

Wax Room Pollution - Prevention of Associated Health Problems

Pollution in wax rooms has long been recognised as both a problem and a challenge. Smoke was originally the dominant factor, and may cause problems even with fairly low waxing temperatures. The more recent development of new types of wax (for example in the form of dust) and preparation of the ski sole by rotating machines has led to fears that chemical pollution may lead to added complications.

Acute (and occasionally chronic) reactions may develop in the airways, skin and also in the eyes. Damage to health potentially includes the development of asthma, allergic reactions, reduced lung diffusion capacity and other more severe consequences.

Scientific studies in this field are in progress in Sweden and in Norway, but ahead of the final outcome, it is already clear that measures must be taken to prevent this potential occupational damage.

Organizers of snowsports competitions must ensure proper conditions of work for the personnel involved in doing the waxing work. The problems are of course the same for skiers and wax technicians who are preparing equipment for training sessions, and who are waxing skis at home. Some safety guidelines are proposed below – the Medical Committee proposes that these should be adopted by the National Federations and presented for general distribution in their countries.

Safety Guidelines

- All wax room staff should wear approved protective masks with filters
- The masks should ideally have intercom systems to enable the personnel to communicate without removing the masks
- Suction for ventilation should be set up close to the waxing iron and the rotating polishing machines – this will reduce the smoke and pollution in the room
- General good heating and efficient ventilation
- The wax rooms must be cleaned and fully ventilated daily
- The time of exposure to smoke and pollution must be reduced to the absolute minimum per day
- Access to the waxing rooms without protective masks must be limited
- Written notices regarding the dangers for unprotected persons should be posted

FIS Medical Committee

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