KMC GUIDELINES FOR AVALANCHE SAFETY

For any KMC winter trip (on skis or snowshoes) travelling through avalanche terrain, participants need to have avalanche gear (beacon, shovel and probe) and know how to use it. The avalanche beacon must be digital and multi-antenna. AST1 is highly recommended.

You do not need the gear (or the training) if you are NOT traveling in avalanche terrain.

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1. Trip Leader Guidelines for Winter Trips

A. **Trip leaders are organizers, not trained guides**. As such, trip leaders are familiar with the trail head and the route. In the field, the trip leader should make sure that all participants are comfortable with the route as the group is navigating the terrain. Route and turn-around decisions should be made by the group as a whole.

B . Prior to the trip, the Trip Leader should determine whether participants are likely to encounter avalanche prone terrain. In making the determination, the Trip Leader should check pertinent weather forecasts, and Avalanche Canada forecasted conditions. To assist with the trip planning, use the Avalanche Canada Avaluator card The Avaluator (avalanche.ca) and Trip Planner https://avalanche.ca/planning/trip-planner. If conditions on the ground on the day of the trip are such that the trip is not recommended in the Trip Leader's judgment, the Trip Leader must relocate or reschedule the trip.

C. **If the Trip Leader determines that traveling in avalanche prone terrain is likely** and that such terrain cannot easily be circumvented or otherwise avoided, in that event:

a) Every participant must carry, have practiced with, and be proficient in the use of a digital avalanche beacon, probe, and shovel (“Avalanche Equipment”), and b) At the trailhead, the Trip Leader must complete a beacon check.

D. However, if the Trip Leader determines participants can divert to a different course, or circumvent or otherwise avoid the avalanche prone terrain, then and in that event, the participants do not need to carry Avalanche Equipment.

For more important information on KMC trip leader processes and responsibilities, please click here.

2. Participant Responsibilities for Winter Trips

A. Ensure you have the equipment and appropriate clothing required for the planned trip. If the trip organizer requires that participants bring avalanche equipment: bring a beacon, shovel and probe, and know how to use them. Make sure that the beacon batteries are charged and carry spares. If you have a GPS or Navigation app on your phone (GAIA preferred), and an Avaluator Card, bring them along.

B. The night before the trip, check the avalanche and weather forecast from Avalanche Canada so that you can be an informed group member: Avalanche Canada (Kootenay Boundary avalanche forecast) and https://www.avalanche.ca/weather/forecast (BC weather forecast).

For other important KMC Participant Responsibilities, please click here.

3. Beacon Requirements

Digital, 457 kHz three-antenna beacon models (such as the Tracker 2, Ortovox 3+, Pieps DSP, Barryvok/Mammut Pulse) are required.

They can be rented from ROAM and Valhalla Pure in Nelson for a reasonable cost.

4. Recommended Avalanche Training course

Avalanche Skills Level 1 (AST 1): An AST 1 course is your place to start. While you do not need any experience to take this course, it is a must for everyone recreating in the backcountry or slackcountry (lift accessed backcountry), as you will learn how to recognize avalanche terrain and how to rescue a companion. An AST 1 is a minimum of two days with both classroom and field components. AST 1 is a prerequisite for other avalanche safety

courses and is only the beginning; avalanche pros will tell you, avalanche training is a life-long process.

KMC offers member discounts to take this course.

V.2 17 January 2023