

NZAC Backcountry Avalanche course

Who is this course for?

The NZAC Backcountry Avalanche course is designed for **NZAC Intermediate mountaineers** (or equivalent skill set) who are looking to gain a greater understanding of the avalanche phenomenon.

Prior to attending this course* participants must have **experience of moderate alpine (non glacial) mountaineering**, be a **NZAC Intermediate mountaineer** (or equivalent skill set) and the **fitness to enjoy multiple days (7 hours) in the mountain environment**.

*Full course pre requirements can be found in the course info pack

Course Overview

Duration: 4 Days

Season: July - September

Location: Various mountainous locations across New Zealand

Course Tutors: MSC Avalanche 2 / Avalanche Risk Management Level 6

Ratio: 1-6

Cost: TBC

Progression: NZAC Backcountry Avalanche Refresher

Syllabus

Avalanche Basics

- Avalanche characteristics
- Identification of avalanche terrain
- Types of Avalanche
- Snowpack
- What is an avalanche path
- Avalanche size
- Transceiver Checks
- Equipment for traveling in the alpine environment

Pre-Trip Planning

- Avalanche Advisory
- Systems and checklists for trip planning
- Weather forecasts
- Snow stability checklists
- Intentions (safety code)

Avalanche Assessment

- Weather
- Snowpack factors
- Recognising Avalanche Terrain
- Human Factors
- Decision making tools

Movement in avalanche terrain

- Safe travel techniques and etiquette
- Route Selection
- Track Setting

Companion Rescue

- What to pack
- Skilful transceiver use

Course Outcomes*

Avalanche Basics

-An understanding of the dangers presented from avalanches to mountaineers

Pre-Trip Planning

- Identify the core principles of pre-trip planning including where to find information and how to use it when planning a trip
- A basic understanding of how weather effects snow conditions and they type, size and likelihood of avalanches
- An understanding of how to leave intentions and their importance
- The ability to confidently perform a transceiver function and range check
- The knowledge of what avalanche safety equipment to take into the alpine environment

Avalanche Assessment

- A basic understanding of how observed weather is effecting the snowpack and avalanche conditions
- The ability to identify avalanche types in the alpine environment
- The ability to recognise avalanche terrain with an understanding of angle, aspect, altitude, slope shapes, trigger points and terrain traps
- The understanding of how human factors influence decision making in the alpine environment
 - The ability to demonstrate appropriate locations for snowpack observations
 - The knowledge to record and observes layers, basic crystal identification and snow metamorphism in the snowpack
 - The ability to perform snowpack tests
 - The knowledge to identify when weather is contributing to snow instability.

Moving in avalanche terrain

- An understanding of avalanche terrain avoidance principles
- The ability to utilise safe travel techniques (spacing, visual contract, islands of safety, safe travel routes, communication and escape routes)
- The knowledge to select appropriate routes to avoid or minimise avalanche danger

Companion Rescue

- The ability to locate a transceiver buried in a pack of under a strike board, 60cm under a 10-20 degree slope in a 50m X 50m are in under 2 minutes 30 seconds
- The knowledge to efficiently dig out a casualty both as an individual and a team

Someone who has these skills and the skills listed for the NZAC Basic Snowcraft is considered a **NZAC Intermediate Mountaineer** and is likely to have the skills and ability to travel on glaciated Mount Cook Grade 2+ Terrain

*Course outcomes may vary dependant on participant ability and course conditions. This is a guideline, individuals must assess their own ability after a course.