Avalanche Risk Management Policy

Regional Avalanche Danger	Avalanche Terrain		Non-Avalanche (Green) Terrain
	Below Treeline	Treeline & Alpine	
Low	Recommended	Required	No Requirements
Moderate	Recommended	Required	
Considerable	Recommended	Required	
High	Required	No Trip	
Extreme	No Trip	No Trip	

Avalanche Equipment

- Avalanche Transceiver: 457 kHz , digital, minimum 3 antenna, batteries charged above 50%
- Avalanche Probe or Avalanche Probe Ski Poles, and
- Shovel

Required

All participants are required to carry avalanche equipment.

Recommended

Carrying avalanche equipment is recommended.

No Trip

The trip should be canceled.

Avalanche Terrain

Terrain capable of producing an avalanche, as well as surrounding terrain that could potentially be affected by an avalanche.

Non-Avalanche (Green) Terrain

Usually flat or low angled terrain situated well away from any avalanche terrain. Local features may exist such as trail embankments, building roofs, etc. that could produce a small slide capable of burying a person. Participants should take the least risky logical route and be aware that flat light or whiteout conditions may cause them to stray onto more hazardous terrain.

Treeline

For this Policy treeline is the upper edge of the dense forest. If you can ski easily through the trees then you are most likely Above Treeline.

Alpine

Wind action at and above treeline builds slabs in lee and cross-loaded areas. The resulting slabs are often less stable than the surrounding snowpack and can be difficult to recognize. Alpine areas are most exposed to the effect of wind on snowpack distribution. Near treeline wind generally has less effect on snowpack distribution but the distribution is complicated by bands of trees that may act as snow fences. Human triggered slab avalanches are a major concern (89% of accidents due to avalanches occur Above Treeline).

Below Treeline

The effect of wind is further reduced in dense forests below treeline. The snowpack is generally more stable in dense forests than in areas with larger spacing between the trees. However dense forests do not stop avalanches originating above treeline from running through them. Buried surface hoar is often more developed in sheltered areas and logging cut blocks than in areas above treeline that are more exposed to the wind. The major concern below treeline is naturally triggered avalanches running down distinct tracks and runouts.

Regional Avalanche Danger

Compiled by Avalanche Canada in Revelstoke on a regular basis, usually twice a week. ***The rating levels are only general guidelines.*** Distinctions between geographic areas, elevations, slope aspects and slope angles are approximate and transition zones between dangers exist. The information is available on their internet site www.avalanche.ca .

Training Requirements

Participants on trips into avalanche terrain are required to have taken an Avalanche Skills Training (AST), minimum level 1 course or have equivalent experience. Unless a participant has taken the course within two years prior to the trip, they are required to have participated in a Rambler in-house avalanche rescue refresher workshop (or equivalent other refresher) within the last two years.

Canadian Avalanche Danger Scale

Danger	Natural Avalanches	Human Triggered Avalanches	Advice for Ski Tours in Avalanche Terrain
Low	very unlikely	unlikely	travel is generally safe, normal caution advised
Moderate	Unlikely	possible	use caution in steeper terrain on certain aspects
Considerable	Possible	probable	be increasingly cautious in steeper terrain
High	Likely	likely	travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended
Extreme	numerous certain	numerous certain	avoid avalanche terrain; stay away from runouts

Factors Common to Accidents

Where

The majority of accident avalanches start above or near treeline on lee or cross-loaded slopes. Most start on 30 to 40 degree slopes but can start on lesser slopes depending on snowpack stability.

When

Many accidents occur during pleasant weather: generally clear skies, little or no snowfall and light or calm winds.

How

Human-triggered dry slab avalanches are the cause of most avalanche accidents. The weak layer often consists of surface hoar, facets or depth hoar.

Avalanche Risk Management

Avalanche risk management is best served by avoiding avalanche terrain. On trips with known avalanche danger participants can reduce their risk of being caught in a slide by proper planning, by low risk route finding, by avalanche terrain analysis, by snow stability evaluation techniques, by awareness of changing conditions, and by good group management. **This attitude is by far the most important factor in avalanche risk management and should be your highest priority in the backcountry**.

The Winter Trips list has trips with Non-Avalanche (Green) Terrain for those who wish to avoid avalanche hazards.

Travel in avalanche terrain always carries some risk, and even experts get caught through misjudgment or bad luck. How prepared a group is to respond to an avalanche incident is a major concern of this Policy. According to Avalanche Canada the best, if not only, chance a buried person has for survival is for rescue by other members of the group. An avalanche transceiver search is the most effective method of locating a buried victim. Probes and shovels are essential to then rapidly uncover the victim who would soon die of asphyxiation.

Coordinator's Responsibilities

Coordinators should decide if avalanche equipment is required for their trip, and should state this clearly when the trip is announced. On the day of the trip the coordinator should:

- check the latest regional avalanche danger level
- ensure the trip requirements are met as stated in this Policy
- have an alternate trip planned

Participant's Responsibilities

If avalanche equipment is required for the trip then the participant should:

- bring all required equipment in proper working condition
- be familiar with the equipment's use and regularly practice using it.
- confirm transceiver battery life is at least 50%
- on the day of the trip, check the latest regional avalanche danger level

[avalanche off Snowdome]