



AMERICAN AVALANCHE ASSOCIATION

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This letter serves to explain the status of the various levels of avalanche certifications that exist within the US. With the recent rec/pro split, and changes to standards moving forward, we feel it is important to understand how all of the trainings align. Currently, the US does not regulate what kind of certification is necessary for working in avalanche terrain. The American Avalanche Association aims to oversee professional avalanche education, ensuring its consistency and high standards.

If we look at this from a then and now perspective, it allows us to see the differences between the two systems.

Up until 2017, we had the Level 1, 2 and 3, along with the AvPro. The Level 1 and 2 did not have an evaluation component, as it was participation based only. The Level 3 and AvPro were the only courses that offered assessments and evaluations up to 2017.

Skills assessed were as follows:

- Level 3 - Beacon/rescue skills, snowpack test proficiency, snow profile, documentation, terrain recognition, route finding, group management, and a written test. 6 days
- AvPro - Beacon/rescue skills, snowpack physics, avalanche formation, terrain assessment, route finding, group management, avalanche control practices, written test. 6 days.

Currently, we have the Pro Program which is a more comprehensive program, with a larger step of skills between the Pro 1 and 2.

Now, the skills assessed are as follows:

- Pro 1/Bridge - beacon/rescue skills, snowpack test proficiency, snow profile, documentation, written test, operational risk assessment (AM/PM forms). 5 days - Pro 1, 2 days - Pro 1 Bridge
- Pro 2 - snowpack test pit proficiency (efficiency and accuracy), documentation, operational risk assessment and risk treatment, avalanche atlas creation, public forecasting, operational forecasting and a written test. 6 days

- Pro AvSAR - Organized Rescue Response, ICS for multi agency response, beacon proficiency, communication, leadership, search strategies, methodology and techniques and a written exam. 3 days

The A3 would like to acknowledge that trainings prior to 2017 are no less valid than ones received after 2017, they just emphasize different topics and therefore cannot be considered the same. If a student passed a Level 3 or AvPro whenever they took it, they met the standards of the time and it will be honored as such.

The point is, people were evaluated on different topics at different times and training pre-2017 was no less valid than post 2017, it just emphasized different topics. If the person passed the course whenever they took it, then they met the standards of the time.

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