

Court: Inbounds avalanches an inherent risk of skiing

By Karen E. Crummy, Denver Post

Avalanches within the boundaries of open runs at Colorado ski resorts are an inherent danger, and operators do not have to warn skiers or close runs, even when risk is high, the Colorado Court of Appeals ruled Thursday.

The 2-1 decision, which immunizes resorts from claims after avalanche-related deaths or injuries, is the first of its kind in the country, said Jim Chalot, a Colorado ski attorney. He said the decision is likely to influence courts in other states with similar ski-safety laws.

“There hasn’t been a prior case where an avalanche (on an open run) is considered a statutory inherent risk of skiing,” said Chalot, who has practiced ski law for more than three decades.

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