

Avalanche Awareness Programs – Recommended Guidelines of American Avalanche Association

| Program | Audience | Recommended Learning Outcomes | Recommended Content / Curriculum Summary | Recommended Student Link to next Course | Recommended Format Setting-Indoor/Outdoor | Recommend Student's Next Steps | Recommended Instructor qualifications Student:inst. ratio |
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| Avalanche Awareness/ Introduction to Avalanches | Aspiring backcountry travelers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe the equipment necessary for winter backcountry travel ● Recognize that most fatal avalanche accidents were triggered by the people involved and that preparation and training prior to backcountry travel can save lives ● Find and interpret local mountain weather forecast and avalanche advisory information ● Differentiate avalanche terrain from terrain where avalanches can not occur; Recognize avalanche exposure ● Describe a basic process to manage risk for winter backcountry travel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GEAR – Introduce required and recommended winter backcountry travel equipment, including avalanche rescue gear, discipline specific travel gear, as well as navigation, survival, first aid & repair kit. ● RISK – Use local case histories to introduce avalanche risk to prospective backcountry travellers; detail how a risk management process can be applied to reduce avalanche risk for those wishing to travel in the winter backcountry environment. ● RESOURCES – Show where to find and how to use local weather forecast and avalanche advisory resources to anticipate backcountry conditions and hazards during a trip planning process. Define the scope and limitations of these resources as planning tools. ● TRIP PLANS – Illustrate how to build a trip plan that avoids the expected hazards and accommodates uncertainty related to the conditions, group and terrain, specifically by defining terrain to avoid and anticipating decision points and decision criteria to reduce decision bias in the field. ● TERRAIN – Illustrate local recreationally used terrain where avalanches are not possible. Illustrate local terrain where avalanches are possible, that's interspersed with non-exposed terrain. Illustrate exposed avalanche terrain, where avalanche exposure is unavoidable. ● MANAGE RISK – Model and practice avoiding exposure to avalanche terrain while travelling in the backcountry. Illustrate applying safe margins in the terrain between where avalanches are expected, and where the group chooses to travel. Emphasize group decisions and clear communication. Debrief the group's choices and the role the instructor played in facilitating the choices. | <p>Introductory courses emphasize managing risk by avoiding exposure to avalanche terrain, but is limited to basic concepts.</p> <p><u>Level 1 courses</u> introduce a process for evaluating where and how to travel in avalanche terrain.</p> <p><u>Avalanche Rescue</u> courses are appropriate for anyone travelling in the winter backcountry whether their intent is to avoid or travel in avalanche terrain. Even those attempting to avoid avalanche terrain may make mistakes and avalanche rescue skills are essential for any winter backcountry travellers.</p> | <p>1-3 hr. classroom sessions introduce topics.</p> <p>Some introductory programs will only include classroom time.</p> <p>Some introductory programs will include a day of supporting field time. Travel in the field emphasizes terrain recognition with an intention to avoid exposure to avalanche terrain when possible.</p> | <p>This course prepares someone to enter the backcountry and manage their risk given limited experience and skills.</p> <p>This course does not prepare student for independent travel in avalanche terrain.</p> <p>To travel in avalanche terrain students are encouraged to travel with trained and experienced group leaders, and to follow up an Avalanche Awareness course with either/both an Avalanche Rescue and Level 1 class.</p> | <p>Course Leaders and Instructors: Required to be AAA Affiliate members, recommended to be AAA Professional members.</p> <p>If course has a field component, instructors need to be qualified to manage students in avalanche terrain.</p> <p>Classrooms ratios unlimited; Field ratios maximum 8:1</p> |