

Study sounds warning on drinking and skiing

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One in five people ski having consumed alcohol, and 29 percent of these hurtle down the piste over the legal limit for driving, an Austrian survey showed Thursday.

"People skiing under the influence of alcohol pose an increased risk to themselves and to other people on the slopes," said Alexandra Kuehnelt-Leddihn from the Austrian [Road Safety](#) Board (KFV).

Alcohol slows down reaction times and impairs [coordination](#) and judgement of speed and distance, said the KFV, which tested 600 people at several Austrian ski resorts for the survey.

"People greatly underestimate the likelihood of an accident," said Kuehnelt-Leddihn. "Even a small amount of alcohol can be dangerous."

Among 15-24 year-olds, 26 percent of those tested had drunk alcohol, falling to 24 percent for the 25-49 age group and to seven percent for the over 50s. Eighty-three percent of women and 79 percent of men had drunk no alcohol, the KFV said.

Among those who had consumed alcohol, 73 percent said they had drunk something "light" such as beer or shandy, 24 percent a "medium" tipples such as wine and eight percent a "hard" winter-warmer like schnapps.

Police figures show that as of February 24, 27 people have died in [accidents](#) with other [skiers](#) in the current season, up from 19 at the same point in 2012, although the number of registered incidents fell to 1,742

from 2,120. Fourteen have also died in avalanches, down from 13.

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