

# AVPro Course Letter

Thanks for your enrollment in the AAA Avalanche Professional Course! We look forward to meeting you.

Graduates from this course in previous years have suggested that a pre-course letter would be helpful. What follows is some information that will set you up for a successful experience. If the literature hasn't made it clear thus far, this course is graded on a pass/fail basis. Evaluation criteria are spelled out in the course objectives and measures document on the AVPRO page of the AAA website. Here are some thoughts to help you prepare.

- Practice with your beacon. We will likely do some beacon training and testing on the first day of the course. Make sure you can reliably find one beacon in under 2 minutes (in a 30mx30m area) and three beacons in under 7 minutes (in a 100m x 100m area). We will add tips and techniques to your repertoire, but it would be great to have everyone's beacons skills up to the standard from the start.
- Dig and document both test and study profiles. We have found that most practitioners struggle with crystal identification and efficiency in the pits. If we can focus on helping with those skills, and not have to worry about you memorizing new symbols, that will enhance your learning. Good examples of pit documentation can be found on page 33 and 36 of the SWAG. If you are computer oriented and have a lap-top, you can submit your profiles with SnowPilot or SnowPro. Computer drafting of profiles is NOT required, but can help with legibility and sharing of information. We will supply a copy of the SWAG and a SnowPit Technologies Field Book for the course. All of the documentation is expected to meet the standards presented in the SWAG.
- Read the pre-course readings that are in the "Highly Recommended" folder of the CD. Background material is useful for reference following the course, but is much lower priority if your time, or patience, is short.
- Take some morning and evening weather observations, and check out the weather resources for the venue where the course will be held (ski area, SNOTEL, METAR, RAWS, and other remote weather data will be noted on the venue logistics sheet on the AVPRO page of the AAA website).
- Have a look at the equipment list for some recommendations for snow science tools. It's difficult looking at snow grains if you don't have a decent lens or scope.
- Try to give yourself some time on the front and back end of the course. The course starts quickly and the days are full. Good rest will help you learn, and more importantly, enjoy the learning.

We look forward to our course with you!

American Avalanche Association