

Who is this course for?

The NZAC Avalanche Awareness course is designed for **NZAC Novice 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 easy alpine (non glacial) mountaineering**, be a **NZAC Novice mountaineer** (or equivalent skill set) and the **fitness to enjoy a full day (7 hours) in the mountain environment**.

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

Course Overview

Duration: 1 Day (plus 3 hour evening session)

Season: July - September

Location: Various mountainous locations across New Zealand

Course Tutors: MSC Avalanche 1 / Avalanche Risk Management Level 5

Ratio: 1-6

Cost: Set by NZAC Section

Progression: NZAC Backcountry Avalanche Course

Syllabus

Avalanche Basics

- New Zealand Avalanche Statistics
- What is an Avalanche
- 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
- Weather
- Intentions (safety code)

Avalanche Assessment

- Weather
- Snowpack / snow profile
- Recognising Avalanche Terrain
- Human Factors
- Decision making tools

Movement in avalanche terrain

- Safe travel techniques and etiquette
- Route Selection

Companion Rescue

- What to pack
- Transceiver Basics

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 in simple alpine terrain
- The understanding of how human factors influence decision making in the alpine environment
- An understanding of how to assess terrain and the likelihood of an avalanche using the Avalanche Assessor Card

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 accurately search for 1 casualty in avalanche debris
- The ability to probe effectively to pinpoint a casualty
- 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 Novice Mountaineer** and is likely to have the skills and ability to travel on non glaciated Mount Cook Grade 1+ 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.