hesitate to ask if they would like to rest at any point during the day.
• That everyone owes a ‘duty of care’ to each other.
• In the event of an accident, the organiser will act in a way they deem safest to offer assistance to any injured parties, whilst appreciating the assistance of similarly experienced members of the party.
• That, if it is the very rare occasion of it being the first time the organiser has done the particular route, the party understands this and it is therefore an ‘adventure’ for all involved.

Please read all of the following pages. It includes important notes on Duty of Care & Emergency Procedures.
AT YOUR OWN RISK

It is essential that you understand the relationship between you and Collett's Mountain Holidays (including our resort staff) with specific regard to our organised winter walks, snowshoeing days, downhill and cross-country skiing & any other activities we may help to organise during your stay with us. It is important you select your itineraries carefully with the ability of you and your party in mind. If you have booked for people other than yourself, we ask you to make members of your party aware of our position and if you (or anyone in your party) should take issue with it, we would ask you (or them) not to join our organised walks, snowshoeing or skiing or, indeed, come to us for ideas and suggestions. We thank you for your understanding on this.

Our staff organise various winter walks, snowshoeing days and ski itineraries during your stay but they are not qualified guides and you join them at your own risk.

Everything you do during your stay in the Dolomites is done at your own risk. In the event of personal injury or death, we are not liable for efforts made by us to enhance your stay in the area, amongst which are our organised winter walks and skiing and the various printed and verbal suggestions concerning itineraries and routes that you will come across during your stay. It is a fact that mountainous areas and winter activities undertaken in the mountains are associated with personal injury and death. By coming to such an area with Collett's Mountain Holidays or, indeed, independently, you are exposing yourself and your party to the (thankfully small) possibility of personal injury or death. In such an event, Collett's Mountain Holidays will not be held responsible for your interest in mountainous areas and your involvement in winter mountain pursuits, which can occasionally have tragic consequences.

DUTY OF CARE

We put safety first but you are as responsible as we are!

You join our organised days out at your own risk, responsible for your own safety and as part of an autonomous group, in which each member has a Duty of Care to each other. Not being professionally responsible for you does not mean we turn a blind eye to safety, nor does it make us exempt from owing a duty of care to people joining our organised winter walks, snowshoeing days or downhill/cross-country ski days.

We deem the safety of our staff and clients to be of unparalleled importance and we therefore take our own safety measures and endeavour to minimise the possibility of personal injury and death. We do this in line with legal requirements pertaining to duty of care.

As with any person or organisation involved with activities where there is a possibility of personal injury or death, the issue of duty of care is ever-present and, in the absence of a qualified guide in 'non-professional' activities anywhere in the world, such as winter walking or skiing (whether organised by a company, club, university or even a friend) has a legal commitment to all involved. This commitment to others should therefore be at the heart of your decision when joining a particular organised winter walk, snowshoe itinerary or ski day, whilst also forming the basis of your behaviour during that particular excursion.

ORIGIN OF ORGANISED WALKS & SKIING WITH COLLETT'S MOUNTAIN HOLIDAYS

The following brief account of the evolution of our summer programme of Organised Walks & Via Ferratas will hopefully help you understand better the relationship between us and you when out on the mountain together in a group.

It was the winter season of 1992/3 that introduced us to the Dolomites and our knowledge of the area and local friendships flourished over a five year period when Tom Collett was employed by an independent ski operator, which, under his management, came to specialise in the Dolomites. Tom then pursued independently his idea of bringing people to the area in the summer.

Collett's Mountain Holidays was established in 1997 offering accommodation in Arabba from May to October. Whilst we promoted the area as a paradise for walking, climbing, painting, mountain biking, wildflowers etc., Tom Collett and his resort staff were not experts in any of these pursuits. The enthusiasm and energy behind the company's establishment was based purely on the immense beauty of the area and the belief that whatever it was that might attract people there, in our accommodation and our presence, they would find a good springboard from which to explore the area in their own way. There is little change in our approach today.

During our first few seasons we made friendships with many guests and it was normal to further this by walking in the mountains together. These walks were arranged usually over a chance meeting in the street or a drink in Café Peter or over dinner.

We would look at a map and randomly plot a route. If anyone involved happened to bump into other Collett's guests, they would be invited to join in. The walks were great fun and we developed an awareness and knowledge of many beautiful walking routes and, in later years, Via Ferrata. The organised walks and via ferratas in the summer and winter walks, snowshoeing and ski days we now offer in the winter are basically a scheduled version of the same arrangement, representing nothing more than the opportunity for you to go on a walk or ski itinerary (which you might not otherwise discover) in the company of other people with common interests, therefore making the experience more sociable. The only difference is that we now propose the specific walks and ski days (along with meeting time and location) on the five days of the week when we are available to join in.

Previously, the routes were decided upon on a whim and by the consensus of all, regardless of whether they were guests or staff. So we use the word 'organised', because our activities are not 'guided'.

If the people organising them were qualified mountain guides, then we might use the term 'guided' and also charge people for them.
The Law is not clear on this subject and lawyers admit 'grey' areas prevent clear legal guidelines. Test cases will no doubt shape the Law in future. Nevertheless, regardless of the legal position, we choose to give the question of duty of care a high profile in our approach to all of our activities, simply because it triggers a focus on safety. We apply codes of practice to the organised activities. We assess, manage and communicate risk. We work hard to make people aware of the importance of mountain safety and their responsibilities when part of a group.

If you are worried about the extent and nature of our various codes of practice, please contact us and we will be happy to discuss them with you. We will also urge you to deem them irrelevant, so that you are reminded of your own commitment to safety in a non-professional environment and encouraged to focus independently on your own preparations regarding the safety of you and those within your party.

In other words, our codes of practice should not be taken into consideration by you when deciding to join an organised winter walk or ski day, for at the heart of our procedures are basic mountain safety measures, which should be undertaken by anyone preparing for a day in the mountains, especially when walking or skiing in a group, where your actions (or inaction) could compromise your safety as well as the safety of the other people in that group.

**WINTER MOUNTAIN SAFETY & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Apply your minds to safety at all times, whether walking or skiing in the mountains and when planning any walking or ski itineraries. Poor preparation, planning or disregard for rules of the mountain can all be fatal. Familiarise yourself with the requirements for walking safely in winter and the rules of the piste if you plan to ski. As a general guide to safety we have used information published by the Italian Alpine Rescue Corps, the British Mountaineering Council and the Ski Club of Great Britain to produce the following overleaf on the prevention of accidents.

**Prevention of accidents** - basic rules for increased winter safety in the mountains

Never underestimate the dangers and the risks attached to a winter day out in the mountains whether skiing or walking - hostile environment, rapid changes in weather conditions, length of time required to cover short distances etc.

Select itineraries within your level of fitness and technical/physical ability and within those of your party members. Walking in snow is far more draining than walking on a clear path. Similarly, don’t head straight for the hardest black run on the first day, work up to it!

**Do not go alone** - if possible, go with others or, for more safety, go in the company of an alpine guide, ski guide or a qualified organisation. (Collett’s is not a qualified organisation but we will endeavour to arrange local guides if requested to do so). Prior to departing, research and familiarise yourself adequately with the characteristics and difficulties of the walk or ski itinerary you are planning. Bear in mind snow and weather conditions. Study carefully the relevant piste map or topographical walking map.

Particularly if going out walking, let someone know where you are going and leave details of your itinerary. (Do not change your itinerary unless necessary).

Have a contingency plan in the event of the unexpected. When walking, an inaccurate or out of date map, poor visibility, route deterioration or a snow slide could all cause a change in your itinerary. Skiers could be faced with piste or lift closures so make sure you can get back from where you have got to.

**Mountain Weather** should always be taken into account, particularly in winter. A forecast is available in our chalets every day after 4.00pm and includes information about snow conditions and avalanche danger. Whilst inaccuracies and local variations in mountain forecasts are not uncommon, they are worth consulting, especially if you are planning an extensive itinerary for the following day.

**Have the right clothing** - For winter walking and snowshoeing you should ideally have a robust pair of waterproof walking boots, which support the ankle, a good number of warm top layers, waterproof/windproof jacket, trousers or salopettes and a pair of gloves and a warm hat (gaiters are also useful). Skiers should have salopettes or insulated waterproof trousers, warm top layers, a windproof/waterproof jacket, gloves and a hat, goggles and sunglasses. Use high factor sun cream to minimise the risk of sunburn.

**Be Responsible** - Always carry the relevant map at all times whether skiing or walking. When walking carry safety equipment such as a compass, torch, whistle, hot drink, spare energy food (e.g. chocolate) and an understanding of how to use them in case of emergency. If you have a health condition, please ensure that you carry any relevant medication at all times and inform another member of your party so that somebody is aware of your circumstances.

**Have adequate insurance cover** - You should have adequate insurance to cover you for whatever activities you plan to undertake whilst in the Dolomites. Collett’s offers a complete winter sports insurance package through Global Travel Insurance. See [www.colletts.co.uk/winterinsurance](http://www.colletts.co.uk/winterinsurance) or call us on 01799 513331 for more details.

**Avalanches** - Avalanches are a danger in any mountainous region, but the Dolomites are quite lucky as their tower-like forms are generally so steep that the majority of snow slides straight off them without having time to accumulate. Some areas do have higher avalanche dangers and this should always be taken into account when planning an itinerary. Check the local weather and avalanche risk report & ask our staff as to potential dangers - if you are not 100% certain don’t do it.

**Study Your Map** - Study the relevant map carefully, including the reference section. Remember that when walking, map reading and navigation is made far more difficult by snow cover which can hide valuable landmarks.

**Map Features** - Be aware that features on the walking maps may have changed or may be covered by snow. Contours should remain reliable, however features such as paths, roads, fences, streams etc. may be covered by snow or may have changed since the map was printed.

**Way-marked Paths** - In winter many of the path waymarks may be buried or obscured by snow. Always use a map to aid with...
route finding so as not to rely too heavily on these markers.

Grid Lines - You will notice that the grid lines on the Tabacco maps do not allow you to give accurate grid references. It is therefore important to keep track of your position as you follow a route. In the case of an emergency a description of local physical features would aid a rescue party in locating you.

Contour Intervals - There is a contour interval of 25 metres on the 1:25,000 scale Tabacco and Kompass maps.

Rock Fall - Due to the fragile nature of limestone, rock falls can occur. In winter, freeze/thaw action is prevalent and this can lead to the loosening of rock. Always be cautious when walking near the massifs for rock falls and warn others by shouting a warning.

Distress Signal - To attract attention use the International Distress Signal, using either a light, a whistle or by shouting: six long flashes of a torch/blasts of a whistle/shouts/waves in succession, repeated at one minute intervals. Repeat until replied to. A reply is given 3 times a minute (every 20 seconds) in either a visible or audible manner.

Helicopters - If a helicopter is involved, the pilot's questions can be answered as follows:

Hands raised in position of five past eleven - YES or YES LAND HERE, HELP IS REQUIRED
Hands raised in position of twenty five to one - NO or DON'T LAND, HELP NOT REQUIRED

Calling for Help - SOS - the procedure

- 118 is the number to call in the event of an accident when other help is not available. The operator who takes the call will decide if you need ambulance or helicopter assistance.
- Always give your name & surname.
- Identify precisely the place from which you are making the call and let them know your telephone number.
- If the location of the accident is far from the place from which you are making the telephone call, try to memorise some landmarks to help the search party find the group.
- Explain in brief what has happened and where it has happened.
- Give the time of the accident.
- Give the exact number of casualties and their relative conditions.
- Give the mobile number of people in the rest of the group still at the scene of the accident, and try to remember the colour of their jackets etc. in order to aid finding them.
- Describe the weather conditions of the accident site, and in particular, the visibility.
- Do not leave the place from which you are making the call, in case the rescue services have to contact you again for further information.
- If the operator manning the emergency line does not speak English and you are unable to communicate, try calling one of our staff and we will relate the information as best we can.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES - SNOWSHOEING

Based on information published by the Italian Alpine Rescue Corps & the British Mountaineering Council - For anyone wishing to take the following emergency notes with them on an itinerary a printed copy is available from the resort office.

Stay calm; do not do anything on impulse.

Evaluate the situation and identify the actual dangers.

Take immediate and sensible precautions to prevent further risk.

Give spare clothing to the injured person and do your best to provide shelter for them.

All reasonable efforts should be made to cope with the situation without calling rescue services, providing that you do not make any injuries worse than they are already. If self-help is not possible, then rescue services will need to be contacted. Call for Soccorso Alpino (Alpine Rescue) on 118. Whether this is by mobile or landline, the rescue team will need to know where you are and the condition of the victim.

If you do not have a mobile, you would have to use a nearby Rifugio or lift station, or descend to find a landline. Choose a safe route - this might not be the quickest, but the possibility of a second accident must be avoided.

Mark the casualties' position on a map and take it along with you. Going for help is a relatively easy decision to make if there are four or more people in the party. At least two can leave to ring for help, leaving one to care for the casualty. If there are only two or three in the group then this becomes a more difficult judgment. In this situation, attracting help from others in the mountains will help.

If no help is forthcoming a decision must be made as to whether to leave the casualty alone or send somebody on their own. You would have to consider the injury, the conditions and the capabilities of the other members of the party.

As far as the injured are concerned, do for them only those things that you are certain you can do safely.

DOWNHILL SKIING & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Skiing can be a dangerous sport. Although the Dolomites are generally a wonderfully quiet place to ski with mostly uncrowded pistes and minimal lift queues, it is still important to be aware of others and always ski within your limits. A ski accident in Italy is treated in the same way as a road traffic accident and the same processes apply. The Ski Club of Great Britain lists the 10 FIS (Fédération Internationale de Ski) rules for safe ski practice:

Respect - Respect others with the manner of skiing.
Control - Adapt the manner and speed of your skiing or snowboarding to your ability and to the general conditions on the mountain.

Choice of Route - The skier or snowboarder in front always has priority. It is the responsibility of the person behind to leave enough space so they can ski unhindered.

Overtaking - Leave plenty of space when overtaking a slower skier or snowboarder so as to allow them to turn where they wish.

Entering & Starting - Look up and down the mountain before joining a marked run. Stopping Only stop at the edge of the piste or where you can be clearly seen by others. Never stop below the brow of a hill where you are hidden.

Climbing - When climbing up or down the piste, do so only at the sides.

Signs - Obey all signs. They are there for your safety.

Assistance - In the event of an accident mark the area with crossed skis or a snowboard stuck in the snow. Provide help and alert the rescue service. It is an offence not to stop at the scene of an accident even if it appears the person is OK.

Identification - All those involved in an accident, including witnesses should exchange names and addresses. Consider wearing a helmet to increase your safety whilst skiing.

It is law in Italy for children under 14 to wear a helmet whilst skiing. These can be rented from the ski hire shop.

Stay calm - do not do anything on impulse. Evaluate the situation to avoid further dangers. Check verbally with the casualty to see how badly they are injured or whether they have just suffered a minor fall. Put crossed skis (or upright snowboard) further up piste from the casualty to alert other skiers of an accident.

Some emergency notes based on information published by the Ski Club of Great Britain and the British Mountaineering Council.