



Snowshoeing day trips involve certain risks. This activity takes place in natural settings, which are consequently farther away from emergency services. This can cause delays in the event of incidents requiring immediate care or an evacuation.

Be sure you have the necessary skills and abilities and the appropriate equipment for practising this activity. Snowshoers must be aware of the potential risks, which include the possibility of material damages and injuries. We advise you to read this document carefully.

You should always choose an excursion based on your abilities, fitness level and outdoor activity skills, the area's topography and snow conditions. A trail's level of difficulty is classified into three levels: Easy, Intermediate and Difficult. You must take these classifications into consideration when choosing a trail.

For general information about the trails and maps, call 1 800 665-6527. For preparation tips, contact the Fédération québécoise de la marche (FQM), at 514 252-3157, toll-free at 1 866 252-2065, or visit their Web site at [www.fqmarche.qc.ca](http://www.fqmarche.qc.ca).

**It is important to note that winter backpacking on skis or snowshoes is not a guided activity, and that you are responsible for your own safety.** There are no patrols on the snowshoeing trails.

We suggest that you read the Careful by Nature brochure, available at our reception offices, and give a friend or relative a copy of your itinerary, making sure to let this person know your return date, with instructions to call emergency services (911) if you do not arrive on the expected date. To prevent false alarms, call this person as soon as you get back.

## FORMALITIES

Before setting off on a trail, get information about the characteristics of your snowshoeing project (length, difference in height, services).

Free appropriately scaled topographical maps are available in the facility's reception areas. It is very autorisation d'accès.

## SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION

Even if you are going snowshoeing for less than an hour, there are risks involved. Be careful.

During your hike, make sure you know exactly where you are going.

### Tip

- *The isolation of certain territories limits the use of portable phones. Despite this fact, we recommend that you bring a communications device with you.*

## WEATHER CONDITIONS

During the winter, weather conditions can change quickly from fair to difficult. Temperatures may vary greatly in the same day. Cold temperatures may increase the risk of hypothermia and death.

### Tip

- *Before your departure, it is important to check snow conditions and the weather forecast for the area you will be visiting.*

## CLOTHING

Make sure to wear appropriate clothing. The symptoms of frostbite are a pinching sensation and progressive numbness. Then there is a gradual loss of feeling until there is no sensation at all. The skin becomes white, icy and waxy. The first symptom of hypothermia is trembling. Heed the warning signs! If these symptoms appear, dry clothing, a warm, non-alcoholic beverage and food are effective remedies.

### Tips

- *Take the multi-layer approach and avoid cotton clothing.*
- *Be sure that the wrists of your undergarments and your socks are not too tight to avoid restricting blood circulation to your hands or feet.*
- *Choose loose-fitting clothing that offers good protection for your lower back.*
- *Avoid putting your gloves on in the snow or putting your wet hands into dry gloves.*
- *Don't tie your shoes too tight, because physical effort can make your feet swell, and as a consequence they can get cold more quickly.*
- *Prevent snow from getting into your shoes by wearing gaiters.*
- *If your glasses get fogged up, this is usually a good indication that your body temperature has increased quickly. If this happens, you can reduce your speed, the number of layers of clothing, or simply ventilate your clothing to let some cool air in.*

## DURING THE HIKE

Snowshoers must be ready to go in all kinds of conditions. A change in weather conditions or your physical condition can greatly affect the level of difficulty and your speed. In ideal conditions, an experienced group of snowshoers rarely goes faster than 2 km/h, including rest periods for meals, for example.

Itineraries are usually indicated with signs or markers. However, vegetation and snow cover can make them less visible and snowshoers can easily become disoriented.

Slopes that are comparable or superior to those of a stairway in a public building could be unstable, even in wooded areas. Watch out for avalanches.

### Tips

- *Be sure to have the skills and fitness level required for the circuit you have chosen.*
- *Leave early, hike only in the daytime and with a group (min.2 people).*
- *Stay on the trails, don't take shortcuts. If you are not sure of your route, retrace your steps until you find a reference point (building, trail intersection, sign, marker, etc.).*
- *Check the map each time you come to a signalled intersection, a shelter or any spot that can be precisely located on the map.*
- *Respect your rhythm, stop or reduce your speed to appreciate your surroundings.*
- *Using walking poles can reduce the amount of energy you need while you are snowshoeing.*
- *Once every hour, take time to stop in a comfortable place to remove your backpack, eat and drink. Wear a down or fleece jacket while you snack.*
- *If you must travel on fresh snow, take turns opening the trail.*

- *Designate an experienced member of the group to close the path. This person will be responsible for staying with the slower group members.*

## FOOD

Even if you are going on a snowshoeing excursion of less than an hour, a canteen of water and a handful of nuts will make your hike more pleasant. For longer hikes, if you eat well and stay hydrated, it will be easier to maintain a comfortable body temperature. You will also have more energy for your hike and you will be more alert when facing the unexpected.

### Tips

- *Be sure that your food and beverages are easy to reach while you are hiking.*
- *Eat and drink small quantities every hour while hiking.*
- *Bring a full water canteen with you. Ideally it should be protected from the cold inside an insulated cover.*
- *Never take or be under the influence of drugs or drink alcoholic beverages while doing the activity.*
- *Never eat snow to hydrate yourself without boiling, treating or filtering it.*

## EQUIPMENT

No matter what the brand name, model or price of the technical equipment you use during your hike, it is important to familiarize yourself with them before your trip.

### Tips

- *Choose your snowshoes according to your weight.*
- *A pair of snowshoes with cleats is indispensable for steep hills or on icy surfaces.*
- *Backpacks should be chosen in terms of the weight and volume of your baggage and according to your build.*

## PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Snowshoers must bring all of their garbage out with them. This rule is in effect along the trails and in the huts.

The forest environment must be preserved, so do not cut down or mutilate trees.

During your trek, you will be travelling through the habitats of a number of wildlife species.

These animals are normally not very aggressive, but if you try to get too close to them, their survival instinct could translate into dangerous behaviour.

### Tips

- *Bring binoculars to observe the animals*

# WHAT TO BRING

## FORMALITY

Entry pass	
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## SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION

Sound-signalling device or appliance (whistle)	
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Communication device (Cellular or satellite telephone)	
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## FOOD

Bring enough food for the trip	
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Insulated canteen for drinking water	
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Thermos for hot liquid	
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## FOR THE TREK

Topographical map specific to your itinerary (in a watertight cover)	
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GPS, extra batteries, instructions for use	
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Compass with magnetic declination of the area visited	
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## ENVIRONMENT

Bags for carrying out your garbage	
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Rechargeable batteries	
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## METEROROLOGY

Thermometer	
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## CLOTHING

Pants and jacket (external shell)	
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Practical clothing (favour synthetics and multi-layering)	
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Gloves and mittens	
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Down jacket	
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Tuques, balaclava	
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## TECHNICAL MATERIAL

Sun glasses	
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Sun screen	
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Lip balm	
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Walking poles	
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Backpack	
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Multi-purpose knife	
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Waterproof matches	
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Flashlight or headlamp and batteries	
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Insulated ground mattress to sit on while having lunch	
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Binoculars	
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