



NZAC Avalanche Danger Scale Level Rating System

Danger level	Snowpack stability	Avalanche probability and Avalanche trigger	Recommended action
...What...	...Why...		...What to do...
LOW (green)	The snowpack is generally well bonded and stable.	Natural avalanches highly unlikely. Human triggered avalanches unlikely.	Travel is generally safe. Normal caution advised.
MODERATE (yellow)	The snowpack is moderately well bonded on some steep slopes, otherwise generally well bonded.	Natural avalanches unlikely. Human triggered avalanches possible.	Generally favourable conditions. Routes should be selected with care, especially on steep slopes.
CONSIDERABLE (orange)	The snowpack is moderately to weakly bonded on many steep slopes.	Natural avalanches possible. Human triggered avalanches probable.	Backcountry skiing and travel should only be carried out by experienced persons able to evaluate avalanche hazard. Steep slopes of the aspect and altitude indicated should be avoided.
HIGH (red)	The snowpack is weakly bonded in most places.	Natural and human triggered avalanches likely.	Backcountry skiing and travel should be restricted to low-angled slopes; areas at the bottom of slopes may also be hazardous.
Extreme (black)	The snowpack is generally weakly bonded and largely unstable	Widespread natural or human triggered avalanches certain	No backcountry skiing or travel should be undertaken



NZAC Terrain Guidelines for the Danger Scale

Danger rating	Location	Activity	Instructor responsibilities
Low – unlikely	Backcountry allowed	Travel is generally safe. Normal caution advised. All activities, all terrain within written scope of award.	Remain observant for changes in hazard.
Moderate – possible	Backcountry allowed	Use caution in steeper terrain on certain aspects.	Use safe travel technique, keeping all participants under close supervision.
Considerable	Limited backcountry allowed	Travel in avalanche terrain should be limited. Movement on or under slopes >35 degrees only for personal safety	Movement in considerable rated terrain features under close supervision and to be avoided unless ensuring group safety.
High – likely	Limited backcountry allowed	Travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended. Movement on slopes >30 degrees only for personal safety.	Movement in high avalanche area only to ensure personal or group safety.
Extreme - certain	No backcountry allowed	Travel in avalanche terrain must be avoided or confined to low-angle terrain, away from avalanche run-outs.	Nil movement unless for group safety.
Unknown	NZAC Introduction to Alpine Climbing courses do not operate in an area not covered by avalanche forecasting.		