

Trip Insurance – Do You Really Need It?

Basically, trip or travel insurance, like most insurance, is a hedge against an unforeseen circumstance that you hope will not occur, causing financial loss. For example, you pay to go on a ski trip, and two weeks before the trip, you break your arm and can't go. If you did not buy trip insurance, and no replacement was found, you are out the full cost of the trip. If you did have trip insurance with cancellation coverage for this type of event, you would get back the cost of the trip from the insurer. Travel expert Rick Steves' website features an article regarding trip insurance: <http://www.ricksteves.com/plan/tips/insurance.htm>.

The cost of the insurance depends on the type of coverage you want and the amount you want to spend to protect yourself against a potential loss. Cancellation due to medical reasons, trip interruption, trip delays, and lost luggage are coverages that are available under a typical policy. You can include such items as medical coverage, evacuation, or cancellation for any reason, at an extra cost. Pre-existing medical conditions are not typically covered, although some insurers will add this if the insurance is purchased shortly after initial trip deposit. Premiums are usually based on the value of the trip and the particular coverage you feel you will need. Like most insurances there are exclusions in the fine print. For example, if your flight is cancelled before you leave and rebooked for two days later, those two days of your lost vacation may not be covered. Trip delays usually have a time period stipulation; it is not considered a delay until X hours after the delay starts. **So, the important thing is that you need to understand what is covered and what is not covered in the policy before you purchase.**

Where do you get trip/travel insurance? Your trip leader should have information about insurance offered through the tour operator for your trip. The National Ski Council Federation has a trip insurance company listed as part of the benefits available to club members, www.skifederation.org (you need to sign up for a password to access details for any benefit listed on their website). Your personal insurance agent is another option.

Buying trip insurance is a personal choice; KOPSC does not require that you purchase it before going on one of our ski trips. It's a matter of weighing risk and benefit and determining whether you really need it.