

AAA AVPro Course

This is a comprehensive professional course aimed at all levels of avalanche workers. It introduces the *Snow, Weather, and Avalanche Guidelines* of the American Avalanche Association (2004) and sets a proficiency standard of education for the U.S. avalanche community. Sixty percent of the course will be conducted in the field with the remaining forty percent of the course in the classroom. The course is intensive; eight days long and each day will be between nine and eleven hours of instruction.

This course will provide expert instruction designed to provide participants the opportunity to become accurate and efficient in snowpack observation. The course will solidify the participants' understanding of snowpack physics and avalanche formation and give them tools to apply that knowledge to the assessment of avalanches and avalanche potential. Terrain assessment, route finding, group management, and decision-making will be examined and practiced daily. Avalanche rescue and beacon use will be extensively practiced, and participants will be brought to a higher level and expected to meet a standard.

Additionally, the course will provide an overview into highly organized avalanche control programs (both at ski areas and highways), and provide industry norm instruction into avalanche control practices. This course will benefit a large audience including: forecast center avalanche observers, ski patrollers, ski guides, search and rescue coordinators/trainers, highway technicians, and experienced recreationists who want to pursue a career in the avalanche realm.

Instructors will be chosen from a pool of AAA Certified Instructors including some of the best practitioners and researchers in the avalanche industry. This course will have a pass/fail format with final evaluations being given at the end of the course. There will be course pre-work and assignments.

Specifically, the course will address the following avalanche knowledge and skill topic areas with lecture, demonstration, participation, and practice:

Fundamentals

- Decision Support and Strategies
- Weather Information Sourcing
- Avalanche Rescue
- Snow Physics
- Avalanche Formation

Observing and Recording Standards

- Avalanche Observations
- Snowpack Observations
- Weather Observations

Applied Practice

- Terrain-based Avalanche Control – ski guiding
- Explosive-based Avalanche Control – industry and transportation
- In the Public Eye – communicating and the media

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Prerequisites: It is required that participants have taken one of the following: a 3-day Level 2 avalanche course, both phases of the National Avalanche School, or their equivalent of in-house training and experience. Participants will need to be proficient with beacon recovery and will be tested on single burial recovery at course commencement. Participants will also need their own skis or splitboard, boots, and skins and be proficient in their use. Skiing or riding skills need to be at least at the intermediate level in most snow conditions. Participants should be in good enough physical condition to comfortably climb 3000' vertical over the course of a day.

Pre-course suggested reading:

Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain, Bruce Tremper, The Mountaineers, 2003
Snow, Weather, and Avalanche Guidelines, American Avalanche Association, 2004
Avalanche Handbook, McClung and Schaerer, The Mountaineers, 2006, particularly chapters 3 through 6, 8 and 9

Venue Location #1: SW Montana – Bridger Bowl and Big Sky..

Dates: January 24 – February 1, 2009

Venue #2: Breckenridge, Colorado.

Dates: February 21 – March 1, 2009

Please note: We will use local ski areas as well as backcountry roadheads. Classroom location will likely be some distance away from field areas, so personal transportation will be helpful. Carpooling will be encouraged

Course Cost: \$1200 (\$1100 for AAA Professional and Affiliate Members). Course tuition includes all instruction, course handouts, and field notebooks.

Lodging: To be arranged by the participants. A list of nearby lodging options will be included with pre-course information.

Registration: Further information and registration contact:

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More information is available on the internet at:

www.americanavalancheassociation.org