

Latest health and safety measures for visitors to the French Mountains

The French Mountains are a leading winter destination. After a somewhat shorter spring season in 2020, people are looking forward to hitting the slopes again, staying in top accommodation, taking in the fresh mountain air and snowy landscapes, and sharing quality moments with family and friends.

The French Mountains have adopted **all of the necessary health and safety measures outlined by the French government**. Specific measures have also been introduced by those working in mountain-related sectors and occupations (e.g. accommodation, catering, ski lessons, etc.) in order to guarantee the safety of clients and members of staff.

The main measures in place in the French Mountains include enforced social distancing, provision of hand sanitising gel, mandatory use of face-masks, facilities for washing and disinfecting hands and equipment, limitations to the number of people allowed in a room at any one time, regulating the entrances and exits to buildings, and floor markings to direct people in the right direction (one-way systems).

Service providers in ski resorts and villages have also taken steps to ensure that client check-in is as simple and hassle free as possible. For example, holiday apartment complexes now allow guests to check in online to avoid queues on arrival.

Accommodation providers have also looked into making **cancellation policies** more flexible for clients. In certain circumstances, some ski resorts (for example, Les Menuires) now allow clients to cancel **without incurring a charge**.

Specific measures have also been applied to the ski areas and ski lifts. This summer, recommendations were to ensure that people using the lifts and gondolas kept one metre apart and wore face-masks. Equipment was disinfected several times a day. The Ministry of Health and those working in mountain-related sectors and occupations will work closely to develop more stringent measure which will be introduced for the winter season.

Large events involving more than 5,000 participants, such as the Tomorrow Land Festival in Alpe d'Huez, have been postponed to 2021 for now. Whether or not these events end up taking place will depend on how the pandemic evolves between now and next year.

Health and safety measures and labels

Charters and national health and safety labels have been created to ensure maximum safety for visitors. These include:

- The [2 be safe](#) label in shops and accommodation at Les Deux Alpes
- A [Covid-19 protocol](#) at Le Val d'Arly
- The [Covid-free](#) label at Monts Jura
- The [SafeGuard](#) label at Avoriaz
- The [Afnor label](#) in the Dévoluy
- The [Vacances Sereines](#) ('relaxing holidays') label at the Haute Maurienne Vanoise
- The [Clean United](#) label at Val Thorens

What do these labels mean?

These health and safety labels guarantee the ski resort in question's adherence to all measures put in place to limit the spread of the virus. These measures include spacing tables 1.5 metres

apart in restaurants, ensuring that people keep one metre apart in enclosed spaces, making face-masks and hand sanitising gel available at all times in all places, regularly disinfecting all public areas, and regulating the entrances and exits to buildings and one-way systems so people don't come into contact with one another, etc.

All of these measures may further evolve depending on the French government's latest decisions. More information can be found [here](#).

Specific health and safety measures in some ski resorts

La Plagne: Reorganising and training staff, enforcing mandatory use of face-masks in all public spaces, encouraging everyone to pay by card, providing online booking and check-in, making hand sanitising gel available in several places, running a communications campaign discouraging people from disposing of their face-masks in the great outdoors. More information can be found [here](#).

Tignes: Enforcing mandatory use of face-masks in all public spaces and on all ski lifts, limiting numbers and enforcing social distancing in ski lessons, making face-mask wearing mandatory for instructors and encouraging clients to book online where possible. More information can be found [here](#).

Courchevel: Enforcing mandatory use of face-masks on all ski lifts for people aged 11 and above, giving all gondolas a thorough deep clean at least once a day to disinfect them. More information can be found [here](#).

Val d'Arly: The Val d'Arly tourist office has pledged to charge no fees for Covid-related cancellations over the 2020-2021 winter season. More information can be found [here](#).

Official protocol for ski lifts

Objective

Ensuring the health and safety of the general public while enabling ski lift activity to resume

Face-masks

Wearing a face-mask is mandatory for everyone using ski lifts and ski tows. Ski lift operators can opt for one of two operating modes:

- 1- Everyone must wear a face-mask and respect social distancing as much as possible on the ski lift.
- 2- No-one has to wear a face-mask but everyone is either separated by an empty seat on the ski lift or is alone on the ski lift.

Social distancing

Ski lift operators must ensure that everyone respects the social distancing rules that have been put in place on their respective ski lift(s).

Other obligations

The ski lift operator will ensure that the aforementioned rules have been made clear to passengers via announcements and posters in all areas. The operator will request that passengers respect social distancing and not travel in groups. On-site managers will make running water and soap available in certain areas so that passengers can wash their hands.

National recommendations

- Clean and disinfect ski lifts at least once a day
- Ensure access to and sale of face-masks in every main boarding area

- Provide floor markings to control passenger flow (one-way systems) and clear indications of the distance between people to respect when queuing for, boarding and using ski lifts.
- **Advise passengers not to take cameras with them when showing symptoms of Covid-19**
- Ensure that air conditioning and ventilation systems are operating correctly
- Enforce strict health and safety measures among staff to minimise risk of contamination
- If the ski lift operator opts for the second operating mode, staff must make it clear to passengers that they must respect the social distancing rules in place and sit one seat apart. For safety reasons, children are allowed to sit directly next to an adult family member.

More information on the official protocol for ski lifts can be found [here](#).

Your questions answered

1) **Ski rental and equipment for excursions: Will other protocols be put in place to deal with large numbers of people in shops, and also to ensure hygiene when renting?**

Wearing a face-mask is mandatory in all enclosed spaces, including ski rental shops. People will be directed in and out of shops by floor markings. Hygienic caps will be used when trying on helmets and all sport equipment will be regularly disinfected.

2) **Ski buses, transfers and other public transport: How will travelling on ski buses change? Will masks be mandatory? Is there a maximum number of persons per bus? Will there be more buses to better manage large numbers of people?**

Wearing a face-mask is mandatory on all public transport, on ski lifts, in gondolas and on buses. There is no particular limit to the number of people allowed on the buses. More information can be found [here](#).

3) **Gondolas will be open in most areas in the mountains this summer, with people often taking it once a day, and more often in the winter season. Are there guidelines on how to use the gondolas without creating huge queues?**

Wearing a face-mask is mandatory in all gondolas. The number of people allowed in a gondola will be strictly limited to ensure social distancing between the people inside. Only people from the same family or the same group of friends will be allowed to take a gondola together without having to socially distance. Floor markings will help to ensure that passengers queuing for the gondolas keep one metre apart.

4) **Ski and button lifts: Will ski lifts leave empty seats to create a distance between people?**

As explained above, wearing a face-mask is not mandatory on button lifts. For ski lifts, operators can opt for one of two operating modes, one where everyone must wear a face-mask and respect social distancing as much as possible on the ski lift, or one where no-one has to wear a face-mask but everyone is either separated by an empty seat on the ski lift or is alone on the ski lift. Adult passengers are of course allowed to sit directly next to children who are too young to be left alone on the ski lifts.

5) **How restaurants in ski resorts going to deal with the numbers expected during the lunchtime rush? The same question applies to restaurant toilets.**

Wearing a face-mask is mandatory in all restaurants. Floor markings will direct diners in and out, hand sanitising gel will be made available in all restaurants and staff will disinfect all furniture and the toilets several times a day.

6) **Ski lessons and excursions: Are there adjustments for ski lessons or winter excursions and is there a distinction between children and adults regarding the distance?**

Student numbers in ski lessons will be strictly limited this year. Ski instructors are expected to wear face-masks at all time during the lesson, but not students. The area where students start and finish their lessons will be reorganised so that students and groups can keep a reasonable distance from one other. Students must respect social distancing rules whenever they are stationary between skiing and must wear face-masks on the ski lifts.

7) Accommodation

More information on accommodation can be found [here](#).

8) What about swimming pools and wellness areas in hotels? Are there additional restrictions in the hotel restaurant and bar?

Hand sanitising gel will be provided in all mountain accommodation, which will also undergo a frequent deep clean. Clients are encouraged to book accommodation and check in online, and use contactless payment where possible, to keep human contact to a minimum.

The public changing rooms for swimming pools and wellness areas are currently closed, and group activities in the water are limited to 10 people maximum to ensure that people can keep at least two metres apart. It is mandatory to wear a face-mask when not in the water.¹

Tables in restaurants and bars will be spaced 1.5 metres apart in line with social distancing rules.

9) What is the policy for indoor public spaces such as restaurants, shops and supermarkets? Is there a standard or national policy for this, and does this differ depending on the area or space?

In shops and supermarkets, it is mandatory across France to wear a face-mask and to respect any floor markings, one-way systems, social distancing signs, and entrances and exits.

Please note: The information provided above refers to the health and safety measures most likely to be enforced by ski resorts, ski lift operators and accommodation providers, but these measures may well vary from one ski resort to another.

¹ www.sports.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/sportsguideequipementssportifs.pdf