

# Level 1 Avalanche Course Information

## Notes

This outline is for the Community Level 1 courses we do in outlying towns we have to travel to from Juneau. It begins with a classroom session on the evening of the first day, followed by four more days of field and classroom time.

It is a very thorough course that meets and exceeds the requirements set by the American Avalanche Association. Depending on site-specific transportation logistics, it runs 38 to 42 hours, as compared with the AAA minimum requirement of 24 hours. We use a longer format because we have found that people cannot absorb and retain the amount of information they need in a shorter course.

The content outline below is a framework, not a fixed schedule. We always have to work with the weather and field conditions. We will juggle the components and timing to provide you the best course possible for the conditions we have.

Morning classroom sessions begin at 8:00 am and will go to 10:00 - 10:30 am. Evening classroom sessions begin at 7:00 pm and will go to 9:00 - 9:30 pm.

The most essential course requirement is to show up and participate! Be there on time and ready to go; you have not completed the course and will not get your card if you are not there. We will announce new times when we must make changes. It is your responsibility to pay attention for changes and updates.

We keep current handouts posted on the education > course handouts pages of the Alaska Avalanche Specialists website, [akavalanches.com](http://akavalanches.com). Be sure to study the gear requirements in the Field Course Information sheets, and to read all the Topic Handouts before the course. The handouts comprise a detailed text that we will follow closely.

You will need your own field gear including a sturdy mountain shovel, and a hand lens or loupe of at least 10x power for snow study.

We will bring Bruce Tremper's *Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain*, our fieldbooks, and clinometer cards for everyone. We have a limited supply of beacons and probes we can check out for the course, but you must let us know if you will be using ours ahead of time so we bring enough. Contact us at 907-523-8900, or [aascom@mac.com](mailto:aascom@mac.com).

## Day 1

### Evening Classroom

- Videos - Out Of Ophirica, Haines Burial
- Introductions
- Course Overview
- Video - Know Before You Go
- Terrain

## Day 2

### Morning Classroom

Snowpack I - Mechanics and Weather

Rescue

### **Rescue Field Session**

Travel to field areas, practice near the road, snowshoes/skis necessary.

Rescue field session

Probing

Single beacon search

Multiple beacon search

Practice and Scenarios

Travel back.

### **Evening Classroom**

Snowpack II - Metamorphism, How Snow Changes

Practical - Terrain Classification

## **Day 3**

### **Morning Classroom**

Snowpack III - Stability Evaluation

Practical - Tiltboard

### **Snow Day 1 Field Session**

Travel to field areas, practice near the road, snowshoes/skis necessary.

Field snow study

Stability 1 Observations

Stability 2 Slope and Traveling Tests

Stability 3 Snowpits, note taking for classroom session

Travel back.

### **Evening Classroom**

Human Factor I - Risk Management

Practical - Writing Field Observations; Mark gear for AK Block tests.

## **Day 4**

### **Morning Classroom**

Human Factor II - Decision-making

Practical - Case Histories

### **Snow Day 2 Field Session**

Travel to field areas, practice near the road, snowshoes/skis necessary.

Field snow study practical - coached stability evaluation and note-taking.

Travel back.

### **Evening Classroom**

Practical - Coached Small Group Field Observations Writeup

Practical - Decision-making

## **Day 5**

### **No Morning Classroom Session**

### **Putting It All Together Field Session**

Travel to field areas, practice near the road, snowshoes/skis necessary.

Practical - small group routefinding, stability evaluation, risk management, decisionmaking.

Travel back.

### **After Field Session**

Course Wrapup; no evening classroom session.