

# 6% drop in snowsports participation in U.S. in 2011-12

By Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times

Participation in snow sports in the most recent winter season dropped 6 percent, primarily because of a lack of snow and increased work and family obligations for snow sport enthusiasts, according to a study released last week.

The number of Americans who went skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing, among other snow activities, typically from Thanksgiving to early spring dropped from 21 million to 19.8 million, according to a report by SnowSports Industries America, a nonprofit trade group for snow sports businesses.

The biggest drop in snow sports was among alpine skiers, whose numbers dipped 11% to 10.2 million this winter season, according to the 2012 SIA SnowSport Participation Report. Participation in snowboarding dropped 8 percent to 7.6 million and cross-country skiing declined 5 percent to 4.3 million, the report said.

Among the top reasons snow sport enthusiasts gave for staying off the slopes this winter season were family commitments (33 percent), work obligations (32 percent) and decreased vacation time (20 percent), according to a survey conducted by the trade group.

Poor weather was cited by about 11 percent of snow sports fans as a reason for staying off the mountains, the survey found.

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