

# NZAC INSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

BASIC SNOWCRAFT COURSES 2025

CANTERBURY & WESTLAND SECTION



NEW ZEALAND  
ALPINE CLUB

15 – 17 AUGUST | 29 – 31 AUGUST 2025

**LOCATION: ARTHURS PASS**

**ACCOMODATION: NZAC ARTHURS PASS LODGE**

**COURSE FEES: \$360**

**Who is this course for?**

**The NZAC Basic Snowcraft course is designed for experienced trampers and those with a passion for the outdoors who are looking to gain additional skills to travel safely in alpine terrain where snow and ice is often encountered.**

This is an alpine course suitable for experienced trampers. Please **ensure you meet the minimum requirements.**



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**At a minimum, those wishing to register for the Basic Snowcraft Course must:**

- Have some experience in backcountry tramping
- Have the fitness required to enjoy multiple full days in the mountain environment
- Be enthusiastic to learn new skills in New Zealand's alpine environment.

**Course Syllabus:**

**Preparing for the alpine environment**

- Clothing / equipment
- Trip planning resources (avalanche forecast / weather forecasts / guidebooks)
- Weather
- Basic Navigation

**Being and moving in the alpine environment**

- Use of ice axe (dagger, plunging, step cutting)
- Walking and kicking steps on snow without crampons (edging / step kicking)
- Walking on snow with crampons (flat, 50 / 50, front pointing)
- Identification of the safest route for travel in the alpine environment
- Avalanche Awareness

**Changing Circumstances**

- Self-belay and self-arrest technique with and without and ice axe
- Use of avalanche safety equipment including transceiver search
- Techniques for camping in snow and emergency shelters (snow shelters / bothy bag).

## Course Outcomes\*:

### Preparing for the alpine environment

- An ability to plan simple trips into the alpine environment
- The knowledge to pack and select appropriate equipment for a trip into the alpine environment
- An ability to interpret simple weather forecast and observations
- An ability to identify simple feature on a map and a basic ability to relocate using the map and terrain features.

### Being and moving in the alpine environment

- An ability to use both an ice axe and mountaineering boots as an effective tool for traveling in the alpine environment
- The ability to fit crampons and travel effectively in the alpine environment using them
- An awareness of safe travel through the alpine environment with particular attention to avoiding avalanche terrain and the identification of other potential hazards
- A basic awareness of the avalanche phenomenon and why angle, aspect, altitude, slope shapes, trigger points and terrain traps are significant

### Changing Circumstances

- An awareness of techniques to prevent slips and trips
- The ability to stop an unintentional slide in mild snow-covered terrain
- The ability to confidently perform a companion rescue in the event of an avalanche
- An awareness of snow shelters and how to camp in the snow

Someone who has these skills combined with the knowledge from a NZAC Avalanche Awareness course is considered a **NZAC Novice Mountaineer** and is likely to have the skills and ability to travel on Mount Cook Grade 1+ Terrain (Non-Glacial)

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

## Instruction

Two courses will be held in August 2024. When registering, please sign-up for the correct date. The course will be run at a minimum 1:4 instructor to participant ratio. All participants must agree to follow the instructor's directions. 4 participants maximum per group. The two courses have a combined maximum capacity of 24 participants. The instructors on this course are trained by the New Zealand Alpine Club however do not necessarily hold a formal qualification.

## Pre-Course Theory Night

A pre-course theory night will be held on the Tuesday prior to the weekend

## Course Location

The course will be based from the NZAC Arthurs Pass Lodge, probably utilising local ski fields for field work.

## Follow up day climb

A follow up day climb of a Grade 1 peak will be organised for students of the course and it is highly recommended you attend this as it is a good opportunity to consolidate the skills learnt over the weekend. Details of this will be discussed during the course.

## Course Schedule

The pre- course theory evening (seminar) will cover off essential equipment and logistics for the weekend. Trip planning, basic navigation, and weather forecasting will be covered during Friday and Saturday evenings, other parts of the syllabus will be taught in the field. The course schedule is subject to change depending on weather conditions.

## Course Fees

The course fees include all instruction, accommodation for two nights at the Arthurs Pass Lodge, 1x evening meal, and provision of technical gear if required (ice axe, crampons, helmet, and avalanche kit). The course fees are \$360.00. Full payment on sign-up for the course

See Instruction refund policy on the [website](#).

## **Food**

The Saturday evening meal along with tea/coffee and milk for breakfast are provided as part of the course fee. Dietary requirements will be catered for where-ever possible, please note any requirements on the registration form. You will need to provide your own food for 1 x evening meal (if you have not eaten prior to arrival at the lodge on Friday), 2 x Breakfasts, 2 x packed lunches and snacks.

## **Accommodation:**

The NZAC Lodge at Arthurs pass is dormitory style accommodation (2 bunk rooms). There are hot showers and a full kitchen.

## **Start Time:**

The pre-course evening will be held in the NZAC Library, Unit 6, 6 Raycroft Street, Waltham, Christchurch from 7pm to 9pm on the Tuesday evening prior to the weekend course.

The weekend course formally starts about 7.30pm on the Friday Evening, but you can arrive any time from 5.30pm.

The course will finish around 4pm on Sunday.

## **Transport:**

It is your responsibility to arrange transport to and from Arthurs Pass, and to the field locations. We strongly encourage carpooling and will discuss final transport arrangements at the pre-course evening.

## **Gear list:**

### **CLOTHING and GEAR REQUIRED:**

Warm waterproof stiff tramping boot (minimum ½ shank), or mountaineering boot

Full length gaiters.

Crampons with anti balling plates (can be provided by the Canterbury Westland Section if required).

Walking ice axe, non-technical, minimum 55 cm (can be provided by the Canterbury Westland Section if required).

Helmet (can be provided by the Canterbury Westland Section if required).

Waterproof jacket and over trousers.

Down or fleece jacket.

Soft shell or wind stopper jacket.

3 x pairs of warm thermal socks.

Lightweight fleece or polypropylene top and leggings.

2 x pair of gloves (1 x waterproof ski type and 1 x thermal such as polypropylene or ice ninja).

Warm hat or balaclava.

Sun hat.

Sun glasses or ski goggles.

Sun block.

Personal medication and first aid kit.

Energy food snacks.

Water (minimum 1.5 litre. NOT a bladder and tube system because these can freeze).

Pack large enough to fit everything in, with ice axe and gear loops, liner and bags to keep everything dry.

**PROVIDED as part of the course (if required):**

Avalanche kit – 3 antenna transceiver, metal shovel, probe.

Ice axe

Crampons

Helmet

**OPTIONAL:**

Thermos for hot drink.

Head Torch

Small notebook and pen

**GEAR TO BRING FOR STAYING AT THE LODGE:**

Sleeping bag and pillow.

Change of clothes and shoes.

Toiletries and towel.

Something to drink - alcohol permitted.

Food for the weekend – 1 x evening, 2 x breakfast, 2 x lunch.

Equipment can be purchased with NZAC discount in Christchurch and online from Aspiring Safety, Bivouac and Further Faster

**Insurance**

We recommend you take out travel insurance and/or personal insurance as part of your preparation for participating on NZAC Instruction courses.

**Emergency Situations and Risk Disclosure**

The Course Instructors will have Emergency Management Procedures in place and field communication devices to immediately contact rescue services in the case of an accident or emergency. It is encouraged to take your own personal locator beacon if you own one.

The natural environment and climbing activities can involve risks. While recognising that the course organisers and instructors are doing their best to manage these risks, and agreeing to accept their direction whenever required, you must accept personal responsibility for your own actions and safety. You must always also accept to follow the instructions of the Course Leader and other instructors.

All participants on the Course are expected to be as honest and transparent as possible about their experience and fitness as part of their application. If a participant's lack of fitness/ability severely affects the running of the course the participant(s) may be asked to not participate for certain activities. Arrangements may be made to evacuate the participant(s) at their own cost. The instructor is the final arbiter in these decisions.



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