

# **Avalanche Instructor Certification Application**

## **American Avalanche Association**

Name:  
E-Mail:  
Home Phone:                      Work Phone:  
Mailing Address:  
City:                                      State:  
Zip/Postal Code:  
Best way to contact you:  
Professional Member of AAA or CAA since:

This application is intended to illustrate your practical snow experience, knowledge of snow science and theory, and teaching skills. In order to accomplish this difficult task, the style is more of an essay format than fill in the blanks. Applications must be typewritten or word-processed using the format outlined below. Applicants must be current professional members of AAA.

### **1. PRACTICAL SNOW EXPERIENCE**

The applicant must show 10 or more seasons of practical (field) and teaching experience focusing on snow pack stability evaluation, winter weather forecasting and or avalanche control work. Field experience could include ski patrolling involving avalanche control work and snow stability evaluation, guiding in avalanche terrain, avalanche forecasting and/or personal backcountry travel. Teaching experience can include instructing multi-day avalanche courses, mentoring co-workers, and or presenting research at a snow, weather, rescue or avalanche related seminar or conference (ex. ISSW, CSAW, NSAS, AMGA, etc.). Avalanche courses taught should be a combination of both Level I, and Level II courses (meeting the AAA guidelines for these levels). The applicant needs to have taught both the field and lecture portions, and critical is the teaching done at Level II or equivalent. Documentation (especially for backcountry experience) should include days/year and location, stability evaluations done, and additional references/contacts. Snow profiles and documented observations could be part of this resume.

### **2. SNOW SCIENCE AND THEORY**

The applicant will need to demonstrate a clear understanding of snow science and theory. To quantify this, the applicant should include a list of avalanche courses, workshops and classes taken, conferences attended, related college degrees and courses taken, technical papers and articles written, etc.

### **3. TEACHING SKILLS**

We are looking for teaching experience equivalent to a minimum of eight multi-day avalanche courses. The courses taught should be a combination of both Level I, and Level II courses (meeting the AAA guidelines for these levels). The applicant needs to have taught both the field and lecture portions, and critical is the teaching done at Level II or equivalent.

- What year did you start teaching avalanche courses?
- How many avalanche courses have you taught?
- How many courses do you teach per year on average?
- What populations have you taught? (e.g. skiers, snowboarders, snowmobilers, snowshoers, highway workers, ski patrollers, guides etc.)
- Please provide a detailed list of courses taught, including dates and course organizer.  
Equivalent teaching experience may include on-the-job teaching/training of avalanche

skills and forecasting to new employees, such as ski guides, ski patrol, and in-house guides training. It may also include the teaching of non-AAA curricula courses, such as college courses. If you have taught twenty or more courses, please list the most recent 10.

- The applicant may wish to list avalanche educators they have worked with, or under, in teaching avalanche courses, and list other teaching experience. Course critiques, course summaries, or evaluations, may be submitted as criteria for consideration.

#### 4. LETTERS OF REFERENCE

Required are three letters of reference from people familiar with your snow science and teaching skills. Two of the three letters must be from professional AAA or CAA members. These letters of reference should include the following information:

- ♣ Understanding of technical knowledge (snowpack formation, surface processes, metamorphism, avalanche mechanics...)
- ♣ Effectiveness of teaching progressions or lesson plans, and whether the curriculum/presentation was tailored to the students.
- ♣ Is the applicant capable of organizing level 1 and level 2 courses (as defined by the curriculum guidelines of the AAA)? Is the applicant capable of teaching all the classes defined by those curricula?
- ♣ How is the applicant's field instruction? Does the applicant present the material effectively for the environmental conditions? Does the applicant manage the group appropriately on the approach and exit?
- ♣ Please list your permanent and pertinent temporary email address, phone number, and mailing address

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

##### ♣ Incomplete Applications:

Applications that don't start with the requisite information, letters of reference, and payment will not be forwarded to the reviewer for consideration. The reviewer may ask for more information or clarification as part of the review process.

##### ♣ Appeals to certification denial:

If the reviewer denies certification to the applicant, the applicant may appeal to the Executive Board of the AAA. If the Executive Board denies the appeal, any future re-application must be accompanied by a new application and fee.

##### ♣ Responsibilities of the reviewer:

- The reviewer ascertains that all the quantifiable criteria is met by the applicant and verifies that the submitted information is accurate. The reviewer will contact references.
- The reviewer will process the application within 30 days of receipt. If circumstances do not allow for timely review, the applicant will be notified that there is a delay and when to expect a decision to be made.
- If an application is denied the reviewer is responsible for pointing out any deficiencies in the application and the reasons for denial.

##### ♣ Renewal/Continuing Education:

There is no renewal period, nor a renewal fee. It is expected that certified instructors will continue their own education and conduct courses at the highest standard. Complaints about an AAA Certified Instructor will be handled by the Ethics Committee of the American Avalanche Association.

Please send an e-mail of your resume and scanned copies of your 3 letters of recommendation to [aaa@avalanche.org](mailto:aaa@avalanche.org) plus \$200 payment and hard copies of completed application and your 3 original letters of recommendation to the address below:

Jaime Musnicki, American Avalanche Association  
P.O. Box 248 Victor, ID 83455