



LEVEL 1 BACKCOUNTRY AVALANCHE HATCHER PASS COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Alaska Avalanche School is a non-profit organization created for the purpose of promoting public safety in and around the mountain environment through education, research, publishing, and consulting. You have our commitment that we'll provide you with the highest quality of training possible. What you learn during the workshop will depend upon how hard you work during and prior to the course. We'll provide you with the opportunity, the tools, and the encouragement. The rest is up to you. Please read the following information carefully.

DETAILS:

Cost of the Course: \$345.00 Per Person

Course Duration: 3 Full Days

Tuition Includes: Instruction, and instructional handouts.

Tuition Does Not Include: Round trip transportation to and from the class-site, "Snow Sense" by Fesler & Fredston, food for the duration of the course, all personal gear and clothing (see the Equipment List for more information).

Required Reading: "Snow Sense" by Jill Fredston & Doug Fesler

Recommended Reading: "Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain" by Bruce Tremper

COURSE CURRICULUM:

This course is geared towards skiers, boarders, climbers, and other backcountry enthusiasts and is an intensive, hands-on course, which will provide students with the skills necessary to recognize and evaluate potential avalanche hazard. This course consists of 33 hours of classroom and field training.

Program curriculum consists of:

Group rescue techniques

Beacon use

Beacon Park practice (EasySearcher) for multiple beacon searches

Terrain analysis

Snow stability evaluation

Decision making

Route selection

Safe travel procedures

PRE-REQUISITES:

Students are required to read "Snow Sense" by Fredston & Fesler prior to the course start date.

There is a pre-test that is sent to course participants upon enrollment, which is based on the required reading. Those who thoroughly study their pre-course material before the workshop can expect to absorb more during the course. Participants must be able to ski or snowshoe up and downhill in variable terrain and changing snow conditions and should be prepared to remain outdoors in foul weather all day. We also recommend that you track the weather in Turnagain Arm as closely as possible in the weeks prior to the course and get out and travel a bit on the equipment you will be using for the course so there are no surprises.

RISK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT / WAIVER FORM:

While the Alaska Avalanche School's 30 year track record in safety has been exceptional, a reflection of the times is that each field course participant must sign a detailed waiver of liability. Signing the AAS waiver form means that you acknowledge the inherent risks associated with the activities you will be undertaking, accept responsibility for your actions, and waive any claim for damages against the Alaska Avalanche School and its staff for accidents suffered while participating in the workshop. AAS will send waiver forms to participants prior to the course. **Please read, and sign the form and bring to the first day of the course.**

If you are a minor you must have the Waiver signed by your legal guardian before you arrive at the course. If you do not wish to sign the waiver, your tuition will be refunded less the \$50 processing fee, (as long as you notify us at least 14 days prior to the start of the course) and you will not be permitted to attend the workshop. Please read the registration and cancellation

policies on the AAS registration form for more information and details regarding our policies.

COURSES HELD IN HATCHER PASS:

The classroom portion of the training will be held at the Independence Mine State Historical Park Visitor Center located at 3,200 feet on the Palmer side of Hatcher Pass in the Talkeetna Mountains.

Directions: To get to Hatcher Pass, head east from Palmer on the Glenn Highway and then turn left (north) onto Fishhook Road (this intersection is approximately 1 mile east of Palmer and is clearly signed). *Important note:* *The road over Hatcher Pass from Willow is closed in the winter.* The Visitor Center is located at approximately 19 miles from the Glenn Highway. This is roughly 5 miles past the Mother Lode Lodge (where there is a big switchback in the road) and 1 mile past the Hatcher Pass Lodge (A-Frames). The road will only be plowed to Hatcher Pass Lodge. **Travel by ski or snowshoe to the Visitor Center generally takes about 30-45 minutes from the parking lot. You will need to ferry your equipment and gear to the Visitor Center and if you have a plastic sled, bring it!**

Note:* It is possible that if a storm closes the lower road prior to the course, we may have to cancel the course or change our location. If possible, plan on driving a 4-wheel drive and/or throw a set of chains into your vehicle.

Parking: Since January 1, 2005, there has been an Alaska State Park parking fee for Hatcher Pass. This fee has been waived for workshop participants. **Please place this letter on the left hand side of your dashboard as proof of involvement with this workshop.**

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Please keep your dogs at home during the course!

Visitor Center: There is free sleeping bag space allowed on the main floor of the Visitor Center on the night before the first day of the course starting around 8:00 pm. Bring a light to mid-weight sleeping bag and pad. Feel free to put your bed wherever you would like on the main floor but be aware that the central living space will need to be cleared for the indoor class sessions. This is a heated building, there is a coffee maker, microwave, and hot water is available for tea, hot chocolate, or instant meals. There is no cook stove or kitchen available. Electricity is provided via an on-site generator. Participants are welcome to stay at the Visitor Center for the duration of the course.

Camping: There is no outside camping allowed at the Visitor Center.

Private Rooms: Those wishing private rooms and who don't mind spending the extra time and effort commuting to the Visitor Center can make arrangements for lodging at Hatcher Pass Lodge by calling (907) 745-5897.

FOOD:

Students are responsible for all of their food and water for the duration of the course. Bring enough food to feed yourself for three full days. We will have a **potluck dinner** on the first night of the course so bring your BEST, MOST TASTY DISH (no freeze-dried allowed) to share with others. If everyone puts some effort into their dish we can feast like kings! Crock-pot dishes work out well as do pans of food that just need to be heated up. Please plan on bringing your potluck dish with you on the first morning. The second night, dinner is the responsibility of the students.

Lunches will be in the field so plan your menu accordingly. You might also want to bring some snack food to keep your stomach in check between the end of each day's field session and when we break for dinner.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

The Night Before the Course Begins: We encourage participants to travel to the Hatcher Pass Visitor Center on the night before the course begins so that you won't be late the first morning of the course. The Visitor Center will be open as of 8 pm the night before the course begins for those wishing to come up early. If you come in late this night, just find a space on the floor of the main level and don't snore *too* loudly. Remember, driving time from downtown Anchorage to the Hatcher Pass Lodge is usually around 1.5 hours *if* the roads are in good shape. Don't forget to factor in time to travel from the Lodge parking lot to the Visitor Center.

The First Day of the Course: Registration check-in will take place the first morning from 8 to 8:25 am. **Everyone should be in the classroom ready to go at 7:59 am on this morning since we will start on time and if you're late, you will miss important**

information. The course curriculum will start PROMPTLY at 8:30 am. We'll have a couple of hours of classroom session followed by field sessions until 5 pm. We'll then have class until around 7 pm when we'll break for dinner and the night.

The Second and Third day of the Course: These two days will start promptly at 8:00 am will run very similarly to the first with the exception of the registration. On the last day of the course, we will end by 7 pm.

PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS AND EQUIPMENT:

Plan to bring all the necessary clothing and equipment you require to stay outside all day in foul weather while traveling uphill and down through variable terrain and changing snow conditions. For more information on participant equipment requirements please review the course equipment handout.

TO REGISTER FOR A COURSE:

If you have not already registered for a course and wish to, please call the AAS office to check availability. You can either register by phone or print off the registration form from the AAS Website and send it into the AAS office via post, or fax.

AAS CANCELLATION, REFUND, AND TRANSFER POLICIES:

We highly encourage all participants to review the Cancellation, Refund, and Transfer Policies found on the 2nd page of the AAS Registration form prior to enrollment.

Cancellation Insurance: If for any reason you anticipate a cancellation please consider cancellation insurance. A few recommendations include:

TravelEx: www.travelex-insurance.com

Travel Guard: www.travelguard.com

MISCELLANEOUS:

Student tuition alone does not cover the total course cost. Funding for these programs is derived from individual donations, in-kind contributions, and program receipts from educational workshops. If you desire to contribute to the school we graciously accept donations of monetary value as well as gear that can be put towards our rental program.

Our goal at the Alaska Avalanche School is to provide you with the best possible opportunity for learning about avalanche hazard evaluation in the backcountry.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 907-345-0878 or email: AlaskaAvalanche@mac.com.

We look forward to seeing you in the mountains!