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The Norwegian Mountain Code

9 SIMPLE ADVICES ON HOW TO STAY SAFE IN THE MOUNTAINS, AND
HOW TO REFLECT ON YOUR OWN ABILITIES.



Norwegian **Red Cross**



Background

The mountain code was introduced after a number of accidents and deaths during Easter in 1950. After another disastrous Easter in 1967, The Norwegian Trekking Association and The Red Cross launched the campaign "Welcome to the mountains, but be responsible."

The mountain code has since become part of the Norwegian cultural heritage, and a part of the child rearing.



Photo: DNT

Much has changed since the fifties. We go on different kinds of hikes with other types of equipment, and the knowledge in the population has changed. Tourism attracts new kind of users. Because of this, The Red Cross and The Norwegian Trekking Association have revised the mountain code in 2015.



The updated mountain code is suitable for all seasons, and is a good guide in both the planning and the implementation of shorter and longer trips. They are built up as learning circle with opportunity to continuous reassessment.



Common sense in the mountains isn't just about what you should and should not do. It is about having a conscious relationship with nature, the choices you make and your actions.

This is why the mountain code is laid out as a learning circle: from planning to meeting the group and assessing the current conditions. Then adjust your plans based on what you experience on the hike. Reflection is the most important thing.



The Norwegian Mountain Code

1. Plan your trip and inform others about the route you have selected.
2. Adapt the planned routes according to ability and conditions.
3. Pay attention to the weather and the avalanche warnings.
4. Be prepared for bad weather and frost, even on short trips
5. Bring the necessary equipment so you can help yourself and others.
6. Choose safe routes. Recognize avalanche terrain and unsafe ice.
7. Use a map and a compass. Always know where you are.
8. Don't be ashamed to turn around.
9. Conserve your energy and seek shelter if necessary.

Structure of the code

- Divided into three levels:
 - The advices, which are short, concrete and easy to remember.
 - Subsections which adds more detailed information to the user. (Mostly not included when used in preventive measures)
 - The last level is meant as a dynamic document with background information and links to relevant sources for education and facts.



1. Plan your trip and inform others about the route you have selected.

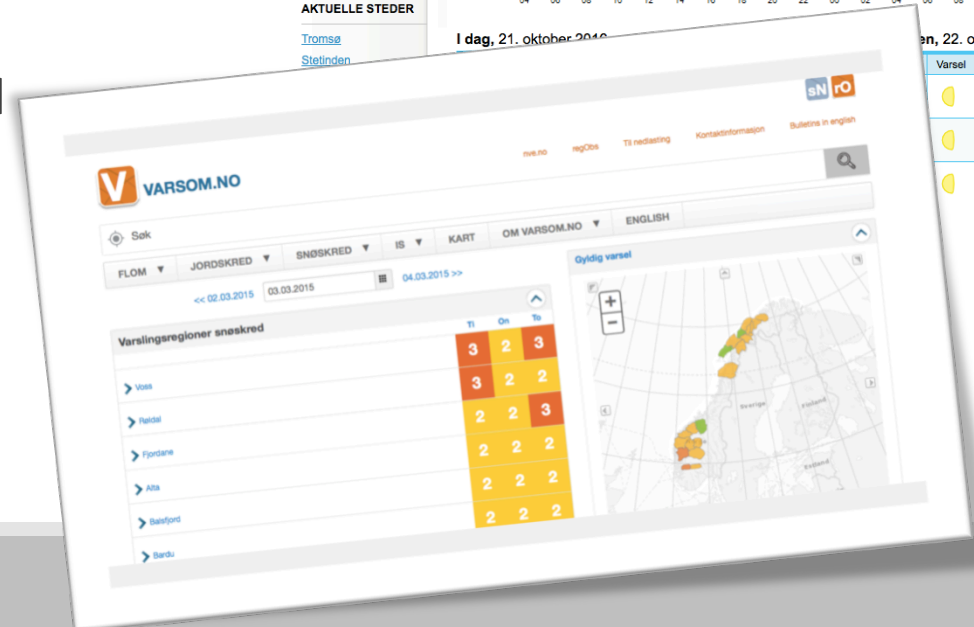
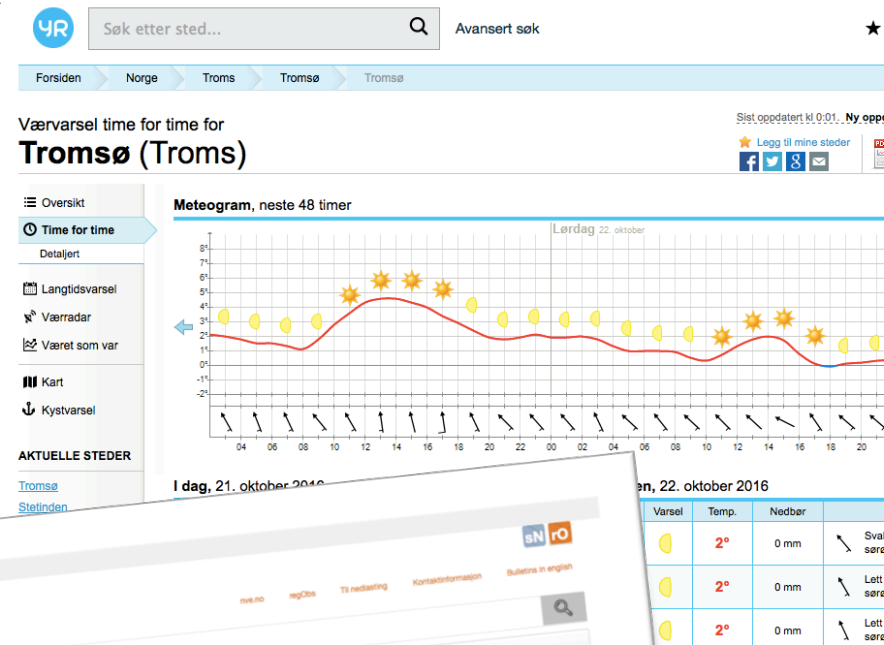
- Plan your trip based on the group's abilities, and always include alternative options.
- Obtain current information about the area and the weather conditions. Listen to the advice of seasoned mountaineers where possible.
- Ensure you have sufficient knowledge and practical skills to complete the trip.
- Respect the natural environment. Plan ahead and don't leave any litter.
- Arrange meeting points during the trip that don't require mobile coverage or accurate timing.
- Is your planning sufficient to guarantee an enjoyable trip no matter what?

2. Adapt the planned routes according to ability and conditions.

- Assess the conditions continuously and adjust your plans accordingly.
- Respect the weather.
- Travelling with others is safer and means you'll have someone to share your experiences with. If you're travelling alone, exercise caution.
- Do not embark on a long trip without sufficient experience. You must be able to take care of yourself as well as the others in your group.
- Be considerate of other hikers. Make sure you have read The right of access and its requirements.
- Make sure your group maintains an open and direct line of communication at all times.
- Can you complete the trip under these conditions and with this group?

3. Pay attention to the weather and the avalanche warnings.

- Always check the weather forecast and avalanche warnings to see what impact they have on the area. Follow the advice and choose a gentler terrain when conditions are too demanding.
- Check the conditions on yr.no, storm.no and varsom.no.
- Monitor the development of the weather and avalanche conditions along the way. Bear in mind that plans may need to be adjusted.



4. Be prepared for bad weather and frost, even on short trips

- Dress appropriately for the weather, and the terrain.
- Remember that the weather changes quickly in the mountains. Bring extra clothing, and the equipment your route and terrain requires.
- Extra food and drink can help save lives, if the trip takes longer than planned or you have to wait for help.
- Is your group equipped to deal with a sudden change in weather?



5. Bring the necessary equipment so you can help yourself and others.

- In the winter, you need a wind sack/bivy sack, sleeping pad, sleeping bag and a shovel so that you can spend the night outdoors if you have to. A wind sack can save lives.
- Bring a high-visibility vest or a headlight, that will make it easier to find you if necessary.
- Bring a first aid kit so you can help yourself and others.
- Always use a transmitter/receiver, and have an avalanche probe and a shovel if you are traveling in avalanche prone terrain.
- Pack wisely. Packing lists for different tours can be found at ut.no.
- Mobile phones can be a useful tool, but remember that they don't work in all situations and areas.
- If an accident occurs, alert the police at 112, go to get help or try to notify someone with other means.
- Are you able to take care of yourself and help others?

6. Choose safe routes. Recognize avalanche terrain and unsafe ice.

- Make an active decision to avoid terrain that is prone to avalanches, and plan your route well.
- Be aware that avalanches can start in drops higher than five meters and steeper than 30 degrees.
- Even if you walk in flat terrain, you can trigger an avalanche on the mountainside above you.
- An avalanche dropout zone can be three times the height of the drop.
- Avoid terrain traps, such as narrow gorges. Consider what will happen if there is an avalanche.
- Be aware that a cornice can break off when you walk on a mountain ridge.
- Be aware of ice conditions when you walk on regulated lakes and rivers.
- Can an avalanche happen where I plan to go? What will the consequence be?

7. Use a map and a compass. Always know where you are.



- A map and compass are essential basic equipment that always work.
- Pay attention to the map even when hiking on a marked trail.
- Knowing where you are on the map makes for a better hiking experience.
- GPS and other electronic aids are helpful, but make sure you have extra batteries.
- Do you know where you are?

8. Don't be ashamed to turn around



- Evaluate your route continuously. If conditions become difficult, choose your best alternative long before you or your group members become exhausted.
- Have the circumstances changed? Should you turn around?
- Are anyone in your group having problems completing the route? Should the group turn around?
- Enjoy the hike for its own sake, and remember that there will be other opportunities if it is too challenging today.

9. Conserve your energy and seek shelter if necessary.

- Adjust your hiking speed to the weakest member of the group, and make sure that everyone can keep up.
- Remember to eat and drink frequently. When you exert yourself, your body needs more fluids than you may feel you need.
- Don't wait until you are exhausted before you seek shelter. Strong winds will tire you out quickly.
- Use your wind sack or dig a snow cave before it's too late.
- Are you able to get back to your base? Do you know where the nearest shelter is?



The revised mountain code

- The mountain code is not meant as “strict rules”, but as guidelines to plan and implement a safe trip in the mountains, in manner to trigger pattern thinking from the user.
- The advices are shaped in a way that makes it possible to use them in education for outdoor activities.
- In line with the today’s language.
- Most Norwegians are familiar with the mountain code through years of different campaigns and distribution.
- We aim to translate the code to different languages, to reach out to foreign tourists.
 - For the English version you can go to:
www.visitnorway.com/plan-your-trip/safety-first/in-the-mountains/the-mountain-code/

Norwegian **Red Cross**



Tourism as an increasing problem at popular mountain destinations



photo: ut.no



Thank you for your attention!

